

The presence of Africans and their descendants in colonial Concepción, Chile: a first approach

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ABSTRACT

In the volumes that compile the history of Concepción and its surrounding areas, the African and/or Afro-descendant presence during colonial times is usually reduced to trivial events. Unlike what happens in other Chilean regions, no systematic studies mention the permanence of this population in the study area during the Spanish domination. Hence, the local sociocultural imaginary does not recognize the historical depth of their presence and relevance. This research aims to carry out the first systematic compilation exercise regarding the presence of Afro-descendants in Concepción and its surrounding areas, registering their mentions in currently available primary and secondary sources.

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As a result, we were able to identify a continued presence of Afro-descendants between the 16th and 19th centuries. Finally, we discuss their estrangement in historical volumes and the development of a paradigm that has made them historically invisible as part of the current social fabric in Concepción.

Key words: *Afro-descendants, History, Colonial period, Social invisibility, Concepción, Chile.*

La presencia de africanos y de sus descendientes en el Concepción colonial, Chile: una primera aproximación

RESUMEN

En los volúmenes que compilan la historia de Concepción y sus zonas aledañas, la presencia de africanos y/o afrodescendientes durante la colonia es usualmente reducida a eventos anecdóticos. A diferencia de lo que ocurre en otras regiones de Chile, no existen estudios sistemáticos que mencionen la permanencia de esta población en el área de estudio durante la dominación española. Así, el imaginario sociocultural local no reconoce la profundidad histórica de su presencia y relevancia. Esta investigación desarrolla el primer ejercicio compilatorio sistemático sobre la presencia de los afrodescendientes en Concepción y sus áreas aledañas, registrando sus menciones en fuentes primarias y secundarias disponibles actualmente. Como resultado, pudimos identificar una presencia continua de afrodescendientes entre el siglo XVI y el siglo XIX. Finalmente, discutimos su extrañamiento en los volúmenes históricos y el desarrollo de un paradigma que los ha hecho históricamente invisibles y los ha negado como parte del tejido social actual en Concepción.

Palabras clave: *afrodescendientes, Historia, Periodo colonial, Invisibilidad social, Concepción, Chile.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of the presence of Africans and their descendants in the Spanish-American territories, is a subject widely discussed.¹ Thanks to this research

1 Leslie Rout Jr, *The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to present day*; Luz María Martínez, *La presencia africana en México*; Dina V. Picotti, *La presencia africana en nuestra identidad*; María Navarrete, *Génesis y desarrollo de la esclavitud en Colombia. Siglos XVI y XVII*; Florencia Guzmán, "Africanos en la Argentina: una reflexión desprevenida"; Claudia Mosquera and Luiz Barcelos, *Afro-reparaciones: memorias de la esclavitud y justicia reparativa para negros, afrocolombianos y raizales*; Ben Vinson and Matthew Restall, *Black*

trend, it has been possible to problematize from an anthropological perspective two central subjects: the contribution of African components to the current Latin American social fabric,² and the vindication of a social identity.³ It should be mentioned that these processes have not developed homogeneously.⁴ Thus, although the introduction of African population shares general features throughout the continent, each Spanish administrative division developed characteristics of its own, which manifested a continuum once the South American independence processes during the 19th century were completed.⁵

This correlates with the historiographic development of the subject in Chile. Although the classic studies from the early twentieth century⁶ are a precedent, it only has become a robust line of research in the last three decades. Thus, there are several recent studies on the presence of Africans and Afro-descendants in areas of formerly colonial Chile.⁷

Mexico. Rise and Society from Colonial to Modern Times; Luis Gómez, “La esclavitud en el Perú colonial”; Maribel Arrelucea and Jesús Cosamalón, *La presencia afrodescendiente en el Perú. Siglos XVI-XX*; Jean Pierre Tardieu, *Resistencia de los negros en el Virreinato de México (siglos XVI-XVII)*.

