

Graduate Program in Translation
College of Humanities
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FIFTH CENTENARY OF THE TAÍNO REBELLION <1511—2011>
(a translation of excerpts from *5to centenario de la Rebelión Taína <1511—2011>*
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by
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Finding an appropriate text for my thesis in the Translation Program was difficult, but I am pleased to present a translation of three papers found in *5to centenario de la Rebelión Taína <1511–2011>*, published by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. I was aware of the word-count limit and was unsure whether it would be acceptable to translate only a portion of the selected text instead of the whole, but once I was notified it had been accepted, I decided to choose the parts of the text which I believed to be the most important, using the *MLA Style Manual* as reference.

I chose this subject mainly because of a family belief that we are of Taíno ancestry and because I am passionate about history and archaeology. I found this text to contain the kind of information that I would consider crucial to be included in history books, yet there is not much on this topic published, and the small amount that is rarely reaches the general public, let alone the history courses taught in schools. It is my belief that educators in Puerto Rico give children too little information about what is considered a third of our ancestry, focusing instead on the rich European conquerors and the tortured African slaves, while almost completely ignoring our indigenous culture. Taíno heritage is pushed to the side because of the false belief that is taught in our educational system: that the Taíno disappeared completely and the only connections we have to them are the *mestizo* and *criollo*. This text provides evidence that this way of thinking is incorrect, based on archaeological finds, historical records, and modern research.

The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture is highly respected, and this publication is the result of years, even decades, of study and research. The author of the first paper, “La rebelion taína, crónica de una guerra negada,” is archaeologist Miguel Rodríguez López,

vice-chancellor of the Center for Advanced Studies of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. He criticizes the poor representation Taíno culture has in Puerto Rico and states that it is the result of misinformation passed down through the centuries by biased European chroniclers.

The next paper, “Théodore de Bry: La imagen gráfica del taíno y la crítica a la conquista española,” was written by Dr. Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, president of the Fundación Cultural Educativa, Inc. (Educational Cultural Foundation, Inc.) and author of various books dealing with Taíno culture. What caught my attention about this paper were the passages from Bartolomé de las Casas’ *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (*A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*) that accompany the engravings done by de Bry. De las Casas’ work, in addition to de Bry’s art, makes for an astonishing, impactful message, one in which the cruel and inhuman treatment suffered by the Taínos at the hands of the Spaniards is brought to life.

The final paper is “Quinientos años de resistencia boricua” by Dr. Juan Manuel Delgado, a professor at the Center for Advanced Studies on Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. His research, which began in the 1970s, has produced numerous extraordinary discoveries, including accounts that support the belief that the Taínos continued their way of life, adapting to the inevitable changes created by time, surviving the Inquisition brought down on their culture by the Catholic Church.

As I was reading the text for the first time, I felt overwhelmed by the number of quotations, names, and words that would require extensive research. I also wished to transmit the style of each author in his respective essay, to keep the unique voice each one possessed. I admit the thought of choosing an easier text was tempting, but I was

determined to make *5to centenario de la Rebelión Taína <1511—2011>* my thesis project.

As always, the first step was the hardest, but once I became more involved, the work became almost enjoyable, and the amount of information and knowledge I have gathered from it has been its own reward. It would be wonderful if others could benefit from this text, and I believe an English translation might help, if only a little. The educational system in Puerto Rico does not value our Taíno heritage because of lack of knowledge, since the amount of time given to its study is very limited. Most of Taíno history is usually covered during elementary school only. After that, Puerto Rican history is taught almost exclusively from mid-eighteenth century until the present date, providing just a passing glance at the Spanish colonization until reaching the Spanish-American War in 1898. By then, the Taínos have long since been forgotten, creating the impression that they had been completely exterminated. Texts such as this one are needed to stop that trend, and to teach Puerto Ricans that part of their ancestry, one they consider dead, is still alive.

A translation of this text not only can benefit future generations of Puerto Ricans, and in that way foment our cultural pride, but also can be of assistance in future research and studies. Nowadays, investigations about the first human migratory routes are increasing in number, and English translations of studies about the Taíno culture and their known history will be of great help in the research to map the migratory routes of the first inhabitants of the American continent. An English translation can also help in sharing information among other professionals.

