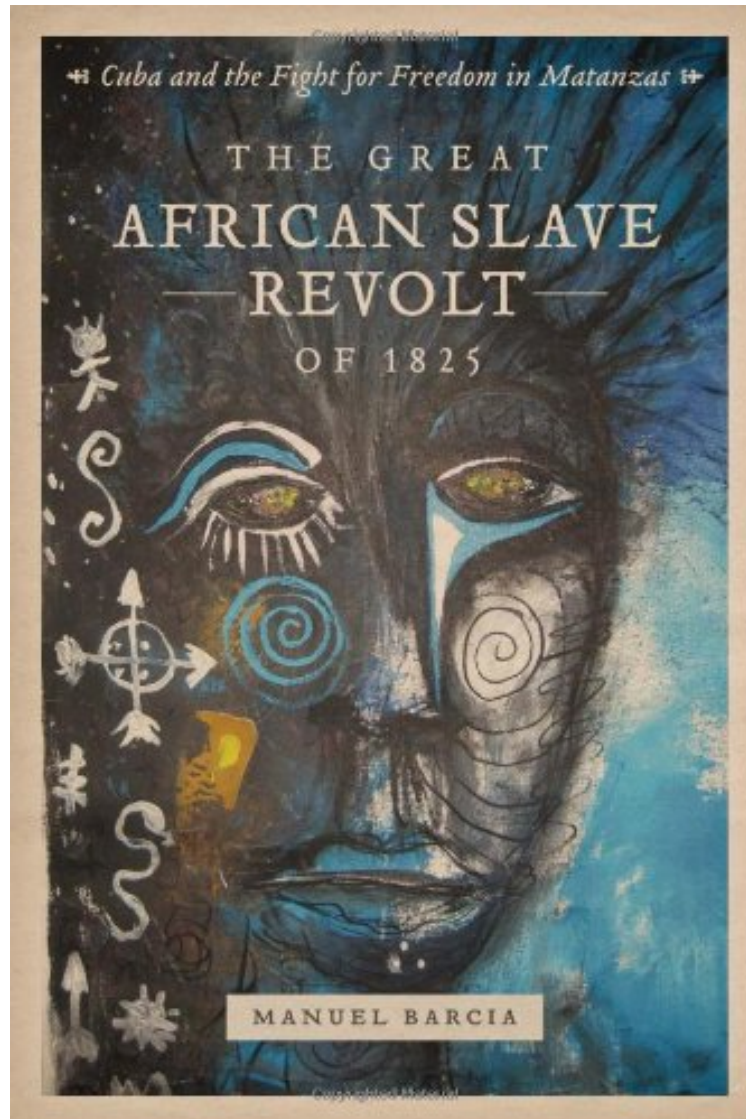


(Read free) The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825: Cuba and the Fight for Freedom in Matanzas

# The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825: Cuba and the Fight for Freedom in Matanzas

Manuel Barcia

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**Manuel Barcia : The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825: Cuba and the Fight for Freedom in Matanzas** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825: Cuba and the Fight for Freedom in Matanzas:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Fantastic Read!By RDDManuel Barcia writes, The African-led insurrection of June 1825 was a local event whose cast came from every corner of the Atlantic world. Conflicts in

Africa, the Haitian Revolution, and the international coffee market all influenced the Revolt of 1825. Writing of the slaves actions in the Revolt, Barcia writes, Their knowledge of war had been obtained from constant and deep conflicts between different peoples of Africa south of the Sahara at the turn of the nineteenth century, so that their tactics evoked African traditions rather than Spanish. Following the crash of the worldwide coffee market, coffee plantations vanished from the plains while sugar-cane fields took over the countryside. The redistribution of land that occurred as a result of the coffee crisis also led to an increase in the number of slaves in the area. In an environment with economic, cultural, and even military ties to other Atlantic islands and nations, no event was entirely domestic. Discussing the connections of West Africa to the slaves living in Cuba, Barcia writes, The kinship ties and affinity between slaves is apparent from the entries of slave purchases found in the notary registry of Matanzas. These relationships of solidarity and kinship constituted one of the pillars upon which the movement was based. In The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba, Matt Childs discussed a more flexible nature of African identity, one in which enslaved and free Africans first felt loyalty to ethnic groups and only later to other African peoples. Barcia acknowledges Childs work at the beginning of his book and references the Aponte Rebellion in the framework of Spanish and Creole fears of slave uprisings. Though Childs argued that all of Cuba functioned as an integrated political unit, Barcia argues that Western Cuba had greater ties to Louisiana, the East Coast of the United States, and, to a lesser degree, the even younger neighboring nation of Haiti. These two findings do not necessarily conflict, as they refer to events thirteen years apart and in different parts of the island. They may, however, represent the work of historians who, in focusing on one topic, had to limit their discussion of others or spending half a monograph discussing how all the events connected to each other. Both Barcia and Childs discuss events that occurred at a time when Spanish and Creole Cubans were nervously anticipating a slave revolt. Both historians focus on the impact that increases in the slave trade had on shifting the islands demographic. Additionally, both demonstrate how the initial connections that linked the participants in these slave revolts trace their origins to Africa, showing how ethnic and communal links persevered in the face of Atlantic slavery. Childs description of cabildos de nacin as representative bodies for African nations by providing political and administrative services reflects Barcias conclusion that the events of 1825 in Guamacaro can in fact be considered an extension of West African warfare in a New World setting. Both historians have found ways in which slaves carved out spaces in which to form their own identities. Finally, after the rebellions/revolts, both Barica and Childs demonstrate that colonial authorities sought to quickly allay the fears of the Spanish and Creole Cubans, either by ascribing blame for the entire rebellion to Aponte or, in the case of Captain General Vives, blaming the Matanzas revolt on international forces attempting to thwart Spanish rule. In neither case did colonial authorities consider that they were to blame for what happened.

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In June 1825 the Cuban countryside witnessed a large African-led slave rebellion -- a revolt that began a cycle of slave uprisings lasting until the mid-1840s. The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825 examines this movement and its participants for the first time, highlighting the significance of African warriors in New World plantation society. Unlike previous slave revolts -- led by alliances between free people of color and slaves, blacks and mulattoes, Africans and Creoles, and rural and urban populations -- only African-born men organized the uprising of 1825. From this year onwards, Barcia argues, slave uprisings in Cuba underwent a phase of Africanization that concluded only in the mid-1840s with the conspiracy of La Escalera, a large movement organized by free colored men with ample participation of the slave population. The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825 offers a detailed examination of the sociopolitical and economic background of the Matanzas rebellion, both locally and colonially. Based on extensive primary sources, particularly court records, the study provides a microhistorical analysis of the days that preceded this event, the uprising itself, and the days and months that followed. Barcia gives the Great African Revolt of 1825 its rightful place in the history of slavery in Cuba, the Caribbean, and the Americas.

"This is an outstanding work that fills a void in the scholarship of a major revolt with important consequences for the study of Cuban slavery." --The Americas  
About the Author  
Manuel Barcia is a senior lecturer in Latin American studies at the University of Leeds. He is also an Honorary Fellow at the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull, and the author of *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808--1848*.