- ² Luz María Martínez, “Afroamérica. Crisol centenario”; Eduard Arriaga, “Temporalidades múltiples en la encrucijada: representaciones artísticas de lo afro en Latinoamérica y el mundo hispánico durante la actual etapa de globalización”; Alejandro De la Fuente, “El arte afroamericano,”; Robin Moore, “Un siglo y medio de estudios sobre la música afrolatina”; Paul Johnson and Stephan Palmié, “Religiones afrolatinas.”
- ³ Ariel Dulitzky, “A Region in denial: Racial discrimination and racism in Latin America”; Patricia Fox, *Being and blackness in Latin America: Uprootedness and improvisation*; John Lipski, “Afro-Paraguayan Spanish: The negation of nonexistence”; Peter Wade, “Race in Latin America”; Purity Uchechukwu, “Afro-Hispanics and self-identity: the gods to the rescue?”
- ⁴ Marisol Sánchez et al., “Influencia africana en la formación de la cultura e identidades cubanas”; Gabriela Álvarez, “Oru Lundu responde (...) una perspectiva situada del imaginario afrodescendientes”; Manuel Ferrer, “Imaginarios nacionales en latinoamérica”; Guillermo Gómez and Ana Solís, *Imaginario e identidad del pensamiento latinoamericano*; Eva Lamborghini, María Martino and Juan Martínez, *Estudios afrolatinoamericanos 3. Actas de las Quintas Jornadas de la GEALA*.
- ⁵ Martínez, “Afroamérica. Crisol centenario”, pp. 9-44.
- ⁶ Guillermo Feliú, *La abolición de la esclavitud en Chile: estudio histórico y social*; Gonzalo Vial, *El africano en el reino de Chile. Ensayo histórico-jurídico*; Rolando Mellafe, *La introducción de la esclavitud negra en Chile. Tráfico y rutas*.
- ⁷ Hector Alfaro and Roberto Flores, “La huella de la sangre africana en el Maule colonial (1716-1778)”; Monserrat Arre, “Comercio de esclavos: mulatos criollos en Coquimbo o circulación de esclavos de ‘reproducción’ local, siglos XVIII-XIX: una propuesta de investigación”; María Contreras Segura, “Población africana en Chile del siglo XVIII: esclavitud, mestizaje y vida económica, Valparaíso 1750-1820”; Carolina González Undurraga, *Esclavos y esclavas demandando justicia, Chile, 1740-1823: documentación judicial por carta de libertad y papel*

Before moving on, it is important to mention that throughout the history of Chile it has been stated that the presence of Afro-descendants was scarce. Among the reasons for this⁸ are low adaptability to cold weather in different areas of Chile, the high economic value that the acquisition of an enslaved person meant and low resistance to diseases.

However, the historical presence of Africans and their descendants is not as meager as it has been exposed. This is evident in various colonial documents, where it can be acknowledged that they had reached Chile mostly but not only as enslaved, but also as free men and free women and soldiers.⁹

Despite the aforementioned, we have noticed that there is no compilation that accounts for this presence in Concepción and its surroundings, an area that is of interest due to its geopolitical role during the Colony.¹⁰

As has happened in different parts of Chile, this absence of critical historic review has built the embedded myth that in Concepción never existed an Afro-descendant population who left sociocultural testimony. An example of this is the statement by Fernando Campos Harriet in his *Historia de Concepción*:¹¹ “Este grupo no prosperó en Concepción por razón del clima. La sociedad penquista no tiene sangre negra en ninguno de sus estratos. (...) Como no fue integrante racial en Concepción, no nos detenemos más en esta clase”. Thus, the myth turns into a (lack of) knowledge. Then, this misunderstanding is passed down from generation to generation, renewing and sustaining the permanent and diverse processes of invisibilization of these social agents.

de venta; Monserrat Arre and Paulina Barrenechea, “De la negación a la diversificación: los intra y extramuros de los estudios afrochilenos”; Vicente González Munita, “Indios y negros al interior de La Chimba: sociabilidades dentro de la marginalidad urbana colonial (Santiago de Chile, siglos XVI-XVII)”; Alberto Díaz, Luis Galdames and Rodrigo Ruz, “... Y llegaron con cadenas... Las poblaciones afrodescendientes en la Historia de Arica y Tarapacá (siglos XVII-XIX)”; Monserrat Arre, Rafael González, Luis Madrid and Andrea Santana, “Antecedentes para estudiar la presencia afrodescendiente y afroestiza en la región de Coquimbo. Siglo XVI-XIX”; Monserrat Arre and Tomás Capetillán, “‘E aquí, pues, dos razas distintas’. Paradigmas raciales en Chile (siglos XVIII-XXI): significados y deslindes conceptuales”.

⁸ Fernanda del Río, *El lado negro de la historia de Chile: el discurso historiográfico sobre los africanos y afrodescendientes durante el siglo XIX*; Celia Cussen, Manuel Llorca-Jaña and Francisco Droller, “The dynamics and determinants of slave prices in an urban setting: Santiago de Chile, c. 1773-1822”, pp. 449-477.

⁹ Mellafe, *La introducción*; Rosa Soto, “Las mujeres negras esclavas en el reino de Chile”; Celia Cussen, “El paso de los negros por la historia de Chile”; Arre and Barrenechea, “De la negación a la diversificación”.

¹⁰ Fernando Campos, *Historia de Concepción, 1550-1970*; Fernando Torrejón, Claudia King and Patricia Virano, “El auge de la ciudad de Concepción en Penco, las variables geohistóricas del siglo XVII”.

¹¹ Campos, *Historia de Concepción*.

Accordingly, this research seeks to carry out a systematic compilation of the mentions about Afro-descendants during colonial times in this study area. These antecedents will allow us to reflect on the implication of the presence of Afro-descendants in the area, on their relevance and the reason for their historical invisibility.