Although I am passionate about this subject, my knowledge about it is not great, which made the process of translation interesting. There were several times when I doubted what I was reading for the simple reason of having been taught differently. Fortunately, Dr. Robiou has written several books on the Taínos, and I spent a good amount of time simply reading what other scholars had written on the subject. Following the example of Dr. Delgado, I did my own research concerning Taíno practices, interviewing relatives who had been born and reared in Orocovis. Their knowledge of local plants, traditions, and history was a great contribution, confirming much of what Dr. Delgado writes. One of my aunts has a collection of Taíno relics, carved stones, and tools, all of them certified as authentic, which she found while constructing her house, mere minutes away from where she had lived all her life on my grandparents' farm. Both of my grandparents were born in the area, and their parents as well. Talking to family friends in Orocovis who had also come from generations of *jíbaros*, I found they all confirmed the claims as well. At that point, all my doubts about continuing with this text vanished. I confronted all obstacles this project brought and enjoyed doing it.

The first obstacle presented itself in the form of a quotation from a history book written in 1947. I believed it would be simple just to find the translated version that existed, but the only English copy was located in the library of the La Trobe University, in Australia. I decided it would be easier to contact the publishing house, Rand McNally, but unfortunately they had lost all rights and track of the text, since they are no longer in the book business. My only hope being on the other side of the world, I contacted the university for a book loan or a scan of the four sentences I needed translated. I was ecstatic when the reply arrived, but my joy was quickly extinguished when they informed

me that no English edition existed; it was an error in the catalog. I had to create my own translation, which for some reason terrified me at the time. Thankfully, the sentences were quite short and simple. The only problem I encountered was the spelling of “Agüeybaná” as “Güaybaná,” which I believe is a typing error, since “Güeybaná” was the name he was given at birth, according to historical records of Fray Ramón Pané.

I constantly struggle with overly literal translations and the fear of changing even the smallest detail. I kept wondering what would make more sense for an English speaker, a school child, or anyone that was not knowledgeable on the subject. I was continually searching for phrases, words, and expressions that would deliver the message I was trying to send.

I knew the greatest difficulty would be the vocabulary. Right at the very beginning, exactly the fourth word of the first sentence, I was stuck. It had not crossed my mind how to translate *ponencia*. At first, I thought that what I was reading was a text that, originally, had been given orally. In that case, it would have made sense to refer to it as “presentation” or “essay,” but then “report” and “paper” came to mind. Searching in the dictionaries of *Merriam Webster* and the *Real Academia Española*, I looked for the different meanings offered, and contrasted one with the other. “Presentation” started to lose its appeal, since it is “the act of presenting; a symbol or image that represents something” rather than reading. “Paper” was “a formal written composition often designed for publication and often intended to be read aloud” and “report” meant “an account or statement describing in detail an event, situation, or the like, usually as the result of observation, inquiry, etc.” “Essay” was “a short literary composition on a particular theme or subject, usually in prose and generally analytic, speculative, or

interpretative.” It was after one of the many revisions on the translation that I noticed that the first author refers to his work as a “written presentation.” Taking this into consideration, and given the nature of the text and the public which I wished to reach, “paper” seemed like the correct choice.

Another struggle was with the word *indio*. Historically, I have heard and read the Spanish conquerors, or “conquistadors” as they are sometimes called, being referred to as “Spaniards,” and there are no controversial arguments about it. *Indio* is completely different. I refuse to call Taínos “Indians,” because I am aware of the difference and the story of why “Indian” was the term chosen to refer to the indigenes of America. Calling them “native” could be considered a safe choice since, etymologically, “native” comes from the Latin *natus*, which means “birth.” But there precisely lies the problem, since “a native” could be anyone of any place born in Puerto Rico. By that definition, children born of Spanish women in Puerto Rico could be called “native.” “Aboriginal,” meaning “origin, the very first,” seemed like the correct term, but it is so attached to the inhabitants of Australia that the probability of confusion and misinterpretation was too high. The term “indigene” is etymologically synonymous with “native,” but with the connotation of “primitive inhabitant of the land.” According to the Center for World Indigenous Studies, it is an accepted term within aboriginal communities, and one of my goals is to respectfully represent Taíno and other indigenous cultures. This would mean that “indigene” and its different versions would appear too often, as they would substitute for both *indio* and *nativo*, in addition to the times *indígena* is used. Since this text is about the Taíno Rebellion, it would seem reasonable to add “Taíno,” to vary the vocabulary.

