



Dissecting colonial architecture: The typology of the Curaçaoan plantation

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Introduction

The colourful large mansions scattered throughout the island of Curaçao currently function as villas, vacation homes, offices or even diving schools, but they were not built for that purpose. Build by the Dutch settlers from 1634 onward, these *landhuizen* were part of the architecture found on the plantation and were the homes of the plantation owners. However, this was not the only architecture found on the plantations. The majority of the people living on the plantation were enslaved people living in hut-like structures. The architecture on the plantation formed a new typology, partly originating from Dutch architecture and adapted to the warm Caribbean climate and partly built by enslaved people from Africa, constructed with traditional West-African style and method adapted to the climate and materials found on Curaçao.¹ However, only part of that history, the *landhuizen*, is preserved and valued within the modern-day cultural heritage. The other elements of the plantation have seemed to vanish in the new post-colonial landscape. This thesis looks at the history of Curaçao from its declaration as a Dutch colony in 1634 onward. It focuses on the image and architecture of the plantation from that point until the current time.

The main question being answered in this thesis is: What was the typology of the Curaçaoan plantation, and how is it now represented in the island's cultural heritage? This thesis explores the original spacial layout of the plantation and the architecture that came with it. It investigates the redevelopment of this architecture as the plantations become unused, the enslaved people become free, and thus the land abandoned. Furthermore, it looks into how this architecture born out of centuries of oppression is currently viewed as culturally valuable.

Literature and architectural analysis done on the architecture found on the plantation is mainly focused on, or even only about, the *landhuizen*. This thesis focuses on putting these *landhuizen* in the historical and spatial framework from which they originated by focussing on the plantation landscape in combination with the architecture. In addition, it critically investigates the current cultural image of the plantations and the architecture within modern society. These are both segments currently missing within the literature.

This question will be answered by literary and archival research picturing the history and trajectory of the plantations on Curaçao. Literary sources that have been used for the research about the history and architecture are *Historic Architecture of the Caribbean*, written by David Buisseret and *Curaçao: Van Kolonie tot Autonomie* by Johan Hartog. These sources have formed the basis for the historical research of the island. The two articles written by David Koren about the plantation landscape on Curaçao, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang' and 'Slavernijverleden werpt schaduw vooruit' and the *The Werbata maps: topografische kaart van Curaçao* maps drawn by Johannes Werbata in 1911 have been used to understand the developments and history of the plantation landscape. And lastly the book *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire* written by Dolf Huijgers and Lucky Ezechiëls is used to gain insight into the architecture of the *landhuizen*.

Research about the cultural image and redevelopment of the plantations has been done by collecting online data about the plantations and *landhuizen* on Curaçao. The software Palladio has been used to map and analyse this data.

The first chapter of this thesis dives into the historical context of Curaçao. It explores the development of the plantations and slavery in the early years of the Dutch settlement on the island. Further, it examines the history of the 19th century on the island, when emancipation took place and how this affected society.

1 Gill, Ronald. 'De architectuur en stedenbouw in de West-Indische archipel. Een verkenning vanuit Curaçao'. *Bulletin KNOB*, 1 March 1993, 7-13. <https://doi.org/10.7480/knob.92.1993.1-2.496>.

Chapter two explores the development of the architecture on Curaçao, how it came about and what influenced it. More particularly, it investigated the architecture found on the plantation, the landhuizen, the settlements of the enslaved people and the structures and elements needed for agriculture and livestock.

A case study is done on four plantations found on Curaçao in chapter three. The plantations analysed are plantation Ascencion, Groot Santa Marta, San Juan and Savonet. These plantations have been chosen as these are some of the oldest and most significant on the island, featuring elaborate architecture and have been well maintained over the years. By using old photographs and the old Werbata maps, the landscape and architecture of these plantations are analysed.

The last chapter, chapter four, analyses the modern-day image and the heritage of the plantation. The collected data about the landhuizen is used to critically look at the cultural heritage and redevelopment of the buildings and landscape.

Chapter 1:

The history and development of Curaçao

This chapter focuses on the history of Curaçao after the Dutch conquered the island from Spain in 1634. In this chapter, the history of Curaçao is explained. The focus lies on the progression of slavery and the developments of plantations throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

1.1 The early years of the Dutch settlements on Curaçao

Dutch explorers captured the island from the Spaniards after an ongoing conflict between the two nations.² The Dutch explorers, represented by the West-Indische Compagnie (WIC), had interests on the coast of South America and the Caribbean islands but lacked a maritime support point. The island seemed an appropriate gateway against the Spaniards.

Curaçao was developed initially as a naval base that allowed passing ships from Brazil to resupply and carry out repairs.³ One of the earliest settlements established on the island by the Dutch was a defence triangle, which consisted of a fort on the Punt (Punda), a camp at the Vijgeboom and a fortress on St. Barbara Bay. Over the next few years, Curaçao functioned as a gateway to the Eighty Years' War against Spain. In 1648 the Peace of Munster ended the war with Spain and thus ended the role of Curaçao as a maritime base.

It is unclear how many residents were initially living on Curaçao, but the numbers reported indicate there were about 32 Spaniards and 415 native inhabitants.⁴ Three hundred forty of the native inhabitants were evacuated by the Dutch, leaving 75 on the island. All of them lived in huts in the village of St. Anna and Ascencion. When the Spanish discovered the island, the number of native inhabitants was said to be a lot higher, around 6000.⁵ Many of them were abused by the Spaniards by being put in enslavement and shipped to Spain. The native inhabitants were related to two tribes that could be found in what is now the country of Venezuela. Curaçao lies just 75 kilometres from the shore of Venezuela.

The development of the plantations

The Compagnie founded the first plantations on Curaçao. Around 1700 the Compagnie owned nine plantations.⁶ In addition to Compagnie plantations, from 1660 onward, pieces of land were also granted to private individuals. They were given as much land as needed to provide their family with food.⁷ Many of these settlers had plantation experience from Brazil. One of them was Matthias Beck. He oversaw four plantations: Klein Sint Joris, Savonet, San Juan and Santa Barbara. Many WIC directors also privately handed out land to friends and relations. These practices followed a long period of usurpation of land.

2 Hartog, Johan. *Curaçao: Van Kolonie tot Autonomie : Deel 1 (tot 1816)*. Oranjestad: D.J. de Wit, 1961, 99-143. <http://archive.org/details/BNA-DIG-HARTOG-CURACAO-NL-I>.

3 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 173-213.

4 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 114.

5 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 1-67.

6 Newton, M. A. 'Architectuur en bouwwijze van het Curaçaose landhuis.' *Monografieën van de Werkgroep Restauratie 2*, 1990. <https://repository.tudelft.nl/islandora/object/uuid%3Ac7ba3d7b-3d2d-426b-bbcb-9f09548d7ef9>.

7 Koren, David. 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang: Waarden en betekenissen van het Curaçaose plantagelandschap.' *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 5, nr. 3 (1 January 2020): 131-51. <https://doi.org/10.5117/THG2020.3.001.KORE>.



Figure 1. Development of the plantations throughout the years

Due to the dry climate, the established plantations focused on a wide range of products for cultivation. The harvest with Dutch crops such as rye and wheat seed came to nothing. Agriculture provided sufficient for daily use after planting crops native to the island, such as tobacco, maize, cassava, bananas, and sweet potatoes.⁸ The crops were mainly for their own use and for the population of the island's capital, Willemstad. Sometimes they could export the surplus, but attempts at growing cash crops such as sugar proved unsuccessful.

In the 18th century, the last of the plantations were established. Between 1660 to 1725, the whole island was divided, all available land was used as plantation grounds.⁹ There has never been a map to establish the boundaries between the land. In addition to the difficulty of the terrain, government officials were afraid for the health of the land marker. They were afraid that they would kill him, reject him or see him as a trader, probably because much land was divided with these underhand or illegal methods.

In addition to plantations for agriculture and livestock, there were also plantations for salt production and water supply.¹⁰ Two plantations that can still be recognised as water plantations are Bloemhof and Hato. At Bloemhof, the old bathhouse, the wells, basins, locks and remnants of irrigation works are still visible. This past is also still visible on Hato. The water here comes from higher rocks on the plateau and runs along the different sides. The plantation also has massive water storage.

The salt plantations were founded at bays that were turned into salt pans. Essential salt plantations were Jan Thiel and Rif Sint Marie. The salt plantations functioned by flooding the bays with water, which was then held in place with dams. Then the seawater evaporated, and the salt remained.

The development of slavery on Curaçao

The first enslaved people from Africa were brought to the island with the first exploration of the land. The enslaved people were coming from Angola.¹¹ There was a clear division in work between the different ethnic groups. Dutch militaries were used for defence labour, the native inhabitants for livestock and the African enslaved people were used for agriculture.

After 1648, Curaçao developed from a naval base to a transit port and warehouse for European goods and as a slave exchange.¹² This trade reached its peak between 1648 and the end of the seventeenth century.

8 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 205.

9 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

10 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

11 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 213.

12 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 214-252.

The enslaved people were first brought to one of the slave camps. These camps were intended as a place where the enslaved people could regain their strength after the long and gruelling sea voyage before they were sold.¹³ The landhuizen Duivelsklip, Koraal Tabak, Noordkant, Oostpunt and Zuurzak were reported to have slave camps.

The enslaved people on Curaçao rebelled twice between 1750 and 1751. The government and the authorities of the plantation were not prepared.¹⁴ The first rebellion took place on the plantation Hato, and in the following years, the situation remained restless. Rebellions broke out on various plantations and the subsequent uprising took place in 1775. Not all plantation owners adhered to the rules regarding the treatment of enslaved people imposed by the government, which became a reason for the enslaved people to revolt.

Reports of the abolishment of slavery by the National Convention of France also reached the plantations on Curaçao.¹⁵ On August 17th 1795, about 40 to 50 enslaved people denied labour on the plantation Knip. Under the charge of Tula, the leader amongst the rebelling enslaved people, the group left for St. Kruis. Revolts from this plantation joined the rebels. After a month, more than 1000 men were in revolt. After an ongoing battle and several attempts to stop the uprising, captain van Westerholt reinforced by marines and civilians, managed to get the upper hand by destroying the rebels' food storage. After this, many of them came to ask for a pardon and were willing to go back to work. Most of the rebellion leaders, including Tula, ended up being surrendered to captain van Westerhold by other enslaved.