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOCIAL IMAGINARY OF THE AFRO-DESCENDANT PRESENCE IN CONCEPCIÓN IN HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION

The construction of the history of the Africans and their descendants in Concepción does not escape the general overview of the discipline in Chile. In fact, the main studies of local history during the period of Hispanic domination almost does not account for the presence of Afro-descendants.¹² The same can be seen in the history of the main modern cities around Concepción.¹³

The only exception to this, correspond to two specific cases: the first, refers to Juan Valiente, a enslaved man who, seeking his freedom, enlisted as a soldier in Pedro de Valdivia's expedition, arriving with the conqueror to Concepción at the time of its foundation, transforming itself into *encomendero* and neighbor of the city, soon to die in the Battle of Tucapel (1553) along with Pedro de Valdivia.¹⁴

The second case corresponds to an almost accidental passage through the area of a group of unfortunate enslaved Africans: The *Trial* Mutineers.¹⁵ These were a group of Africans, who, at the beginning of the 19th century, were embarked from Valparaíso on the frigate *Trial*, to be sold in Lima. However, they rebelled and managed to take over the ship, demanding to return to Senegal, their country of origin. Through deceit, they were transported near Santa María Island, where they were captured and taken to Talcahuano and later to Concepción. Here, the leaders were sentenced to death, and their remains were thrown into a lagoon near the city, which became widely known as the Laguna de los Negros.

¹² Guillermo Cox, *Historia de Concepción*; Carlos Oliver and Francisco Zapatta, *Libro de Oro de la Historia de Concepción*; Campos, *Historia de Concepción*; Figueroa, *Libro de Oro de la Historia de Penco*.

¹³ Eduardo Moreno, *Libro de Oro de Talcahuano (1764-1964)*; Reinaldo Muñoz Olave, *Chillán: sus fundaciones y destrucciones (1580-1835)*; Mario Orellana, *Historia y Antropología de la Isla de la Laja*.

¹⁴ Leonardo Mazzei, "Juan Valiente, encomendero de Concepción", pp. 183-186.

¹⁵ Jorge Pinto, "Una rebelión de negros en las costas del Pacífico Sur. El caso de la fragata *Trial* en 1804".

Before moving on, we must add the data from the oral tradition about the legend of the Laguna Turbia.¹⁶ It tells the story of two lovers who during the colonial period were caught committing adultery and sentenced to death by immersion in the aforementioned body of water. For this, they were tied inside a sack and then thrown into the lagoon by two enslaved Afro-descendants.

As can be seen, the local history and oral traditions of Concepción only include these cases. This has led to the mistaken belief that the presence of Africans and their descendants was low and had no major impact on the local population and identity.¹⁷ This idea has been installed for several generations that continue ensuring that this presence was not significant, based on the argument of how expensive it was to acquire a enslaved person, as well as that the cold weather annihilated the few enslaved who inhabited the area.¹⁸ As a result, the mechanism of historical construction of the past locally produced and reproduced was exempt from the Afro-descendant presence, except in mentions of an anecdotal nature or that have been folklorized, this in line with the previously mentioned invisibility processes.¹⁹ Grubbessich²⁰ proposes that after Chilean independence, the African and Afro-descendant population of southern Chile carried out two processes: the first, related to migration to northern territories, and the second, related to the practice of exogamous marriage, preferably with indigenous people. Consequently, everything previously described has led to postulate that the presence of Africans and their descendants was low and without major impact on the population and identity configuration of the region.²¹

3. METHODS

The temporal margins of this study comprehend from the departure of Pedro de Valdivia from Santiago in 1550 to establish Concepción, until the Batalla de la Alameda in 1820. We consider this period since the bibliographic sources account the processes by which the Spanish incorporated the African population

¹⁶ Caupolicán Montaldo, *Del Diablo y otros Personajes (Crónica Folklórica de la Cuenca del Itata)*.

¹⁷ Campos, *Historia de Concepción*.

¹⁸ José Toribio Medina, *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de Chile. 1515-1818*, p. 313.

¹⁹ Dulitzky, "A Region in denial".

²⁰ Arturo Grubbessich, "Esclavitud en Chile durante el siglo XVIII: el matrimonio como forma de integración social".

²¹ Campos, *Historia de Concepción*.

into the area, under norms and dynamics that lasted until independence and the permanent abolition of slavery in 1823.²²

We present our results considering the centuries covered by these temporal margins, since this would allow us a better understanding of the reality about the presence of Africans and their descendants at different historical moments. In order to provide a broad context, we consider the current regions of Biobío and Ñuble as our territory of interest. This is due not only to the geographical proximity, but also to the situation of administrative, economic and religious dependency of these territories to Concepción between the aforementioned centuries.