“Indian” would be used only when it is referred to in quotes, be they spoken or written in documented reports, or when I wished to convey the speaker’s tone and style.

When it came to Taíno names and words, I decided to keep the original term, italicized, followed by an English translation or explanation when it seemed proper. This way, the reader could gain knowledge of the culture without having to do his own research on terms, unless looking for a more detailed explanation. Many of these terms have an English equivalent; for example, *batata* is “yam,” while others are known by a variation on their indigenous names, such as *yuca*, which is known as “cassava.” On page 102 of the source text, one of the notes given by the author lists several tubers with their Taíno names, and I kept them as they were, with an English equivalent for each of them. For *marunguey* and *mapuey* the scientific name and an explanation are given, since they do not have a common term in English. Given the number of words and names that I believed would require additional information, I made a glossary, which was quite helpful during the translation process, using *La Real Academia Española*, Merriam Webster, the Center for World Indigenous Studies, *Vocabulario puertorriqueño*, *Diccionario de mitología universal*, *Diccionario de voces coloquiales*, *Mitos del pueblo taíno*, *The Taíno Term*, and *The Taíno in 1492* as references.

Thankfully, there was not much vocabulary specific to archaeology or any other related field. It was a different story when it came to translating passages from de las Casas. His original work is dated 1552 and dedicated to the future King Phillip of Spain, so his vocabulary is rather archaic, which would mean the earliest translations would be as well. There are numerous English versions of his work, some with a more modern vocabulary than others. At the beginning, I wanted to maintain the historical atmosphere

by using a translation that would fit in with the time, but the vocabulary was so in disuse and uncommon today that some information could be lost. I decided to look for a translation that kept some of its original style, but with a more modern vocabulary. The problem was that these translations had additional phrases not found in the original text, and I wondered which one was correct. Among the numerous Spanish versions I could find, none had these phrases, which led me to believe that an early English translation which added these was used as the source text for posterior English editions, preserving them until this date. Fortunately, I discovered the translation of Nigel Griffin from 1992, which I found to be the most faithful English version I have read of de las Casas' work and that contained the vocabulary for which I was searching.

I knew quotations would be difficult. During the translation of the first paper, I encountered several quotations that were not identified, and so I could not locate them. For those, I changed the quotation format, be they italicized or with quotation marks, and made them look like part of the text, keeping the explanation that those words were not mine, but from someone else. An example appears on page 13 of the source text: “De su propio puño Oviedo nos advierte que el propósito principal de su vasta producción escrita era: *el recontar los méritos de los conquistadores de estas partes.*” This was translated as, “In his own hand, Oviedo informs us that the main purpose of his written production was to recount the merits of the conquerors from those parts.” This way, the message is not lost or affected, while Oviedo is given credit for his words. For Elliot's quote on page 30 of the source text, the Spanish version of the book was unavailable, and the title of the essay was not stated and therefore, the translation is my own.

The rest of the quotations were from the people interviewed by Dr. Delgado, which were never translated because there was no need, so I was free to do so. This could also apply to the times he mentioned political parties from colonial times, since they had disappeared or lost importance by the time the United States took over the island. During this process my initial fear of translating quotations arose. I was still hesitant to change what was stated and found myself doing translations that were too literal. This was the case when it came to places, since it is possible that many English-speakers are unfamiliar with the Caribbean area and names. For the island of La Española, in English called “Hispaniola,” and the island of San Juan (after St. John the Baptist) and its indigenous name Boriquén, I identified them as Spanish colonies when their most common names are not used. Tierra Firme, which in the earlier maps represented the Caribbean coast in Central and South America, is also identified as Spanish territory. This way, knowledge is gained without interrupting the reading, still staying faithful to the source text. These names are also included in the glossary for further information.