1.2 History of the 19th century

After the Franco-Batavian alliance, many French ships entered the port.¹⁶ At the same time, the island also had to defend itself against English privateers. Curaçao got into a battle between the meddling French and the hijacking English. In 1796 war broke out between the Batavian Republic and England. The English eventually gained control of the island and two time periods of English power broke out, the first one lasting from 1800 to 1803 and the second from 1806 until 1814. Due to a ban on the import and export of enslaved people within British colonies, the export of enslaved people from Curaçao briefly ended in 1812.

Slavery and emancipation in the 19th century

In 1821 the ban on importing enslaved people into Dutch colonies was also applied, but the export of enslaved people from Curaçao continued for a long time.¹⁷

After several attempts, the bill to abolish slavery was come to force on July 1st 1863. In total, 6684 enslaved people on the island were given their freedom.¹⁸ The emancipation proceeded without any uproar, and the plantations on Curaçao were not affected economically by emancipation. The economic resection had already taken place under British rule. Many of the new free population moved to the island's east, but some chose to stay with the plantation owners. They were given a small piece of land and continued to work on the plantation. Subsequent generations continued to inherit this land, and until 1948 the descendants could be found on this land.

13 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 448.

14 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 307-309

15 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 324-329.

16 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 468.

17 Hartog, Johan. *Curaçao: From Colonial Dependence Tot Autonomy*. Aruba: De Wit, 1968, 180-189
<http://archive.org/details/BNA-DIG-HARTOG-CURACAO-EN>.

18 Hartog, Johan. *Curaçao: From Colonial Dependence Tot Autonomy*, 184.

Emancipation Day was celebrated a few years after the abolition, after 20, 25 and fifty years.¹⁹ However, in 1933, the celebrations were banned, and in 1938 not a single Antillean newspaper thought it necessary to dwell on the abolition of slavery.

It seemed as if no one wanted to remember this aspect of history for a long time. In 1960, the government organised a committee to remember 100 years since the emancipation through a festival and a monument. Nevertheless, these plans were ultimately not carried out because the population had little interest.

1.3 Conclusion

When diving into the history and development of Curaçao and the plantation landscape, it becomes clear that the plantation and the landhuizen are deeply rooted within slavery. After the need for a maritime base disappeared, the island was thriving of exchanging goods and, disturbingly, enslaved people. The economic model within the island also heavily relied on the work of the enslaved people. They ensured the maintenance of the crops and livestock for the island's inhabitants.

After years of rebellion, emancipation brought little freedom to the newly freed people, as many continued working on the same plantations. As time went on after the emancipation, less attention was brought to the remembrance of the subject of slavery.

19 Hartog, Johan. *Curaçao: From Colonial Dependence Tot Autonomy*, 184.

Chapter 2:

The architecture of the plantation

The landhuis, also known as *kas di shon*, is the most recognisable part of the plantation landscape, a beautifully restored house situated on a hilltop image that provides a beautiful picture for visitors.²⁰ However, the environment in which they stand tells the real story and history of the plantations where the enslaved people lived and worked. This human capital kept the island's economic model going. Because the landhuizen often overshadow the rest of the plantation's design, this chapter focuses on the architecture of the plantation as a whole.

2.1 The development of the architecture on Curaçao

Three main factors have influenced Curaçao's architecture: tradition, available materials, and the climate.²¹ The traditional aspect influenced the architecture through different cultures, and little representation was preserved from the native inhabitants. However, the Dutch settlers and the enslaved people taken from Africa started to influence the architecture appearing on the island. The materials available on the island were native hardwood, reed, palm thatch and bamboo. Soft coral limestone and earth could also be used to construct buildings. The climate creates a sunny environment, which leads to the necessity of building with sufficient shade and optimal orientation. The wind in Curaçao always comes from an eastern direction, which opens up the opportunity for natural ventilation.

The earliest structures on the islands were the huts built and inhabited by the native inhabitants.²² By looking at similar settlements on the different islands in the Caribbean and Southern America, the huts were most likely round or oval-shaped and were constructed with open-work wooden walls and a thatched roof. These were simple and small structures which is why archaeologically, they are hard to trace, and no structures have withstood the time.

The first houses the Dutch built show little adaptation to the climate on Curaçao.²³ These houses can be found in Willemstad and use traditional Dutch materials such as heavy walls and stucco. An excellent example of one of these houses is Stoomzigt, which has Dutch characteristics such as a sash and dormer, curvilinear gables and tile roofs.

20 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

21 Buisseret, David. *Historic Architecture of the Caribbean*. London ; Exeter, N.H., USA : Heinemann, 1980.
<http://archive.org/details/historicarchitec0000buis>.

22 Buisseret, *Historic Architecture of the Caribbean*.

23 Buisseret, *Historic Architecture of the Caribbean*.



Figure 2. Distribution of the landhuizen and plantations throughout the island

2.2 Architecture on the plantation

The plantations and landhuizen spread over the island during the time. Not all of the landhuizen featured a plantation. During the 18th century, many landhuizen built outside Willemstad functioned as a place of rest for the wealthy citizens. These are also known as a *buitenverblijf*.

Many of the plantations were established along the coast.²⁴ It was necessary to have a place to anchor boats for shipments nearby. In addition to that, because of the island's dry climate, water availability also determined the location.

The main building of the plantation is the landhuis. This main building housed the plantation owners and their families.²⁵ The landhuizen were surrounded by the other buildings necessary for the functioning of the plantation. These buildings included the *mangasina's*, the stone storehouses used to store products.²⁶ The livestock was held in corrals. These consisted of larger stone fences in which the life stock was held. Besides that, many outbuildings such as barns, stables, business premises, a kitchen and toilets could be found. Lastly, situated around these buildings laid the settlements of the enslaved people, often forming a little village around the main buildings.

To support agriculture and livestock, there were also drinking troughs, threshing floors, grazing areas, farmland, courtyards with fruit trees, wells, water troughs and windmills to pump water.

Landhuizen

The landhuizen were preferably built on a hilltop.²⁷ The position of the wind could thus provide the necessary cooling, and the valleys were water-bearing, so the most fertile soil could be found here. In addition, it gave the possibility to warn the other landhuizen on the hills with messages and light signals and from above, as can be seen in the valley of St. Marie.²⁸ Also, this meant the owner could better supervise workers working on the plantation below and look over the cattle in the corrals. The location of the landhuizen was also determined by where the water was available and whether a good mooring place for shipping was nearby.

The design of the first landhuizen was determined by the dominant easterly wind direction on the island and the sun's position.²⁹ This meant that the long axis of the house was often perpendicular to the east-west axis. This ensured an airflow through the house, allowing the building to cool down. The wind direction also determined the layout of the floor plan, so bedrooms were often placed on the east side and the kitchen on the west side.³⁰

24 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

25 Huijgers, Dolf, en Ezechiëls, Lucky. *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*. Amsterdam: Persimmons Management B.V., 1992.

26 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

27 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

28 Newton, 'Architectuur en bouwwijze van het Curaçaose landhuis.'

29 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 9.

30 Newton, 'Architectuur en bouwwijze van het Curaçaose landhuis.'

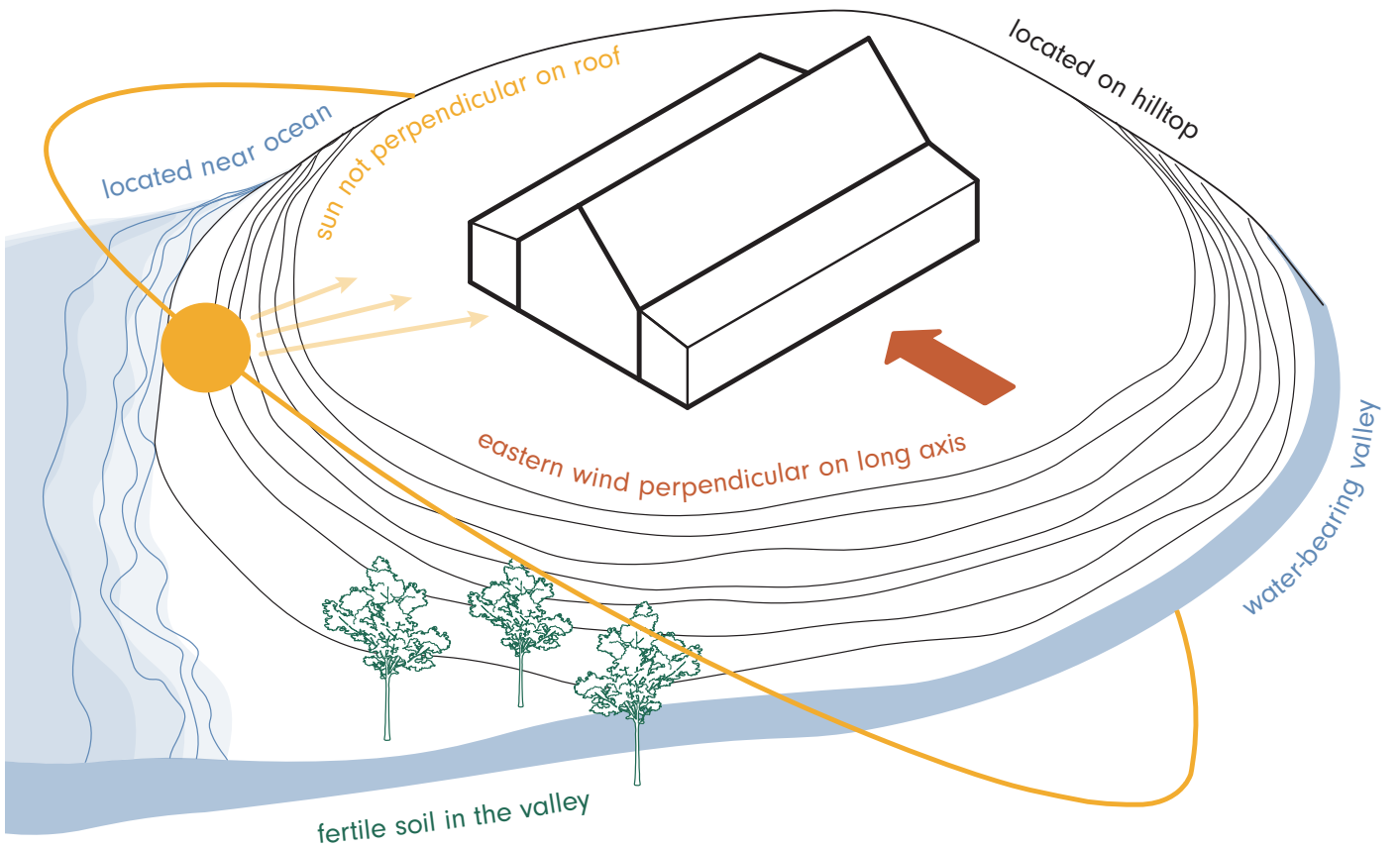


Figure 3. Design principles plantation

More important than the wind was the position of the sun on the roof, the less the sun could shine perpendicular to the roof, the better.³¹ This way, less heat could be generated under the roof.