Is noteworthy that we use the word Afro-descendant, which we recognize as a neologism that does not find a correlation between the historical archives and whose definition is complex.²³ Despite this, we believe it is necessary to use this concept since it corresponds to a process of self-identification, based on the attempt to vindicate a historical past that is often invisible and defined by social practices based on racism.²⁴ Now, while we recognize the value and importance of self-denomination, which considers as Afro-descendant any individual who has at least one ancestor whose birth was in Sub-Saharan Africa regardless of the generational distance,²⁵ for this research we consider descendants up to a third generation, considering that many times the historical records do not provide much detail about ancestries. So, for our compilation we included African and/or descendants within this category, whether in the category of enslaved or free man/woman. Within this last concept we include those trafficked directly from Africa, as well as those who were traded in continental, national and local slave markets.

Regarding the term “slave” which has been used in primary sources and in previous historic research, we decided to use the term “enslaved” instead. We perceive that “enslaved” has a semantic load, which visibilizes the violence implied in the enslaver-enslaved dynamic and defines the former ones as the culprit of the slavery status of the lasts.²⁶ Adding up, this vocabulary choice considers the dynamism in the mentioned state, visibilizing it is not an inherent condition of enslaved people; therefore, we aim to present slavery as the asymmetrical cultural phenomenon that it was.

²² Feliú, *La abolición de la esclavitud en Chile*; Thomas Mareite, “Slavery, resistance(s) and abolition in early Nineteneth-Century Chile”.

²³ Darién Davis, “Latin-America: Afro-descendants”, pp. 70-78.

²⁴ Ricardo Amigo, “Escritos afroriqueños. Intervenciones políticas frente al muticulturalismo chileno”.

²⁵ Wanda Cabella, “Panorama de la infancia y la adolescencia en la población afrouruguaya”, pp. 103-126.

²⁶ Liliam Ramos Da Silva, “¿Puede hablar el traductor? Nuevos abordajes para la traducción de literatura afrodescendiente en Brasil bajo la óptica de los Estudios Culturales”.

This approach on the Afro-descendant presence in Concepción was constructed based on a review of mentions in primary and secondary sources. By mentions we refer to terms found in the reviewed sources that explicitly indicate one or more individuals using the following categories: “African”, “black”, “slave”, “cimarrón”, “African slave”, “Horro”, “bozal”, “ladino”, “cuarterón”, “zambo”, “mulato/a” and “mulatilla”. All these terms were determined as those indicative of Afro-descendants on the bibliographic review.²⁷ If the term “slave” appeared without any other identifier, it was excluded, while if ethnic and contextual identifiers appeared, these mentions were considered. Later, tables were made for each century contemplated in this research, indicating the categories aforementioned, place or locality, chronological registration, textual citation in Spanish and the revised source.

The reviewed primary sources were of administrative, ecclesiastical and military nature. Among them, we can highlight the Acts of the Royal Audience of Concepción,²⁸ Acts of the Concepción Cabildo,²⁹ Acts of the Concepción Synod,³⁰ the 1813 Census,³¹ chronicles of the 16th and 17th centuries³² and the Acts of the Junta de Beneficencia de Concepción.³³ Also, we included as a primary source a review of the database hosted on the FamilySearch website.³⁴ We included these documents since we believe in the pervasive presence of Afro-descendants in several areas of colonial society and culture. As secondary sources, studies that reviewed or reproduced judicial files, parish records,

²⁷ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*; “Los prejuicios sociales en Chile al terminar el siglo xviii”; Emma de Ramón, “Artífices negros, mulatos y pardos en Santiago de Chile”; Paulina Barrenechea, “El rostro más negro: la travesía literaria de un bandido-cimarrón en Chile”; Claudio Ogass, “Por mi precio o mi buen comportamiento: oportunidades y estrategias de manumisión de los esclavos negros y mulatos en Santiago de Chile, 1698-1750”; Sergio Solano, “Repensando la configuración socio-racial del Nuevo Reino de Granada, siglo xviii: pardos, mulatos, cuarterones y quinterones”.

²⁸ Campos *et al.*, *Real Audiencia de Concepción*.

²⁹ Amunátegui, *El Cabildo de Concepción*.

³⁰ Pedro de Azúa, *Sínodo de Concepción (Chile) 1744*.

³¹ Juan Egaña, *Censo de 1813: levantado por don Juan Egaña, de orden de la junta de gobierno formada por los señores Pérez, Infante y Eyzaguirre*.

³² Gerónimo de Bibar, *Crónica y relación copiosa y verdadera de los reinos de Chile*; Alonso de Ercilla, *La Araucana*; Alonso de Góngora y Marmolejo, *Historia de Chile desde su descubrimiento hasta el año 1575*; Diego de Rosales, *Historia General del Reino de Chile, Flandes Indiano*.