I noticed that the first two papers were much more difficult to translate than the last one, which I believed would be the hardest, since its word-count is higher than the first two combined and the amount of documentation was greater. It turned out that it was the opposite. While I struggled with my fear of changing the author’s voice unintentionally at the beginning, it became much easier as time passed and the translation progressed. I noticed that the draft of the last paper elicited a small fraction of comments and questions from my advisor compared to the first two, where I second-guessed every other sentence. I was becoming more comfortable with the text and the translation. Searching terms became easier, and I was not as hesitant to change some aspects of the

original as I was at the beginning. This in no way means that I have conquered that fear, but I have improved. I also noticed that since I was translating in a more natural, relaxed way, words and phrases that had once given me a hard time were not as difficult. There were many instances when the first words that came to mind sounded better than the ones for which I had spent much time searching before, and I decided to keep them and change the ones I had used.

Throughout the source text, I noticed several grammatical errors, some of which made me question the term. For example, I was not sure whether one of the tubers listed by its Taíno name was written correctly, since the way I found it spelled varied. According to various books and articles on Puerto Rican and Central and South American plants, *amaranta* appears as a female proper name, since it is a flower, and the little information I could find about the plant mentions that it does not grow in Puerto Rico, but I did find the tuber *maranta*, also known as “West Indian arrowroot,” native to tropical climates. Another option could be *amaranto* or “amaranth,” cultivated by indigenous people in America since pre-colonial times. My family had never heard of *amaranta*, but they knew of *maranta* and *amaranto*. One crossed out, I kept searching. *Marata* would have the same use as lettuce or spinach, while *amaranto* was used as a grain. Figuring a visual aid would help, I showed my mother a picture of both plants, and she immediately recognized *amaranto*, saying it was very common in Orocovis when she was a child and that it could still be found. This research was necessary, since the author of the essay did not reply to my request for further clarification.

Something similar happened with a sentence on page 92 of the source text. It mentions St. Patrick being proclaimed “protector of the cassava” by our local Catholic

Church. I found this hilarious and simply not realistic. That was a mistake or a joke, I was sure. To my surprise, it is a fact. According to David Ungerleider in his book *Las fiestas de Santiago Apostol en Loíza*, from all the names of saints to randomly choose from a box, St. Patrick's was picked the three times they tried. Considering that a miracle, the people found the protector of the cassava they desperately needed to end a plague. In the end, it was an enjoyable experience, and I gained knowledge in searching terms and verifying the authenticity of facts.

Despite some difficult times, I enjoyed the work. It is much easier to dedicate long hours of research and study to a subject about which you are passionate, since looking for information stops feeling like an obligation to complete the work and instead becomes a quest, where you learn all new bits of information which make you enjoy your work and the subject even more. I am grateful I got to translate such an amazing and interesting text. It has also helped me with my translation practice, and I would gladly accept translating the rest of the papers if the Institute should ask me to do so, if only to have more time to learn about my culture and to help others do so as well.

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I would like to dedicate this work to my family, who were, and still are, my inspiration in everything I do. I express my gratitude to my advisor, Charlotte Ward, for her guidance and assistance in this work. I would also like to thank all who corroborated in the publication of *5to centenario de la Rebelión Taína <1511—2011>* and made gaining such knowledge possible.

I also thank Anelix Díaz and César Caballero, who became my main reasons for joining the Translation Program and continuing my studies. They inspired and pushed me into this wonderful world.