A typical layout of the landhuis is the core, surrounded by semi-open or closed galleries built to keep out the sun and heat.³² Often these galleries ran along the length of the landhuis. The landhuizen without galleries always consist of a core, also called a block. One or two other blocks then extend this block. Another plan that often occurs is the U-shape. Some landhuizen have a combination of the aforementioned typologies. The most common roof shapes that can be seen on the landhuizen are the gable roof, hipped roof, pent roof, tent roof or a wolf roof.

The landhuizen were built with brick from the Netherlands, coral stone or rubble stone.³³ The stones were stacked with loam, diabase, sand or lime in between. The walls were plastered on the outside with lime and sand.

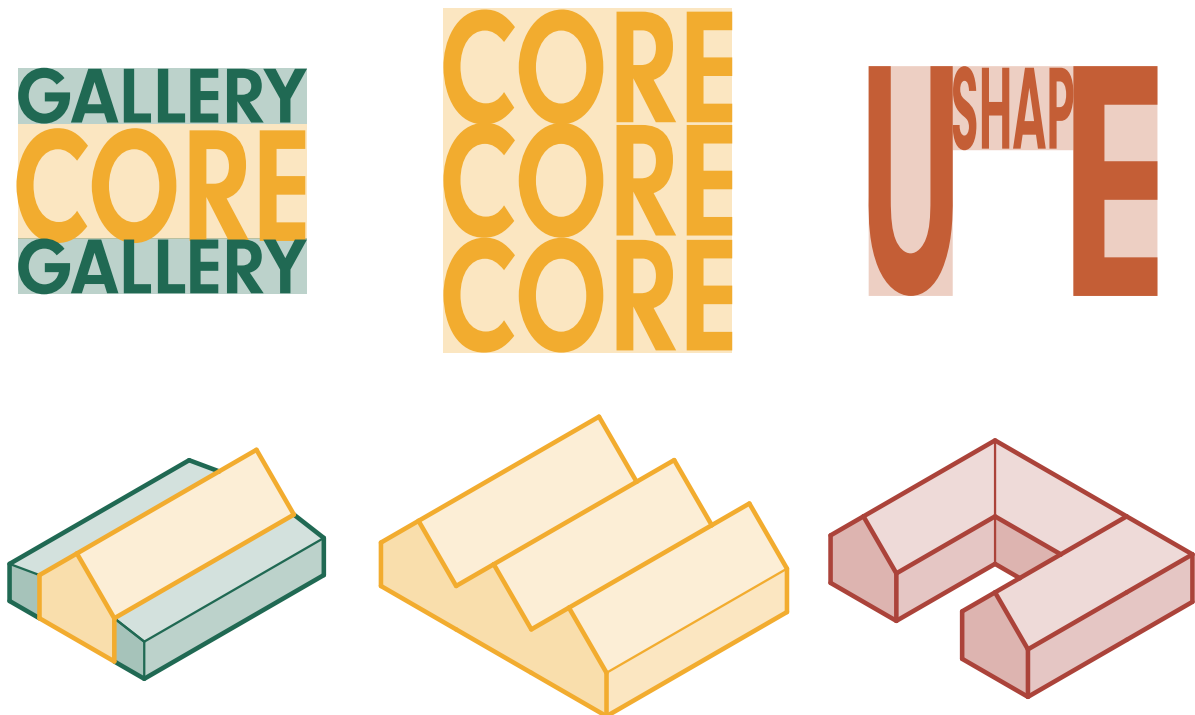


Figure 4. Typology landhuizen

31 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 9.

32 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 9.

33 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 11.

The landhuizen were initially plastered in white.³⁴ In 1817 the government forbade plastering the houses and buildings in Curaçao white. The reflection of the sun on the white houses would be blinding. Since then, the houses have been plastered with a colour, ochre yellow was preferred. However, there are several landhuizen that have changed their colour over the years.

Hofi's

The *hofi's* are small orchards located at the most water-rich location of the plantation.³⁵ Within the *hofi's* fruit trees, shrubs and palms grew. Usually, it was also the shadiest and most sheltered spot on the plantation. Here a composition of crops such as mango, papaya, banana, soursop and vegetables was grown. The harvest from the *hofi's* was also mainly for personal use and to feed the staff. Remains of the plantations of the crops can no longer be found, but there are still some of these courtyards. Often these can be recognised by the presence of palms or fruit trees or a large well that refers to the presence of water.

Traces of slavery in the plantation landscape

The painful historical event of slavery is underlined by how little the history of the enslaved can be traced in the landscape.³⁶ The settlements of the enslaved were built with rapidly decaying materials such as clay, wood and straw, and due to the small size of the houses and the shortage of corn stalks, the traditional *kas di yerba* has mostly disappeared from the island.

The walls of these houses were made of thick branches and filled with wickerwork of thinner branches, which was then filled with a clay and cow dung mixture, and the roof was made of corn stalks.³⁷ The floorplan had a rectangular shape, and the house consisted of three parts.³⁸ As shown in figure 5, the house consisted of the main building, a separate kitchen, and a walkway connecting the two called *ramanda*. Usually, the *ramanda* only consisted of a straw roof. The main building of the house was divided into two sections, a living room and a dressing room. Originally the people slept outside, and in the rain season, they would sleep in the living room.



Figure 5. Diagram floorplan kas di yerba

34 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 11.

35 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

36 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

37 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

38 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 257.

These houses were captured by the first photographers on Curaçao, Robert Soublette and his son Tito, between 1869 and 1923. By that time, slavery had already been abolished, but many continued to live on the plantations. They did not have to pay for their accommodation in exchange for work on the plantation.

These traditional dwellings were replaced by a slightly larger variant, the *kunuku*.³⁹ These were built with materials such as wood, stone or tin. The *kunukus* were the simple dwellings of the freed enslaved, mostly built after the abolition of slavery.

Some of these *kunukus* can still be found in the Curaçao landscape, but they are under pressure as people prefer to build a larger home.⁴⁰ The *kunukus* are being linked to poverty, which the people are trying to leave in the past.

Another element where the slavery past can still be seen on the plantations is the slave bell, which was used to announce the working hours.⁴¹ Often only the spot has been preserved, and the bell has disappeared, as in Knip, Zorgvlied and Fuik.

A wall of stacked stones often indicated the boundaries of the plantations.⁴² The enslaved people built these walls, so they are also known as 'slave walls.' Another used way of fencing was *trankeren*, where rows of trees and cacti form the fence. It seems that this has been taken from the native inhabitants of the island. The fences were intended to keep the cattle in or out.

Because most plantations ran along the coastline, it was sometimes impossible to reach the ocean from the connecting roads between the plantations. As a result, patrol paths were built between adjacent plantations that made it possible to reach the sea.

2.3 Conclusion

Three aspects have influenced the architecture on Curaçao: tradition, climate, and the materials available. The Dutch architecture traditions seem to have had the most significant influence out of the three. Minor adjustments to the architecture were made to accommodate the environment better, such as the galleries, the paint colour and the used materials.

The *landhuizen* were the main buildings on the plantation. They were surrounded by the other buildings that helped function the plantations, such as *mangasina's*, corrals and barns. The *kas di yerba* were usually situated around these buildings. Further away from the main buildings, the agriculture, the *hofi's*, or salt pans could be found.

The presence of the enslaved people have mostly been erased from the plantations, mainly due to the nature of the materials used. The houses that followed the *kas di yerba*, the *kunuku*, can still be found. These were the houses that the freed enslaved people lived in.

39 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teleorgang.'

40 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teleorgang.'

41 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teleorgang.'

42 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teleorgang.'

Chapter 3:

Case study of the plantation landscape

This chapter focuses on the original typology of the plantations and will do so by looking at four case studies. First, the focus will be on the redevelopment and the current use and state of the plantation landscape and the landhuizen. Afterwards, the focus will be on four chosen plantations. These four examples will be used to analyse their history, architecture, spatial plan, and how they currently function in a post-colonial society.

3.1 The plantation in the 21st century

During the 20th century, many plantations lost their agricultural function due to drought, lack of interest and knowledge among the surviving planter families, and the migration of workers to Willemstad after emancipation.⁴³ The arrival of the oil refinery also attracted many people to the city and caused a rise in the middle class. This meant that many plantations were left abandoned or re-purposed. Moreover, even before this happened, many of the plantations merged from the 19th century onward. This caused many of the secondary manors to fall into ruins. During the 20th century, many of the plantations were closed and sold. The abandonment of the plantation landscape meant the decay of the agricultural landscape, quickly turning it into an impenetrable forest named the *mondi*.

Some of the aspects of the plantations were used for new purposes. The hofi's, for example, were increasingly used for gatherings.⁴⁴ Between 1950 and 1960, some were even developed for commercial use for parties, such as the concrete dance floor at Jan Thiel. A lot of the plantation landscapes now feature hiking trails.

