

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Book for the Baptism of Slaves (1636-1670) (Dominican Republic)

Ref: 2008 - 24

PART A. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

The *Book for the Baptism of Slaves*, 1635-1670 ("Libra de Bautismos de Esclavos") belongs to the Historical Archives of the Archbishopric of Santo Domingo (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic). Given its antiquity (XVII century) and uniqueness (the only one in Dominican ecclesiastical history), it is a source of precious information as the form, character and other details of American slavery, particularly in this Eastern part of the Island of Santo Domingo during the above mentioned century.

The Island of Santo Domingo or Hispaniola was the starting point of most of the fundamental processes of the discovery, conquest and colonization of America beginning in 1492. The introduction of the first African slaves in the Island goes back to 1493, though it was not until the second decade of the XVI Century when the slave trade was really organized, first of all by using individual licenses, and then using the facilities of the Portuguese trade system, better known as import license or "asiento". The slave population would certainly increase once the sugar industry was in its way, and the first plantation system or regime established in the New World.

The African slaves joined and later substituted the native Indian slave population and captives from other Caribbean or Antilles islands or even the South American continent. From the middle of the XVI Century, the African slave population formed the main part of the Hispaniola total population. They come from the coastal parts near the Cape Verde islands and the Gulf of Guinea.

As early as the XVI Century, the slaves manifested their protest against slavery in the form of armed rebellions even. The specific way, however, to protest was the so called "cimarronado", that is leaving the land or plantation where they belong, and establishing themselves in a protected and lonely place called "maniell", from which they made incursions into their former owner's property.

Those attacks of the maroon negroes could often be burning and destroying sugar cane plantations and killing their animals. As a result of which, other slaves would join them, or even attack some of their former companions or their masters.

The above mentioned "cimarronada" disappeared gradually, but not totally, towards the end of the XVI Century, when the sugar plantation system was near its end. Though less frequent, slave revolts maintained the same intensity and created the same restlessness and fear among the Spanish and native land owners.

During the XVII Century the external attacks from Spanish enemies joined forces with the quasi permanent internal attacks. That is why the authorities organized frequent raids against the rebellious slaves at the "manieles", located in places of difficult access.

Well known towards the middle of the XVII Century were the attacks against the Ocoa Maniel, in the South West part of the Island, commanded by Captain Damian del Castillo, who was also famous for his defence against the British invasion of the Island in 1655. Though the book of Baptism only mentioned a group of twenty four children captured in the above mentioned attack, the only responsible mentioned at that point is Captain Juan de Villalobos.

Finally, towards the end of the XVII and beginning of the XVIII Century, the "cimarronada" element gave way to other protest mechanisms and/or assimilation, which became possible due to the increasing number of free or liberated slaves who could also present before a Civil Court their demand for freedom, particularly when the slave owners did not respect their previous labor contracts. This new addition would certainly allow the increase of the free population, not only in the cities but in the rural areas as well.

2. DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1. Name.

Historical Archives of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

2.2. Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Besides being the custodian of the above mentioned book since 1670, these historical archives kept also the parish books for Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and Burial from 1590 until the end of the XIX Century, of thirteen parishes within the territory of the old Archdiocese of Santo Domingo. Other invaluable documents are the Marriage records, the Bishop's counselors meetings or Chapter from the XVIII Century, and the Ordination or Clergy records from the same Century on, as well as the foundation of moss funds for the dead (Capellánias), among other documents.

2.3. Contact Persons

Rev. Fr. Geraldo I. Ramirez Paniagua (Chancellor of the Archbishopric) and Rev. Fr. Jose L. Saez Ramo, S.J. (Director of the Historical Archives).

2.4. Contact details

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Ciudad Colonial
Santo Domingo, D. N., Dominican Republic
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3. IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE.

3.1. Name and identification details of the items being nominated

The Book for the Baptism of Slaves (J 636-1670), Historical Archives of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo (ASD). The Cathedral Parish Books: 1st Cabinet, Drawer N. 1, Book N. 2 (old location, according to the 1926 Catalogue: est. B, cajón 46, leg. 2).

3.2. Description

The Book for the Baptism of Slaves (1636-1670), is 23.5 cm width, 31.5 cm tall and 0.1. cm wide. The book contains 78 double pages, and registers 794 baptismal handwritten records -two of them belong to two collective ceremonies, that is, almost 30 slave children belonging to the guerrilla or simple refuges of the Southwest part of the island around 1665. There are also 83 confirmation records of 1 659.