³³ “Actas de la Junta de Beneficencia de Concepción”, Concepción, 1680-1812, Fondo 002-AJBC, Archivo Luis David Cruz Ocampo, Biblioteca Central Universidad de Concepción, Chile.
<http://archivoluisdavidcruzocampo.udec.cl/index.php/Actas-de-Beneficencia-de-Concepción>

³⁴ “Chile, matrimonios, 1579-1930”, FamilySearch, February 3, 2020.
<https://www.familysearch.org>.

and the National Historical Archive of Chile, were used. It is necessary to emphasize that it is not the objective of this compilation exercise to inquire about the reliability and/or veracity of the records and mentions, since it is only a first approximation, which we hope will allow us to carry out more in-depth analysis soon.

As we have said, in the first place, we will present in an exhaustive and linear form the data referring to the presence of Africans and their descendants. Then, we will contrast this with both Chilean and hispanic-american contexts. This will allow us to debate, discuss and complement the discourses of invisibilization and lack of historical agency that has been built around the so-called absence of Africans and their descendants in Concepción.

4. HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE PRESENCE OF AFRICANS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN CONCEPCIÓN

The 16th Century

The analysis of Table 1 shows that during the first 50 years of Concepción's existence, several Africans or Afro-descendants can be registered. In two cases, we can see that rather it corresponds to fortuitous situations, such as the presence of Pochón, an enslaved who survived the expedition of Juan Ladrillero to the Magellan Strait,³⁵ just to perish a couple of days after arriving. Similar is the case of the Castillo brothers, who were only in Concepción for their trial and subsequent execution.³⁶ We cannot rule out that the case of these brothers was unique, since Villalobos³⁷ points out that during the 16th century it was very common for enslaved ones to desert and go over to the Mapuche side to fight their former enslavers.

Most Afro-descendants who actually lived in Concepción during this time, served in the army. In addition to the aforementioned Juan Valiente,³⁸ there were several more in different functions, from Trumpets to Executioners.³⁹ In fact, there are recurring mentions of the capture and death of Afro-descendants by

³⁵ Mateo Martinic, "Antecedentes para la historia social de Magallanes. Negros y mulatos en el antiguo territorio de colonización".

³⁶ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*. Mellafe, *La introducción*.

³⁷ Sergio Villalobos, *Vida fronteriza en la Araucanía. El mito de la guerra de Arauco*.

³⁸ Mazzei, "Juan Valiente".

³⁹ Medina, *Colección de Documentos, Tomo 2*; Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*; Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America"; Jean-Pierre Tardieu "El negro de la deshonra en La Araucana de Alonso de Ercilla".

the Mapuche after the Battle of Tucapel⁴⁰ and the first and second destruction of Concepción.⁴¹ Additionally, one of the most reiterated crafts conducted by non-military Afro-descendants belongs to blacksmith,⁴² although the participation in farming⁴³ and ship crew⁴⁴ is also mentioned.

Table 1. Mentions of afro descendants in Concepción and nearby areas during the 16th century (prepared by the authors)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Santiago	1550	When leaving to Arauco, Governor Pedro de Valdivia “mandó a hacer de madera unas andas que llevaban cuatro negros”	De Bibar, (1558) 1966, p. 138	Primary
Concepción	1550	“Andrés de Pereda, que acompañó a Valdivia cuando el extremo fundó Concepción, y en el cerco de la ciudad y batalla de Andalién marchaba con uno o dos africanos”	Vial, 1957, p. 17	Secondary
Cañete	1553	When Caupolicán attacked the fort, his men “mató una negra con sus hijos que vivían fuera del fuerte y a todos los yanaconas que servían a los españoles”	De Rosales, (1674) 1877, p. 486	Primary
Concepción	1550-1553	Juan Valiente, soldier, freed man and encomendero. “Como descendencia dejó dos hijos nacidos en Juana Valdivia, probablemente esclava del Gobernador, que habría obtenido su libertad para casarse. El primero de ellos, Pedro, sucedió a su padre en el disfrute de la encomienda...”	Mazzei, 1979, p. 185	Secondary

⁴⁰ Claudio Gay, *Historia Física y Política de Chile. Documentos sobre la Historia, la Estadística y la Geografía*, 178; De Rosales, *Historia General del Reino de Chile*, pp. 486-499.

⁴¹ José Toribio Medina, *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de Chile. Desde el Viaje de Magallanes hasta la Batalla del Maipo. 1515-1818. Tomo 22. Proceso de Villagra*.

⁴² Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*.

⁴³ José Toribio Medina, *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de Chile. Desde el Viaje de Magallanes hasta la Batalla del Maipo. 1515-1818. Tomo 27: Informaciones de Servicios V*.