Not only the change in the island's economy but also the materials used for the construction have caused the architecture on the plantations to decay. Coral stone as a building material brings many problems because the material contains large amounts of salt.⁴⁵ After long periods, the saltwater left in the coral stone evaporates, leaving the salt behind. This salt dissolves the cement and other binding agents. This process starts on the inside of the wall and gradually spreads to the outside until it also dissolves the plaster. This makes the walls bulge, and eventually, the wall collapses. A solution to these problems has not yet been found. The walls are now often 'restored' by replacing them with brick or concrete blocks. The authenticity of the landhuizen suffers because of this. The famous Curaçaoan plaster of the uneven walls hereby becomes a thing of the past.

However, what exactly did this past of the plantation look like? In the further paragraphs of this chapter, the original function and layout forming the typology of the plantation will be analysed according to four case studies. The four plantation landscapes are analysed on their history, architecture, spatial plan and, lastly, their new function in a post-colonial society. The analysis of the spacial layout is based on the Werbata maps made of the island, published in 1911.

43 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

44 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

45 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*.

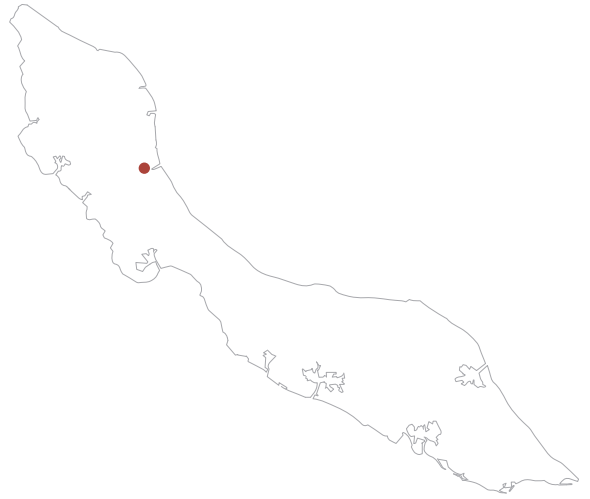


Figure 6. Location of the Ascension plantation

3.2 Ascension

The first plantation analysed is plantation Ascension, as it has been well maintained throughout the years and has a restored kunuku on the land.

History

The plantation of Ascension was established in 1672 by Jurriaan Jansz-Exteen.⁴⁶ The location of the plantation is on the old native town of Ascension. The plantation grew corn, beans, cotton, and indigo and aloe vera for a short time. The plantation had large livestock and was known to have a considerable amount of water. In the revolt on the plantation in 1795, several mangasina's were lit on fire.

Spatial plan

The exact boundaries of the plantation were never documented, but it is said to have been 490 acres large.⁴⁷ An indication of the size of the plantation is displayed by the circle in the spatial plan in figure 6.

The abundance of water on the plantation can be clearly seen in the spatial plan. Several streams of water run across the plantations, and many water wells can be found on the property. In the valley on the southeastern side of the landhuis, the hofi was located, indicating the spot where the most water on the plantation could be found. This fertile ground is also visible by the streams running through the hofi and three wells located here.

For a brief period, phosphate was extracted on a small scale on the plantation. It is unclear where exactly, but the landscape toward the ocean becomes more stone-like.

The landhuis consists of a core with galleries on four sides. It has a gable roof with a hollow kink where the gallery starts. The roof has four dormers on both sides. On either side of the terrace is a small tower with a tent roof, and the terrace has a parapet.

The landhuis is situated on a small hill within the plantation landscape, providing a clear view of the hofi's found in the southern valley. The long axis of the house reaches from the north to the south. This way, during the day, the sun shines perpendicularly on the roof for the shortest time. This ensures that the sun generates the least amount of heat underneath the roof. In addition to that, situating the landhuis perpendicular to the east-west axis ensured an airflow through the house, allowing the house to cool down naturally.

It is unusual for the kitchen to be on the eastern side of the building. Usually, the kitchens were built on the western side of the house. This way, the eastern wind could blow the fumes from the kitchen away from the house. Whereas here, they seem to be blowing into the house.

The towers on the end of the terrace have most likely been for aesthetic purposes.⁴⁸ The towers were supposed to strengthen the imposing character, and more practically, they were used as additional storage.

46 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 213.

47 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 213.

48 Newton, 'Architectuur en bouwwijze van het Curaçaose landhuis.'

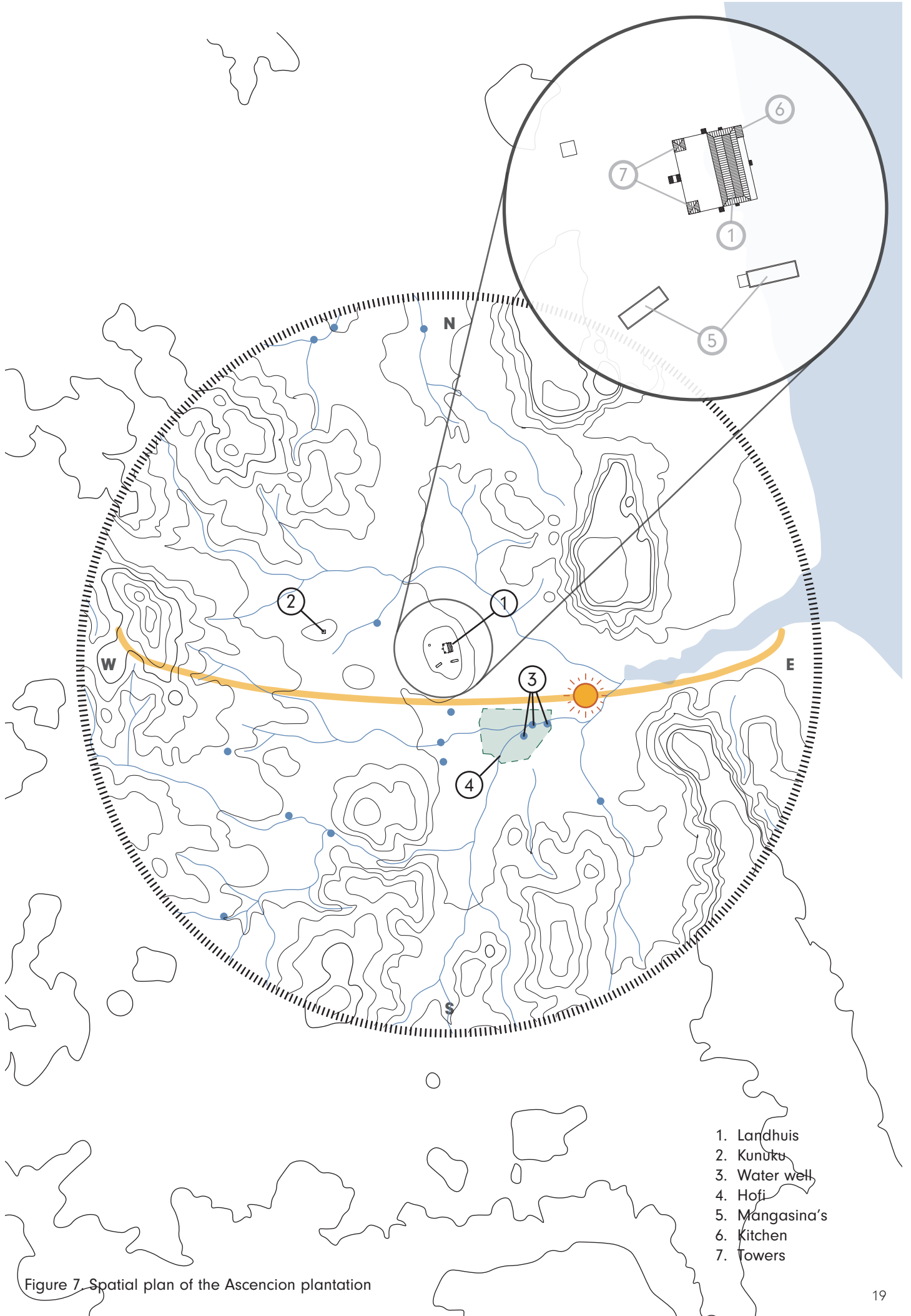


Figure 7. Spatial plan of the Ascencion plantation

There is still an old kunuku standing on the plantation, it was build around 1860 and still inhabited until 1982.⁴⁹ The land where the kunuku was built was lent to the workers.⁵⁰ They paid for it by growing vegetables and fruit on it. The kunuku and surrounding land were also fenced by cacti to keep animals away from the crops, the same way the plantations were fenced.

Current function

Currently, the landhuis and the plantation are privately owned, and function as a small museum opened once a month.⁵¹ However, according to the article 'Building on the Power of the Past', the history shown is revoked by its current function with its promotion for holiday homes and tourist activities.

In contrast, the kunuku turned museum is said to give an inside into the lives of the enslaved people. It gives insight into their day-to-day activities by focussing on how the newly freed people lived after abolishing slavery.⁵²

49 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 257.

50 Hartog, *Curaçao: Kolonie tot Autonomie*, 114.

51 'Landhuis Ascencion Curacao'. Accessed 14 April 2022.
<https://www.landhuisascencion-curacao.com/index.php/rondleiding>.

52 Hoop, Gabriella. 'Bezoek Aan Een Kunuku Huisje: Kas Di Pal'i Maishi.' *Meet Curacao* (blog), 28 April 2016.
<https://www.meetcuracao.com/bezoek-aan-een-kunuku-huisje-kas-di-pali-maishi/>.



Figure 8. Location of the Groot Santa Martha plantation

3.3 Groot Santa Martha

The second plantation chosen for the case study is the plantation of Groot Santa Martha. It is one of the most elaborate landhuizen, and archival photographs are available documenting the kas di yerba.

History

The plantation of Groot Santa Martha was registered as early as 1696. It was established by Matthias Beck, the island director at the time who owned several plantations.⁵³ The plantation grew sugar cane and had a distillery to produce molasses and rum. Besides that, the plantation had large livestock and salt pans. At the end of the 19th century, almost 90% of the salt from Curaçao came from this plantation.⁵⁴

Spatial plan

The plantation landscape is mapped in figure 9. It shows the layout of the main buildings and the settlements and the location of the agriculture.

The bay on the west side of the landhuis shows the salt pans used for salt production. Two hofi's can be identified in the landscape, a large one in the valley south of the landhuis and a smaller one on the northwestern side. The hofi's feature a majority of the water wells on the plantation.