To this brief description, please find a CD-R containing the complete digital transcription of the above mentioned book, made in November 2007 by the Technical Department of the Dominican National Archives or Archivo General de la Nación (Santo Domingo, D.N., Dominican Republic).

4. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1. Authenticity

The proposed document is truly an authentic book. It is not a late copy of another missing book or books. It belongs to the old archive of the so called Cathedral-Parish of Santo Domingo, which became today's Cathedral Archive on December 14, 1790, though as a strictly private archive for the only use of the Cathedral Pastor and his assistants. The Vicar General of the Archbishopric of Santo Domingo (His Reverence Amancio Escapa, OCD.), custodian of the above mentioned book since 1993, could give a credible proof of his authenticity. And above all, the above mentioned CENTROMIDCA (now CENACOD) technical department, in which it was repaired from May 1989 to December 1993, can also attest its authenticity and true value.

The document serves also to study and understand the other face, so to speak, of the colonial slave system. This other face, less known among historians, proves that this parish book represents but a section of this country's transition from a slave society to a society with slaves, or rather from a slave plantation society to a patriarchal slavery. This later concept was accepted simply because it was not dependent on the world market system, but rather served to consolidate or secure the social levels in a native society or the "creole society".

For the same reason, an understanding of it is helped by the fact that this Book of Slaves is the only one to register the baptism administered to slaves, as the practice was for separate books for slaves and free men. It is obvious that we need to take other factors into account to explain whose decision it was that made possible the plurality or the existence of single sacramental records. In fact, the need to open formal sacramental records or books was emphasized by some of the early ecclesiastical assemblies, particularly the 1608 Diocesan Synod, ordered by Archbishop Cristobal Rodriguez, O.P., as well as the First and only Provincial Council (1622-1623), which obviously were previous to the above mentioned book of slaves.

4.2. World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

There is no doubt that the proposed document is unique within this Archive's collections. There are no similar books in this country's ecclesiastical archives. It's well known that In practically all Cuban parish archives they kept separate books for Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and Burial of the slave population (the so called books for Pardos y Morenos), from 1665 up until 1881, when a decision of the Spanish Government Secretariat ordered the elimination of all those previous books.

However, the book we present here is the only one existing throughout the Spanish colonial period in the island of Santo Domingo. As the book ended in September 29, 1670, after this date the Santo Domingo Cathedral's baptism books were unified, so to speak; and from that date to the end of slavery in 1822, the beginning of the political unification of both colonies (Haiti and Santo Domingo) this parish used only one book to register free people as well as slaves.

Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style satisfied?

The book, from a non-searcher's point of view, gives an insight into the economic crisis which characterizes the XVII Century in this country, which affected all realms of Dominican society including the Church, and led to the development of a new type or style of Caribbean slave regime, so to speak. Since the book has been kept outside the archive's deposits, researchers and historians of political or social environment, never mentioned it or used the data, and for this reasons there are but a few authors who were allowed to consult or even look at it.

The *Book for the Baptism of Slaves* does not represent a definite style or even linguistic innovation, but its simplicity of writing, certainly has contributed a discovery and later description of life in Santo Domingo City during the XVII Century, its inhabitants and particularly the families, church personnel and simple citizens who were slave owners during that period. It also helps to better understand how the well entrenched social status of the XIX Century was defined and achieved. In spite of the paper's unequal quality and the evident difficulty of such fancy handwriting, the book is not that difficult to read.

4.4. Rarity, integrity, threat and management

4.4.1. Rarity

There is an older book of Baptism, which runs from 1590 to 1638. However, this First Book of Baptism registers only the baptism of children from the white population of the City of Santo Domingo. Therefore, the fact that our book of slaves (1636-1670), as we had already said, registers exclusively the black population of the same city makes it an even rare and certainly precious exemplar.

4.4.2. Integrity

Thank to the technical operation of the above mentioned CENTROMIDCA (new CENACOD), the book of slaves is now well saved. Given the fact that the main room and storage of the Historical

Archive, IS in the process of renewal, proper air conditioning and even reconstruction, the above mentioned document is kept for the time being in the Vicar General's office instead of the general deposit of the Historical Archive. To save its integrity and protect it, instead of its original binding, the technical experts at CENTROMIDCA (now CENACOD) decided to keep it in a closed chest with four small pieces of cardboard.