⁴⁴ Luis Thayer Ojeda, “Las antiguas ciudades de Chile,” *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 129 (1911), pp. 169-216.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Cañete	1553	“Marchó Valdivia hasta los paredones de la casa fuerte de Tucapel, ya convertida en ceniza, y viendo allí cerca una india parada en medio de una gran sementera, mandó a un negro suyo llamado Anton que fuese a traerla”	De Rosales, (1674) 1877, p. 497	Primary
Cañete	1554	After the Battle of Tucapel, the Mapuche would had killed prisoners and “cortaron la cabeza de los cuerpos de los españoles y las de los negros y pajes del Perú que llevaban Valdivia y los soldados”	De Rosales, (1674) 1877 p. 499	Primary
Concepción	1554	“Felipe, negro horro, quizás soldado en Marihueño, herrero”	Vial, 1957, p. 31	Secondary
Concepción	1554 y 1570	“Algunos horros han dejado huella en nuestra historia: Cristobal Varela... militar famoso era mulato. Peleó en Jaquibamba, en Concepción - al tiempo del despueble y para el cerco de 1564 - y en La Imperial con Villagra. Fue vecino Osorno, Concepción la capital y Valdivia”	Vial, 1957, p. 175	Secondary
Concepción	1555	During the second destruction of Concepción: “habían perecido algunas piezas de indios é indios de servicio é un negro herrero, que mataron los naturales”	Medina, 1900, p. 53	Secondary
Concepción	1557	“De la expedición preparada en Concepción por el año 1558, consta la presencia de por lo menos un negro de servicio, que junto con el capitán y un marinero fueron los únicos sobrevivientes”	Mellafe, 1959, p. 105	Secondary
Cañete	1558	Capupolicán’s executier would have been a salve: “luego llegó el verdugo diligente/que era un negro geloflo, mal vestido”	De Ercilla, (1569) 1982, p. 233	Primary
Quiapo	1558	“Y el severo General [García Hurtado de Mendoza] mandó... que hiziesse justicia de ellos y no se embarazasse con tantos prisioneros... y como iban saliendo les daba un negro a dos manos con una barreta de yerro y caian en el foso”	De Rosales, (1674) 1878, p. 93	Primary
Cañete	1558	“A black conquistador named... Juan Fernandez, fought... at Cañete”	Restall, 2000	Secondary

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Colcura-Lota	1558	García Hurtado de Mendoza reports that “de pasar el río, hizo un norte que se anegó la barca que había mandado a hacer y se perdieron dos o tres criados míos y otros tantos negros”	De Góngora y Marmolejo (1575) 1862, p. 248	Primary
Concepción	1560	“Catalina de Mella, casó sucesivamente con españoles de categoría. En efecto fueron marido suyos: 1) Gonzalo de los Ríos... 2) Juan Dávlos Jufre... 3) Bernardino de Mella... uno de los primeros pobladores de Concepción, hubo en Catalina... al menos cinco hijos, incluso un sacerdote y un militar”	Vial, 1957, p. 174	Secondary
Concepción and Laja	1560-1590	“Alonso Galiano...era ya marido de la morisca Leonor Galiano, de seguro esclava suya, que le dio descendencia... Juan Galiano y Luisa Galiano”	Vial, 1957, p. 17	Secondary
Cañete	1561	“Gómez de León, lacayo y soldado encomendero. Quizás mulato”	Vial, 1957, p. 20	Secondary
Cañete	1561	Five or six months after the repopulation of Cañete, local mapuches rose in arms “é les mataron muchos negros e indios yanaconas que servían a dichos españoles”	Medina, 1901, p. 114	Secondary
Arauco	1561	During the war, the local Mapuche, “mataban a los españoles y negros y yanaconas...”	Medina, 1901, p. 101	Secondary
Concepción and Itata	1563	“Girardo Gil... era casado con Juana de Lezcano, morisca horra, esclava liberta, herrada en la cara... dejó dos hijos legítimos”	Vial, 1957, p. 17	Secondary
Concepción and Santa María Island	1563	“El Gobernador, que en la Concepción tenía noticia de lo que passaba en Arauco y del prolijo cerco, embió un barco con comida y municiones. El barquero, que consigo llebaba tres españoles y cuatro negros, viendo que todavía duraba el cerco... retiróse a la isla de Santa María... En ese tiempo los indios de la isla estaban alzados, y como el barquero saltase a tierra, aunque iba avisado y con orden que no tomase tierra en la isla ni en Arauco, salieron los indios a él y le degollaron con los otros tres españoles y los negros con el barco se escaparon y fueron a la Concepción a contar el suceso”	De Rosales, (1674) 1878, p. 126	Primary