The landhuis is situated on a hill in the landscape with a valley on the northwest and southwest side. This location gives the landhuis an excellent viewpoint over the surrounding landscape.

The landhuis consists of a U shape and a gallery along the northwest side and has a gable roof. In the 20th century, the patio was closed by a gate.⁵⁵ On the east side of the landhuis are two large mangasina's, and on the northern side lay several corrals for holding livestock.

Along the northern side of the hill on which the landhuis is built, lay the kas di yerba. A picture taken by Soubllette, shown in figure 10, somewhere between 1890 and 1920, clearly shows these settlements.

The picture shows the huts built with branches, the trankeren made from cacti and the landhuis with the surrounding buildings on top of the hill in the background.

53 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, .

54 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 251.

55 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 251.

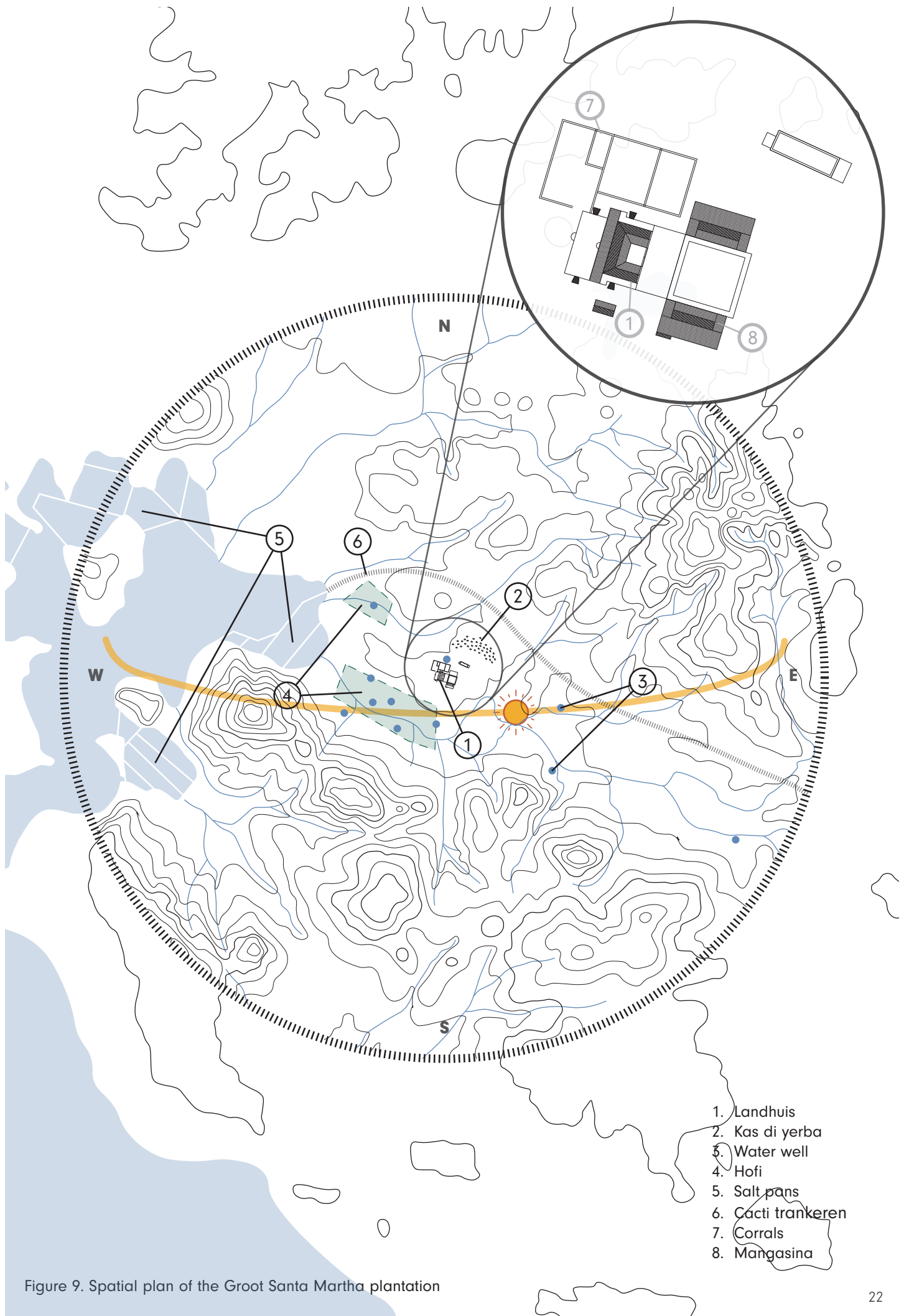


Figure 9. Spatial plan of the Groot Santa Martha plantation

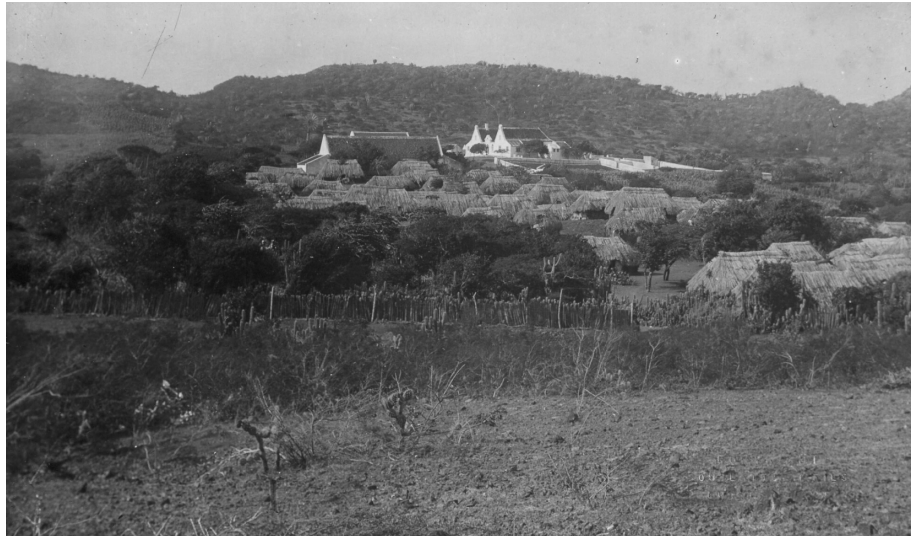


Figure 10. Photograph of Groot Santa Martha, taken between 1890-1920

Current function and heritage

The landhuis is currently owned by the government and is used as a daycare for disabled children. The other traces of the plantation are now unrecognisable in the landscape.



Figure 11. Location of the San Juan plantation

3.4 San Juan

The third plantation that is analysed is the plantation San Juan. This plantation was chosen because it is one of the oldest plantations, and the same family has owned it for over 200 years.⁵⁶ This has caused the plantation to be carefully maintained throughout the years.

History

The plantation of San Juan was established before 1662 by Matthias Beck.⁵⁷ In 1828 the plantation was named one of the most important on the island. It was owned at the time by widow M. Schotborgh, and it still belongs to this family. They grew corn, sugar cane, cotton, and indigo on the plantation of about 657 acres large. Later they built salt pans in the bay, which proved unsuccessful.

Spatial plan

The landhuis is situated on the northern side of a hill. This location allows the landhuis to overlook the hofi's on the valley on the northern side. The hofi's are located in the valley where multiple streams from the surrounding landscape run through, making it the most fertile ground of the plantation.

The landhuis exist out of a core with surrounding galleries on all four sides. It has a hipped roof with a hollow kink where the gallery starts. On the north side, the roof has three dormers. The house has a terrace with a parapet on three sides. The landhuis is situated higher than the terrace. After reaching the terrace, another set of stairs is required to reach the level of the house. The rainwater drainage is created by a long aqueduct reaching from the roof to a rainwater storage on the west side.

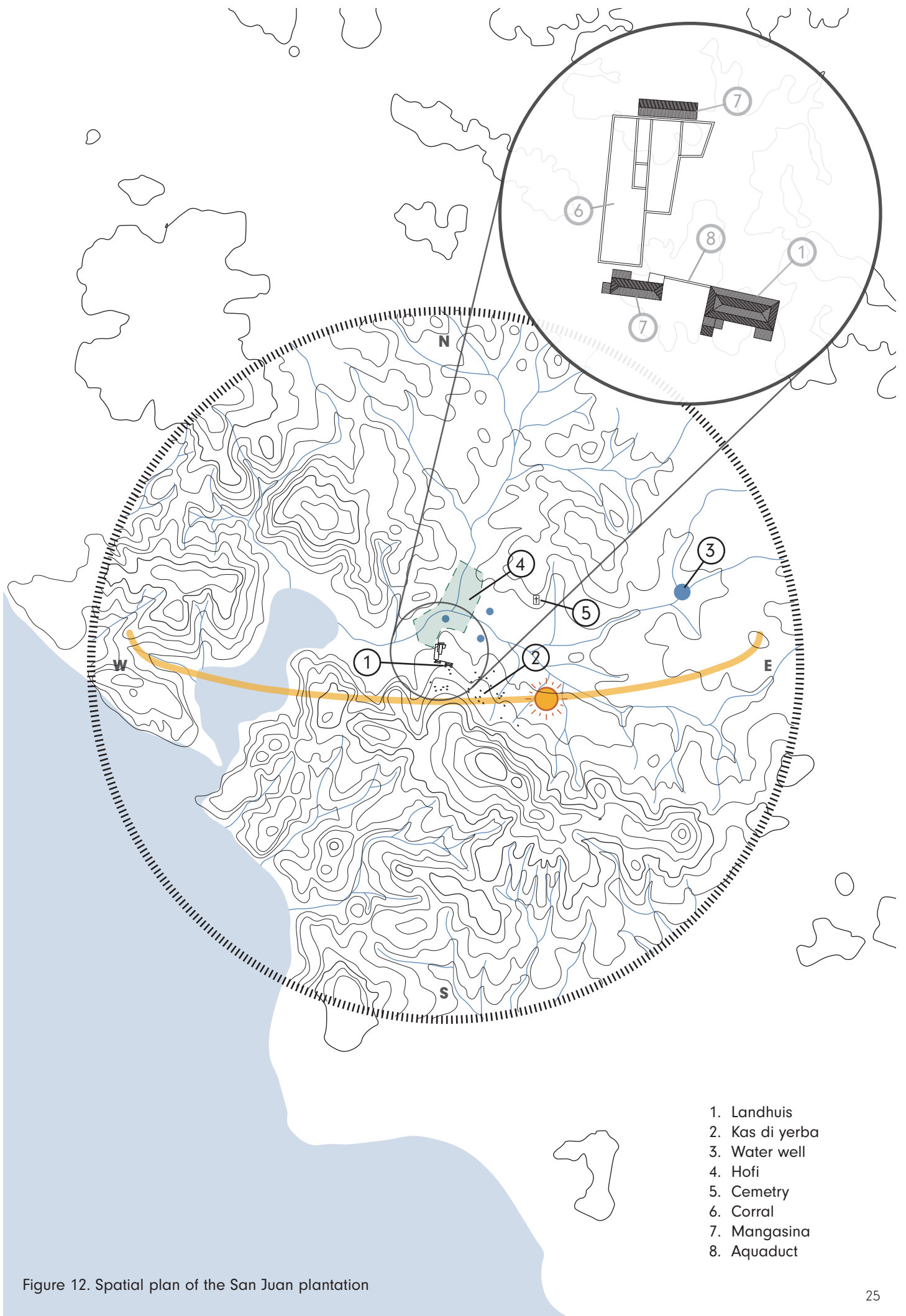
The kas di yerba are located along the hill on the southern side of the landhuis. These settlements are also visible in the old photograph of the plantation, shown in figure 13.