4.4.3. Threat

When the renewal and reconstruction program of the Historical Archive is finished, all 195 parish books, -that is, Baptismal, Marriage and Burial records--, will be kept in a new deposit room, next to the research or reading room, open to the public. Likewise, this institution is in the process of buying a scanner so that most of the documents could be better saved, and the public can consult the old documents online. This book of slaves already exist in a digital version, prepared by the Country National Archives (Archivo General de la Nación) in November 2007, as prior step to its publication as a co-edition of both the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo and the already mentioned National Archives.

4.4.4. Management Plan

The *Book for the Baptism of Slaves* already exist en digital version, prepared in November 2007 by the technical personnel from the Dominican Republic National Archives (Archivo General de la Nación or AGN), as the first step to its editorial publishing joined by the Historical Archives of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo, as an obvious way to make it accessible to historians and the like.

5. JURIDICAL INFORMATION

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage

The owner of this book of slaves is the Archbishopric of Santo Domingo. See the address below and in number 2.4.

5.2. Custodian of the documentary heritage

This book is under the custody of the Historical Archives of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo.
Isabella Catolica Street Number 5,
Ciudad Colonial.
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5.3. Legal status:

a) Ownership

The above mentioned document belongs exclusively to the Historical Archives of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo.

b) Accessibility

There are no limits for the specialized public reader or researcher to access to the CD copy of the document. As we have already said, there exists a digital copy, made by the State National Archives (AGN) technical department, in view of its immediate service to that public.

c) Copyright status

The document, due to its antiquity, has no copyright.

d) Responsible administration

The Historical Archives of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo and the National Archives share the responsibility and safekeeping of this document. Both institutions cooperate for its safekeeping and even its publication in the near future.

e) Other factors

The Government Department of Culture (Secretaria de Estado de Cultura), is currently drafting legislation to protect and preserve the national heritage.

6. MANAGEMENT PLAN

6. 1. Management plan for this documentary heritage

As already mentioned in 4.4., we are in the process of renewal and reconstruction of all aspects of the Historical Archive, as part of a plan of the Government's Department of Culture (Secretaria de Estado de Cultura), and the State National Archives (Archivo General de la Nación), as a result of a joint effort to render technical assistance to our archive in several lines of reform and renewal. As part of this program, we shall open at least a new room for the deposit of the 195 parish books. At the same time, and in spite of the works going on, we shall continue to receive the accredited public readers and investigators, as it was our intent four years ago.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1. Details of consultation about this nomination with a) the owner of the heritage, b) the custodian, c) your national or regional Memory of the World Committee

Consultations were held on the proposal with:

a) the owner and b) its custodian

The Director of the Archive who assumed its direction in January 17th 2003, is in frequent contact with His Eminence, the Archbishop Cardinal of Santo Domingo. Since that date, the Director presented a complete general inventory of the Historical Archive, as well as other small reports answering his questions and/or plans. As I have already mentioned, since August 2007, the Archivo

General de la Nación technical advisors have made several recommendations and we are still defining new ways of collaboration to preserve and properly keep our documents.

c) National Committee of the Memory of the World for the Dominican Republic

As to the UNESCO National Committee and its program of the Memory of the World, during at last four months, it has discussed and studied this project, and it has decided to present this *Book for the Baptism of Slaves*, always in coordination with the above-mentioned institutions.

PART B. SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION.

8. RISKS EVALUATION.

8.1. Describe the nature and extend of the risks around the element of the documental heritage.

The nature of the risks that could affect this *Book for the Baptism of Slaves* could be classified as anthropogenic and natural causes. In the first case, the answer to possible risks such as theft, could be met with the proper vigilance and surveillance systems all through the building where the document is kept.

As for as the second cause, the damaged infringed by hurricanes and even earthquakes in the building in which the document is well kept, located in the area called Santo Domingo Colonial City, Humanity's Heritage, are already taken care of by the proper prevention of any risks in the Historical Center of the City as a whole, since the final responsibility for such a document and the Church Archives, remains with the Colonial City Emergence Commission.

9. EVALUATION OF THE PRESERVATION STATUS.

9.1. Preservation context of the documentary heritage.

The *Book for the Baptism of Slaves* is now kept in the Vicar General's Office within the Archbishopric of Santo Domingo's building, in a well protected and air conditioned area. From its restoration procedure back in 1993, as we have already seen, its 78 pages were enclosed in a specially prepared cardboard box by the Inter American Center of Microfilm and Documents Restoration (CENTROMIDCA), now National Center for Documents Conservation (CENACOD).

PART C. LODGMENT

The nomination is lodged by:

Name: José SAEZ, S.J.

Signature

Date 28 /03 / 2008