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Cañete	1563	“El capitán Alonso Benítez, dueño de un navío de cabotaje, cuando se despobló la ciudad de Cañete, llevó españoles y esclavos a Valdivia”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 424	Secondary
Concepción	1565-1566	“Item para que el dicho [doctor Torres de Vera] pueda pasar tres esclavos”; “Item para que [el licenciado Navia] pueda pasar tres esclavos libres de derecho,” “Item para que [el doctor Diego Martínez de Peralta] pueda llevar tres esclavos libres de derechos”	Campos <i>et al.</i> , 1992, pp. 74, 79, 100	Secondary
Concepción	1567-1570	“Diego, negro (libre) herrador. En 1567 recibió dos fanegas de trigo de la Real Hacienda, Concepción... en 1574 recibe botas, borceguíes y sombrero de fieltro forrado”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 423	Secondary
Concepción	1568	“El capitán don Gonzalo Mejía, alguacil mayor de corte, recibió un negro trompeta para que sirviese en el ejército bajo sus órdenes”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 422	Secondary
Concepción	1569	“Caravajal, era otro negro de propiedad del rey... fue llevado por Agustín de Ahumada desde Tucapel, y entregado al factor Rodrigo de Vega Sarmiento en Concepción”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 422	Secondary
Concepción	1569	García Paredes, Royal Attorney, denounces that the Hearers of the Real Audiencia harassed him “porque lo defendí a un negro de Juan de Molines que lo deshacía por mandado del dicho Hernán de Solares y por ello reñimos”	Medina, 1956, p. 120	Secondary
Concepción	1569	“Diego, mulato carpintero, recibe una fanega de trigo de la Real Hacienda de Concepción”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 424	Secondary
Cañete	1570	“El general Martín Ruiz de Gamboa... sacó un negro marinero de la fragata del rey con otras cosas que llevó a otra fragata para Tucapel”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 422	Secondary
Concepción	1571	“Antón, negro libre, vivía en Concepción, aparece en un reparto de trigo realizado por la Real Hacienda... en 1571, en que recibe una fanega”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 423	Secondary
Concepción	1571	“En Concepción... el mulato Antón de Guzmán”	Vial, 1957, p. 20	Secondary

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1571	“Francisco, negro esclavo del fundidor Cristóbal Díaz, zapatero. Vivía en Osorno en 1571, año en que fue secuestrado... Fue sacado del depósito por el licenciado Egas Venegas para llevarlo consigo desde Osorno a Concepción”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 422	Secondary
Concepción	1574	“Don Antonio Bernal Benavente, pasó a Chile desde la ciudad de Los Reyes, y desde Valparaíso a Concepción fue transportado por Andrés Pérez en su navío, con dos piezas, es decir esclavos”	Muñoz Correa, 2019, p. 424	Secondary
Arauco	1578	After facing spanish soldiers, Francis Drake’s men captured “un negro de los nuestros prendieron en tierra y le metieron dentro y le convidaron con libertad no la queriendo, habiendo estado un dia y una noche con ellos le echaron fuera”	Medina, 1957, p. 385	Secondary
Santiago	1581	Mateo married Isabel, both born in Concepción. He is registered as “negro”	FamilySearch, 2020	Primary
Angol and Concepción	1593	“Los mulatos Dionisio y Sebastián del Castillo, hijos que hubo Elena, negra esclava de Martín de Algaraya” “Ambos africanos vivían en Angol, hacia 1590. El mayor, Dionisio, era libre, y soldado en el fuerte de Longotoma; el menor, esclavo de Hernando Ortiz de Algaraya” “Ambos fueron capturados en diciembre de 1593... se les sometió a un exhaustivo interrogatorio... ante el escribano de Concepción”	Vial, 1957: 27-28; Mellafe, 1959, p. 101.	Secondary

As for the enslaved of Governors Valdivia⁴⁵ and Hurtado de Mendoza,⁴⁶ we cannot rule out that they did not carried out domestic service, a situation that is repeated in the case of the hearers of the Royal Audience⁴⁷ and perhaps in the case of Captain Andrés de Pereda.⁴⁸ Also, we can see that even when there was not a proper law that provided the enslaved a legal status, there were a few

⁴⁵ De Bibar, *Crónica y relación copiosa*. De Rosales, *Historia General*, 495.

⁴⁶ De Góngora y Marmolejo, *Historia de Chile*; Medina, *Colección de Documentos Inéditos*, Tomo 27.

⁴⁷ Campos et al., *Real Audiencia*.

⁴⁸ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*.

Imperial officers that did not hesitate to denounce ill-treatment of them,⁴⁹ even when this was committed by high-rank Imperial officers. This was based on the laws that regulated slavery both in Castilla as in the West Indies.⁵⁰

To conclude the case of enslaved males, we can mention that the number of freed men on the list is surprising. As mentioned above, only Juan Valiente is recognized with this status, but we cannot ignore the case of Cristóbal Varela,⁵¹ who appears as a neighbor of Concepción in two periods, in both cases as a freed man. As for enslaved females,⁵² there are three cases of freed women married to neighbors of Concepción.⁵³

To reinforce the idea that the presence of Afro-descendants during the 16th century was not a trivial aspect, we rescued the mention of the founding act of the hospital of “Our Lady of Mercy” in 1577. This document indicates that in the premises will be admitted “(...) todos los hombres y mujeres así españoles como indios y negros que verdaderamente fueran pobres sin excluir a nadie (...)”.⁵⁴ By this document, it is revealed the demographic importance that this group had during these years in the city.