The slavery past is still clearly visible on the plantation throughout the owner's family history.⁵⁸ This plantation also contains one of the largest cemeteries for the enslaved people on the island. Number 5 on the map gives the speculated location of this cemetery, as the Werbata map marks a grave here.

56 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 208.

57 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 208.

58 Koren, David. 'Slavernijverleden werpt schaduw vooruit: Werelderfgoedstatus voor Plantagesysteem West-Curaçao?' *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 5, nr. 3 (1 januari 2020): 152–68.
<https://doi.org/10.5117/THG2020.3.002.KORE>.



1. Landhuis
2. Kas di yerba
3. Water well
4. Hofi
5. Cemetery
6. Corral
7. Mangasina
8. Aquaduct

Figure 12. Spatial plan of the San Juan plantation



Figure 13. Photograph of San Juan, taken in 1910

Current function and heritage

At the landhuis, visitors can pay to visit the four remote beaches accessible by the roads on the plantation.⁵⁹ The landhuis is still owned by the family Schotborgh, who still currently live in the landhuis.⁶⁰ This means the landhuis maintains its original living function.

59 'Strand-Impressie: San Juan, Onbekend, Ongerept, Uniek En Rustgevend'. Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://www.meetcuracao.com/strand-impresie-san-juan-onbekend-ongerept-uniek-en-rustgevend/>.

60 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 208.

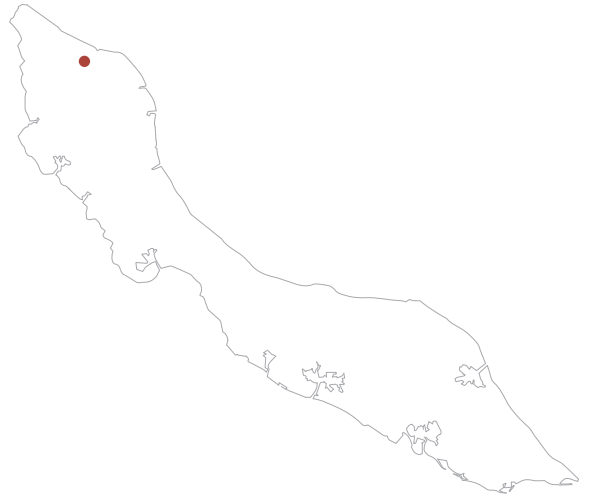


Figure 14. Location of the Savonet plantation

3.5 Savonet

The last plantation that is analysed is the plantation Savonet. This plantation is chosen because it was the biggest plantation on Curaçao.⁶¹

Historical context

The plantation was established sometime before 1661 by Matthias Beck.⁶² On January 1st 1867, the plantation counted 358 employees, one landhuis, 31 stone huts and 125 huts. The livestock consisted of 25 horses, 450 bullocks, 250 donkeys, 2.400 sheep, 850 goats and 60 pigs. After 1898, after the emancipation, the plantation counted 452 inhabitants. The plantation was one of the largest wool suppliers, and the agriculture focused on corn, cotton, oranges, and wood that could be used for paint pigment. For a brief moment in time, the plantation was used for mining copper.⁶³

Spatial plan

Landhuis Savonet is situated on the eastern side of a hill. On the northeastern side of the landhuis lies the valley. Within this valley lies a hofi with many water wells.

The architecture of the landhuis is very typical. It has a core with a gallery on two of the longest sides of the house. The house has a gable roof with a hollow kink where the gallery starts. The roof has three dormers on both sides. The top façade has a crowning of cone-shaped pine cones. During the invasion of the English in 1805, the original landhuis was set afire.⁶⁴ The current landhuis is a replica of the original one built soon after the destruction.

The kas di yerba lay higher up on the hillside on the southwestern side of the landhuis. Some ruins remain of settlements of the freed enslaved people. The houses were probably built after the emancipation, as seen from the size and building materials.

Landhuis Savonet has been given monumental status. The only part of the plantation settlement that has not been given a monumental status is the ruins of the settlements of the freed enslaved.

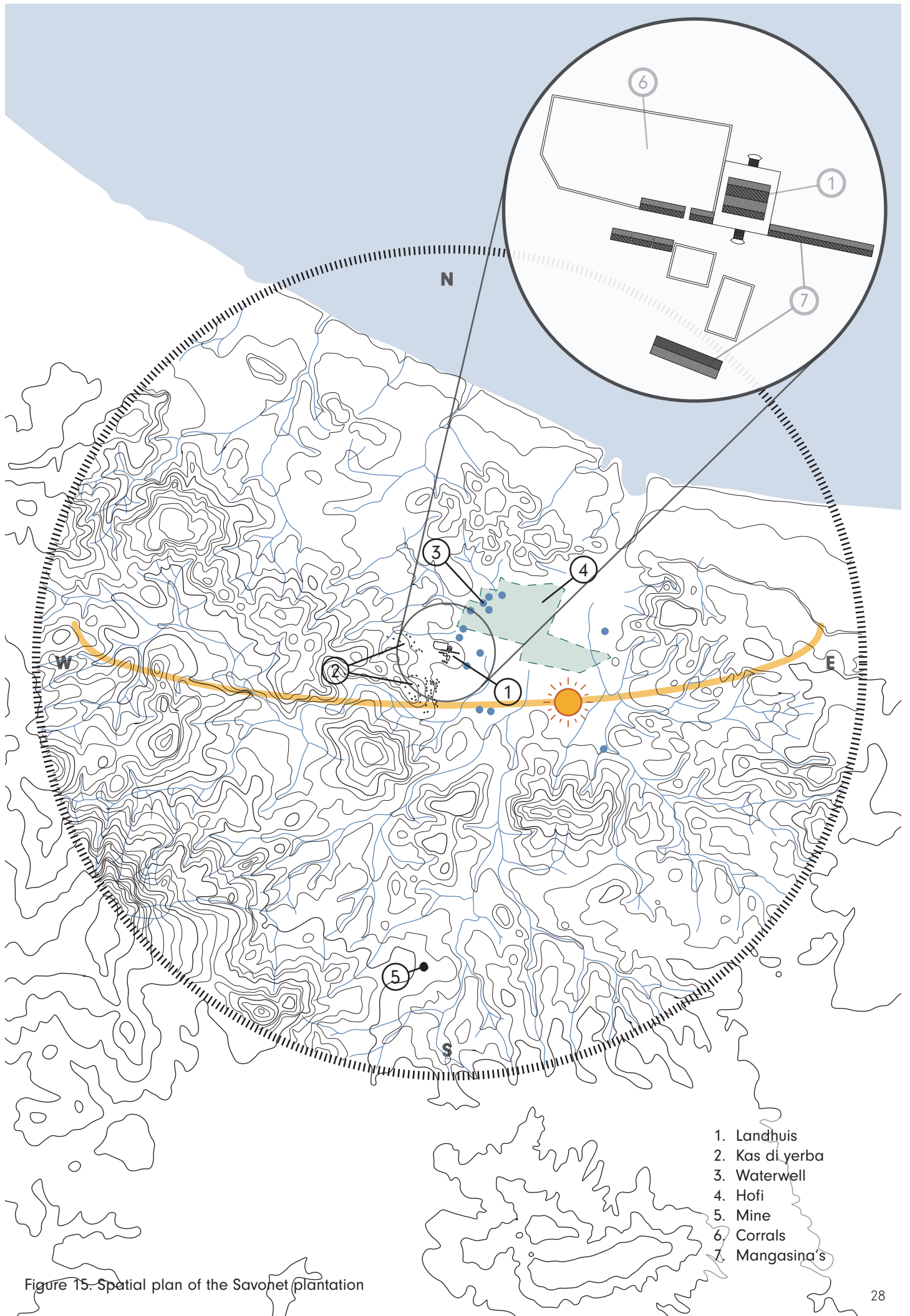
The old photograph of the plantation and landhuis, shown in figure 16, shows the end of the property indicated by cacti trankeren.

61 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 224.

62 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 224.

63 Newton, 'Architectuur en bouwwijze van het Curaçaose landhuis.'

64 Huijgers and Ezechiëls, *Landhuizen van Curaçao en Bonaire*, 224.



- 1. Landhuis
- 2. Kas di yerba
- 3. Waterwell
- 4. Hofi
- 5. Mine
- 6. Corrals
- 7. Mangasina's

Figure 15. Spatial plan of the Savonet plantation



Figure 16. Photograph of Savonet, taken in 1947

Current function and heritage

The landhuis currently functions as a ticket selling point and shop for the National Park Christoffelpark⁶⁵ and as a museum telling the history of the Savonet Plantation and the surrounding Savonet area.⁶⁶ According to the museum's website, the interactions and lives of the enslaved people and the owners are the main focus. Although, reviews of the museum and the article 'Building on the Power of the Past' implies the focus is more on the owners than on the enslaved people.