GLOSSARY

Spanish	English
Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia	History Academy of Puerto Rico
Agüeybaná el Bravo	Agüeybaná the Brave (chief of a tribe of Taínos in Puerto Rico)
alabarda	halberd; two-handed pole weapon
amaranto	amaranth or purpleheart, also crimson-colored
Anacaona	Anacaona (chief of a tribe of Taínos in Hispaniola)
Antillas Menores	Lesser Antilles
arcabus	harquebus (gun supported on a tripod)
areíto	ceremonial dance
ballesta	crossbow
Batalla de Yahueca	Battle of Yahueca
batata	yam
batey	ceremonial plaza
boricua	from Boriquén
Boriquén	Boriquén, also spelled Borinquen (indigenous name of Puerto Rico)
burunquena	Taíno name for a species of crab
cabalgadas	cavalry raids
cachacos	Spanish and Creole people
cacique	chief
cañón	cannon
caribes	Caribs (indigenous group of the Caribbean)
cayuco	Taíno canoe
ceiba	ceiba tree or kapok tree
cemí	spiritual amulet or object
Centro Cultural de Cayacól	Cayacól Cultural Center
Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe	Center for Advanced Studies on Puerto Rico and the Caribbean
Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de la Universidad de Puerto Rico	Historical Research Center of the University of Puerto Rico
cibao	stone
cibuco	Cibuco (a tribe of Taínos in Puerto Rico)
conuco	plot of land
criollo	Criollo or Creole, person born in the American continent with European ancestry
dardo	dart
diente de pala	shovel tooth
en guasábara montuna	(local expression) fight in the open

endogamia	endogamy, reproduction within a small group
entradas	charges
espindarga	long-barreled musket
Fundación Cultural Educativa, Inc.	Fundación Cultural Educativa, Inc. (Educational Cultural Foundation, Inc.)
gentilicio	demonym or gentilic, a noun or adjective that denotes ethnic or national affiliation
Grito de Lares	Cry of Lares (political independence movement celebrated as a holiday in Puerto Rico on September 23)
guábara	Taíno name for a species of shrimp
guanín	medallion
guasábara	warlike encounters
gunda	air potato
hacha	axe
Hacienda Real	Royal Treasury
Hatuey	Hatuey (chief of a tribe of Taínos in Cuba)
horquilla	gun rest
indígena	indigene
indio	Indian (preferred term is “indigene”)
indoamericano	Indo American (a member of any of the aboriginal peoples of the western hemisphere except often the Eskimos)
Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña	Institute of Puerto Rican Culture
Isla de Mona/La Mona	Isla de Mona/La Mona (small island part of the Puerto Rican archipelago off the west coast)
Isla de San Juan Bautista	Island of San Juan Bautista (John the Baptist/Spanish name for the island of Puerto Rico during the colonization)
jíbaro	country person from the interior of Puerto Rico
Juan Ponce de León	Juan Ponce de León (first Spain-appointed governor of Puerto Rico)
La Española	Hispaniola (name of the island made up of Haiti and the Dominican Republic)
ladino	Ladino (European indigene group)
lanza	spear, lance
Las Indias	Indies (refers to the West Indies)
lerén	Guinea arrowroot
Leyenda Negra	Black Legend; term indicating an unfavorable image of Spain and Spaniards, accusing them of cruelty and intolerance

mapuey	<i>Dioscorea trifida</i> , a species of yam
maravedí	Spanish monetary unit during the colonial era
marunguey	<i>Zamia amblyphyllidia</i> , a species of seed plant
mecha	fuse
mestizo	mestizo or mixed race
naboria	Taínos in the service of the cacique
nagua	white-cloth sashes
pardo	tri-racial (in this case: European, African and indigenous)
Partido de la Negritud Puertorriqueña	Puerto Rican Negritude Party
Partido de Puerto Rico	Puerto Rican Party
Partido de San Germán	San Germán Party
Partido Indigenista Puertorriqueño	Puerto Rican Indigenist Party
Partido Peninsular Deificado	Exalted Peninsular Party
Península	Peninsula (refers to the Spanish Peninsula)
peto	breastplate
provanza	deposition (process of giving sworn evidence)
República Boricua	Boricua Republic
soldado con armadura	armored soldier
taíno	Taíno
Tierra Firme	Tierra Firme (landmasses surrounding the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico)
topónimo	toponym, general name for any place or geographical entity
Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras	University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus
yautía	yautía, also known as taro
yuca	cassava

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