3.6 Conclusion

From these four case studies, we can see that the typology of the Curaçaoan plantation consists of four main categories. These categories are the landhuis, the settlements of the enslaved being the kas di yerba or the kunuku, the necessary structures and landscape interventions for agriculture, such as the mangasina's and the hofi's, and lastly, the necessary structures and landscape interventions for the livestock, such as the corrals.

By analysing these case studies, it becomes apparent that the most maintained and preserved aspect of the plantation landscape is the landhuis. Other structures, such as the settlements of the enslaved people, the corrals and mangasina's have mostly fallen to ruins.

The examples analysed show that the settlements of the enslaved people are the structures that have been mostly vanished and forgotten. Out of the four examples, only one of them, Ascencion, features a maintained kunuku. The other case study, Savonet, also features traces of the slavery found in the ruins of the houses of the newly freed enslaved. However, it has been made clear that these structures are not crucial for the remembrance and conservation of the plantation by excluding them from the monumental status the plantation has received.

65 'Landhuis Savonet | Curacao, de Caribische Zonvakantie'. Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://www.curacao.com/nl/activity/landhuis-savonet>.

66 CARMABI FOUNDATION. 'Savonet Museum | Christoffelpark'. Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://www.christoffelpark.org/savonet-museum>.

Chapter 4:

The cultural heritage of oppression

This chapter analyses how the landhuizen have been developed into part of the island's cultural heritage. Whereas in contrast, as seen in the last chapter, the other aspects of the plantation landscape have been mostly ignored in the redevelopments and left to ruins or demolished.

4.1 The need for cultural heritage

The need to preserve cultural heritage is mainly initiated by and in the interest of tourism sectors, charity organisations, governments and scholars.⁶⁷ Forms of heritage preservation can serve to aid national pride, strengthen the communities and maintain elitism. Cultural heritage is crucial to the tourism industry while it's concurrently threatened by it. In the case of the landhuizen, a thread appears where the tourism sector is claiming the remaining historic land for hotels and resorts.⁶⁸ Besides that cultural heritage is socially constructed, people assign meaning and importance to places, objects and in this case architecture.

4.2 The cultural heritage of the landhuizen

The architectural beauty of the landhuizen hides the story of the oppression that happened on the plantations.⁶⁹ The landscape around the landhuizen reveals where the enslaved people lived and worked. It reveals the human capital that kept the island's economic model going. It shows the story of the enslaved people who were shipped to the island to perform forced labour there. This veil is strengthened by the staged character given to some of the landhuizen by their function as a museum. When looking at some of the landhuizen, such as Ascencion, they provide a short history of its role during slavery on their website. However, the house itself displays pictures of tourists having a barbecue and advertises vacation homes.⁷⁰ Another example is landhuis Savonet, which houses a Dutch government-funded museum featuring information about the Dutch perspective of glorified colonial life and nothing about the perspective of the enslaved people.

To investigate these claims, further research has been done into the new functions of the landhuizen and the way they choose to present these new functions within the historical framework of the landhuizen.

67 Aggett, Bethanie G., and Walter Van De Leur. 'Building on the Power of the Past' the Production and Politics of Heritage on a Dutch Caribbean Island.' Accessed 8 March 2022. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epub/10.1080/13527258.2019.1639072?needAccess=true>.

68 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

69 Koren, 'Slavernijverleden werpt schaduw vooruit.'

70 Aggett and Van De Leur. 'Building on the Power of the Past.'

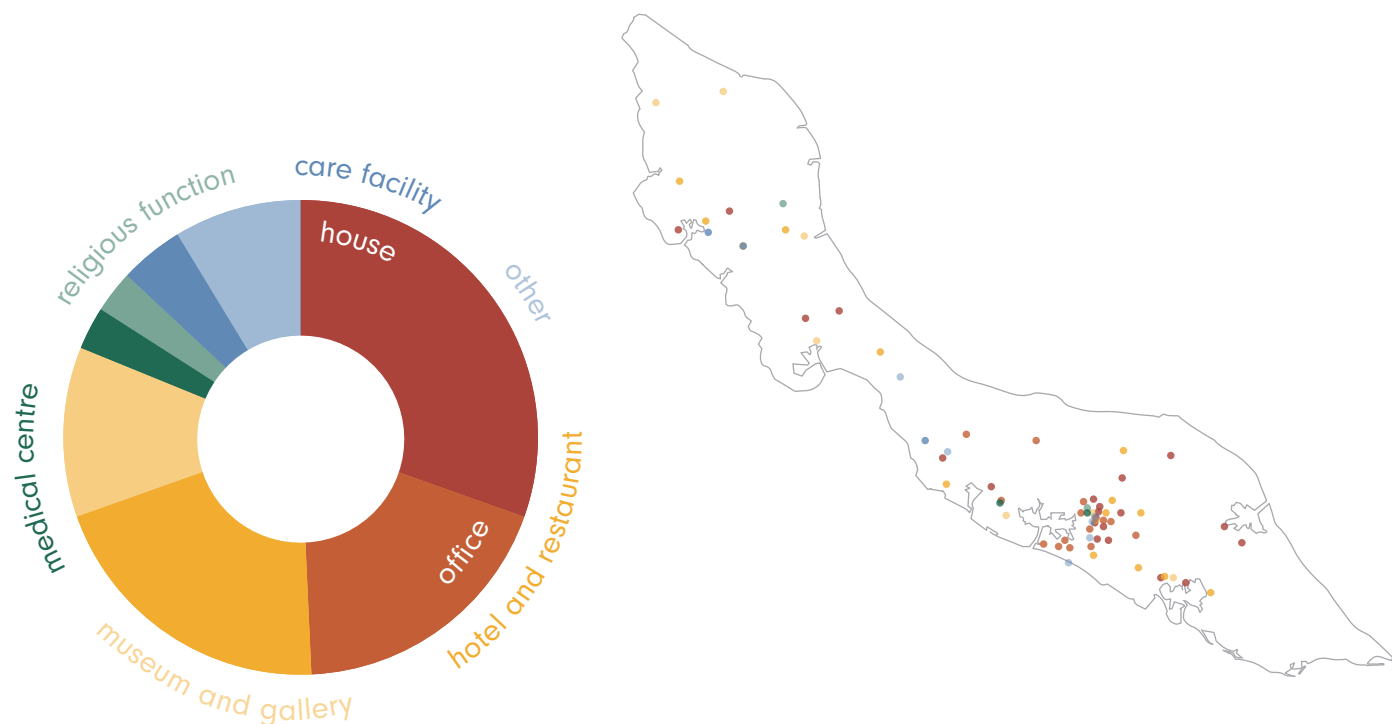


Figure 17. Diagram and map of the current functions of landhuizen

Redevelopment of the landhuizen

Many of the landhuizen are redeveloped into a new function. After the second world war, the Dutch government bought many of the landhuizen. Some now government-owned plantations are Zevenbergen, Zorgvlied and Savonet. They have been combined to form a national park.⁷¹ The plantations that are located far from the city have been the most resistant against extensive and drastic redevelopment. Many of the landhuizen near the city have gotten a new and different function such as a bank, office or hotel. The tourism sector proved to be a new way to gain revenue with the historic buildings and land.

As shown in figure 17, many of the landhuizen have maintained their residential function. The most redeveloped function is an office, followed by a hotel and restaurants, followed by a museum and gallery. Some of the landhuizen are redeveloped as a medical centre, have a religious function or function as a care facility in some way. The category other includes the functions of a wellness centre, distillery, ranch, school, shopping centre and a diving school.

71 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

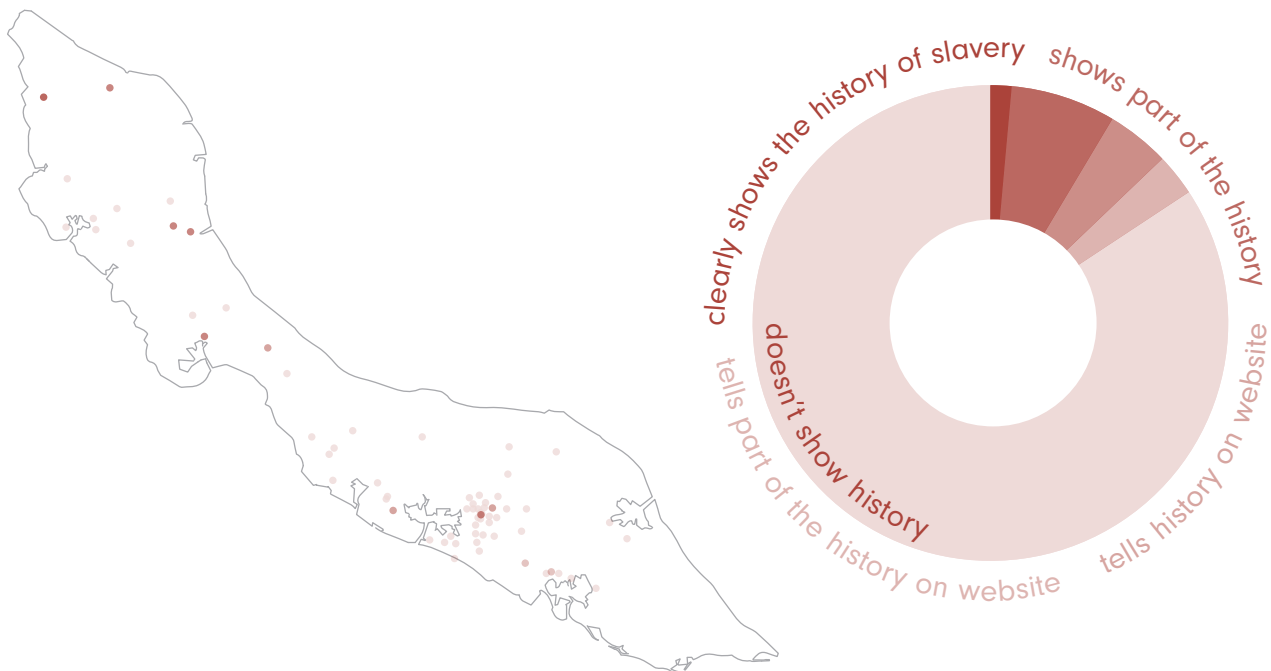


Figure 18. Diagram and map of the representation of history in the landhuizen

It is interesting to look at these landhuizen with a new function and investigate how they present themselves in this post-colonial world. Most of the landhuizen decide not to show or acknowledge this colonial past of the plantations, as can be seen in figure 18.

Interestingly, most former plantations acknowledging the past are far away from the city and thus further away from tourism. Especially the landhuizen with a hotel function seem to want to be oblivious to their past. None of the landhuizen with a hotel function show their historical past. Instead, they chose to advertise and glamorise a stay in a landhuis as a perfect retreat 'to relax and to reset',⁷² and a restaurant in a historic landhuis makes for a 'unique and tropical atmosphere.'⁷³ Although the plantation landscape creates a unique atmosphere, it seems inappropriate to romanticise the architecture while ignoring the hardships it brought with it. Landhuis Klein Santa Martha's insensitivity to its history even goes as far as naming one of the bookable rooms 'The Master Suite.'⁷⁴

The functions that do choose to acknowledge the history of slavery are the museums. The only landhuis that indicates a complete picture of the enslavement is landhuis Knip. The others chose the focus mainly on the Dutch perspective or the history of the owners of the plantation. Next to the landhuizen, when looking at other structures found on the plantation. The kunuku on plantation Ascencion also gives a realistic view of the history.⁷⁵

Two hotels, a restaurant and an art gallery briefly mention a statement about the history of the building on their website. However, none of them seem to depth on the troubled history but instead focus on the agricultural functions the plantation had or their owners throughout the years.⁷⁶

The article 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang' claims that a trend that can be seen among the redevelopments of the plantations is the tourism sector claiming remaining historic land, shining a light on a more significant problem occurring in Curaçao.⁷⁷ Large portions of public space are being privatised for the realisation of resorts and villa housing. The landhuizen become unreachable props in a landscape that does not show or acknowledge its horrifying past but instead offers leisure and relaxation to the paying tourist.

72 Landhuis Bona Vista. 'Boutique Hotel Curacao | Landhuis Bona Vista |'. Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://www.landhuisbonavista.com>.

73 'Brakkeput Mei Mei'. Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://www.brakkeputmeimei.com/home>.

74 'Landhuis Klein Santa Martha – Restaurant & Boutique Hotel'. Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://landhuisksm.com/nl/>

75 Hoop. 'Bezoek Aan Een Kunuku Huisje: Kas Di Pal'i Maishi.'

76 Plantation Jan Thiel Lodge. 'Bed & Breakfast | Jan Thiel Lodge'. Accessed 13 April 2022. <https://landhuisjanthiel.com/nl/jan-thiel-lodge/>

77 Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang.'

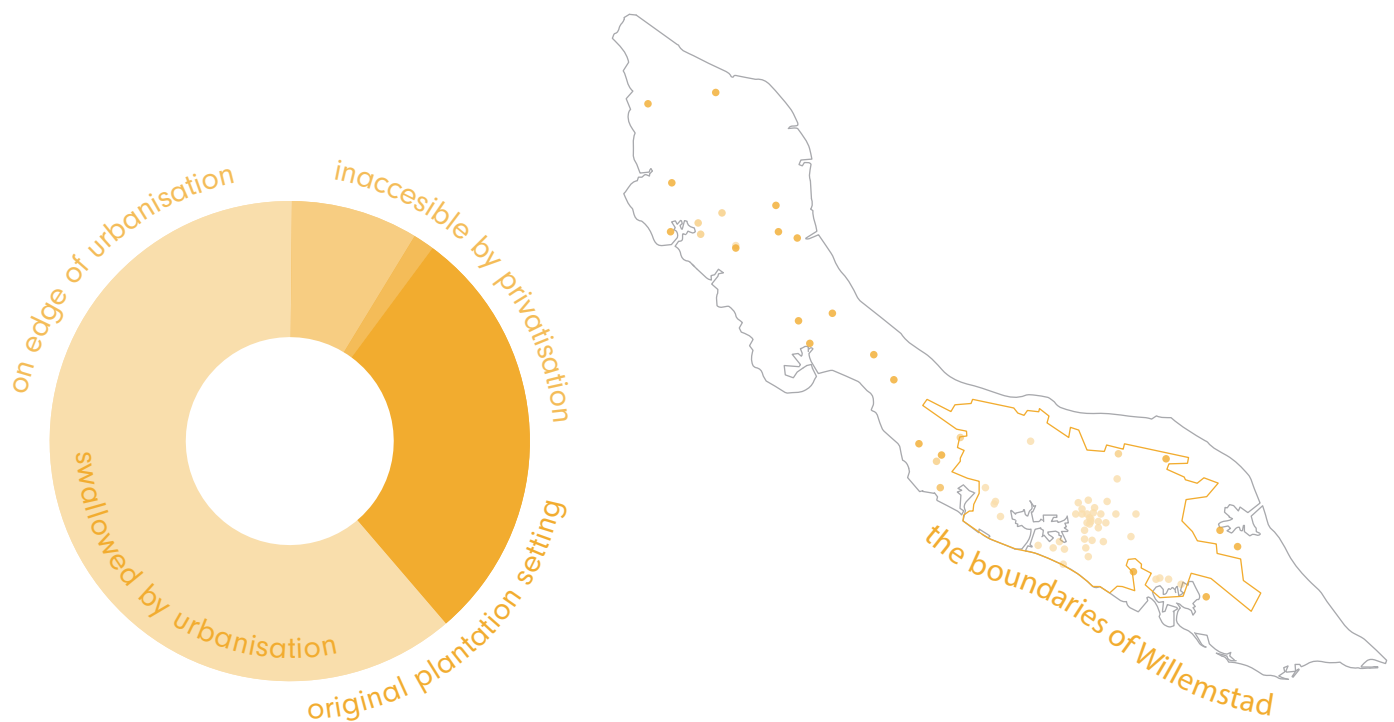


Figure 19. Diagram and map of the setting of the landhuizen

However, this claim does not seem to arise drastically. Out of all the landhuizen so far, only one, landhuis Blauw, is now locked behind the gates of a resort, and the plantation landscape is turned into a perfectly mowed golf course. In the future, this might occur more frequently. Landhuis San Nicolas is up for redevelopment. The website mentions plans for several hotels, a marina village, golf courses and casinos.⁷⁸ However, in de grand scheme, these seem more of an exception than a new trend.

In contrast, urbanisation has led to the disappearance of a majority of the plantation landscapes. Over the last centuries, the city of Willemstad has extended its boundaries. This has led to the urbanisation of the plantation landscape as well. Especially with landhuizen built as a *buitenverblijf*, a country house, have lost to the urbanisation. These *buitenverblijven* were built by the elite from Willemstad for investment and prestige reasons, or as a place for rest.⁷⁹ As all of them were built outside of Willemstad at the time, see figure 20. These are now part of the urban landscape of the expanding city of Willemstad.



Figure 20. Overview of Landhuizen used for a *buitenverblijf*

78 'Port San Nicolas Curacao - A Privately-Owned Property on the Tropical Island of Curaçao, Bordered by a Scenic Coastline Extending over 5 Km of Caribbean Sea Frontage'. Accessed 14 April 2022. <https://portsannicolas.com/>.

79 Koren, 'Slavernijverleden werpt schaduw vooruit.'

4.3 Conclusion

Cultural heritage is socially constructed, often by the industries benefiting from it. The cultural heritage given to the architecturally beautiful landhuizen hides the reality of the plantation system and the reasoning behind their existence in the first place.

When looking at the redevelopment from the agricultural function, most of the landhuizen have left the history in the past and chosen an entirely new function. It seems that tourism is the driving force behind this. The landhuizen acknowledging the actuality of the plantation landscape are the most remote ones and the ones furthest away from the city and resorts, thus also from tourism. Furthermore, the landhuizen with a hotel function are the most oblivious to its history, promoting a stay as relaxing and unique.

Besides the redevelopment of the landhuizen, the plantation landscape and the other establishments found on it have also been given a new function. The plantation landscape has in many places fallen victim to urbanization or recreation.

Conclusion

The history and development of the plantation landscape on Curaçao brings to light their roots within slavery. For a period in the island's history, the economy of the island thrived through the exchange of goods and the exchange of people, brought into enslavement, sold and bought to work on the plantations. Traces and especially structures of the plantation are still visible in the current landscape of Curaçao, but the traces of slavery are harder to identify.

The research within this thesis aimed at finding answers as to what was the typology of the Curaçaoan plantation and how is it now represented in the island's cultural heritage?

To analyse the typology of the plantation, four case studies were analysed. These analyses concluded that the typology of the plantation consisted of four main categories; the main building being the landhuis, the settlements of the enslaved being the kas di yerba and the kunuku, the necessary structures and landscape interventions for the agriculture, such as the mangasina's and the hofi's, and lastly the necessary structures and landscape interventions for the livestock, such as the corrals.

These four categories cannot all be found within the landscape of Curaçao today anymore. This has to do with the nature of the materials used or the cultural value appointed to them.

In chapter four, this cultural value appointed to the plantation landscape is analysed further to discover that often, the only structure valued and redeveloped on the plantation landscape is the landhuis. Looking at the redevelopment of the landhuizen after they lost their agricultural function, it becomes apparent that most have chosen to leave their problematic history in the past and have been redeveloped into a new function. With this new function, most landhuizen do not acknowledge the history of slavery. The most extreme examples of this appear when looking at some of the landhuizen that currently function as hotels, selling the idea of staying in the landhuis as the perfect place to relax and reset.

When analysing the traces of the plantation landscape within the current topography of Curaçao, not much is left to analyse. A lot of the plantation landscape is urbanised through the expanding boundaries of Willemstad. The aspects left are now being put to recreational use through, for example, dance floors and golf courses.

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