The 17th century

During the 17th century, news of the presence of Afro-descendants in the area decreased markedly (see Table 2). Despite the sparseness of the data, some interesting trends can be observed. Firstly, the population continuity of the descendants of the first-generation Africans, reflected in the case of Ventura Beltrán de Mella, Juan de la Cerda Galiano and Pedro Gil,⁵⁵ whose mothers were freed women, as mentioned above. They reached high ranks of official military, so clearly their ancestry did not become an impediment to accessing these positions. Along with the data provided by Mellafe⁵⁶ of the birth of an Afro-descendant in the city, the presence of the above-mentioned officers became the starting point to the birth of the first *Criollo* (Chilean-born) Afro-descendants.

⁴⁹ José Toribio Medina, *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de Chile. 1515-1818. Segunda Serie, Tomo 1, 1518-1572: Rodrigo de Quiroga – M. Bravo de Saravia*.

⁵⁰ Chloe Ireton, “Black Africans’ freedom litigations suits to define just war and just slavery in the early Spanish empire”.

⁵¹ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*.

⁵² Soto, “Las mujeres negras”.

⁵³ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*. Soto, “Las mujeres negras”.

⁵⁴ Daniel Stewart, *Historia urbana de la ciudad histórica de Penco: tsunamis, terremotos y guerra (Concepción 1551-1751)*, p. 215.

⁵⁵ Stewart, *Historia urbana*.

⁵⁶ Mellafe, *La introducción*.

On the other hand, we see a continuity in the crafts carried out by Afro-descendants, linked once again with military and domestic service,⁵⁷ especially associated with ecclesiastical officials.⁵⁸ In this sense, it can be said that one of the most significant events for promoting the influx of enslaved Africans will be precisely the arrival of the Jesuits, mainly through the encouragement made by Alonso de Ovalle.⁵⁹ The above resulted in the installation of several missions, *haciendas* and schools on the imperial border.⁶⁰ It is known that, although the priests of the Order of Jesus were opposed to indigenous slavery in all of the Americas, they did not have the same position with enslaved brought from Africa. This position will be maintained over time and will be reflected with greater emphasis in the next century. Also, it is worth mentioning the presence of a small-scale local slave market, which allowed the movement of enslaved between urban areas.⁶¹

Table 2. Mention of afro descendants in Concepción and nearby areas during the 17th century (prepared by authors)

<i>Localización</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1600-1610	“En Concepción actúa también un organismo similar [de negros y mulatos libres y disciplinantes]”	Vial, 1957, p. 114.	Secondary
Rere	1602	“En 1560 el solar era de don Bernardino Beltrán de Mella y su esposa Catalina (see Table 1). Ellos tuvieron un hijo: Ventura Beltrán de Mella, quien nació en Concepción en 1565. En el año 1602 se encontraba en el recién formado Ejército de Arauco, en el fuerte de Buena Esperanza”	Stewart, in press, p. 52	Secondary
Concepción	1609-1678	“En el año 1609, este solar formaba parte de la viña del capitán Juan de la Cerda Galiano (son of Leonor y Alonso Galiano, see table 1) y doña Baltasara Villagra. Su hijo, Cristóbal de la Cerda Galiano, heredó la viña cerca del año 1655”	Stewart, in press, p. 114.	Secondary

⁵⁷ Diego Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile IV*; Daniel Stewart, “Elite militar y formación económica de un espacio regional: Concepción 1598-1700 (Tierra, población y mercado)”.

⁵⁸ Pello, “Los últimos días”.

⁵⁹ Alonso de Ovalle, *Historica relación del Reyno de Chile y de las misiones y ministerios que exercita en la Compañía de Jesús*.

⁶⁰ Alejandro Díaz, “Los poblados coloniales del Biobío, una urbanización autoritaria desde arriba”.

⁶¹ Alvaro Jara, “Pineda y Bascuñán, hombre de su tiempo (tres documentos)”.

<i>Localización</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1615	“Entre los criollos de Chile había 7 sin otra especificación; los otros eran: 1 de Coquimbo, 1 de Santiago y 1 de Concepción”	Mellafe, 1959, p. 201	Secondary
Concepción	1620-1630	After the death of Bishop Luis Jerónimo de Oré, in the inventory of his possessions is mentioned “un negro esclauo Juan Castellano”	Pello, 2000, p. 166	Secondary
Concepción	1624	“Este solar era del conquistador Giraldo Gil. El murió antes del año 1563 y su viuda doña Juana Lezcano (see Table 1) y sus hijos tuvieron que acudir a la real justicia para mantener la sucesión legal de su encomienda en el valle de Itata. En el año 1600 encontramos en la mitad del solar a su hijo, el capitán Pedro Gil”	Stewart, in press, p. 38	Secondary
Chillán	1641	Diego Pérez de Molina sells his enslaved Antón to Francisco Núñez de Pineda	Jara, 1954, p. 80	Secondary
Castro	1641	Juan Bautista Ferrufino, head of the jesuits, mentions to the king of Spain, that in the Frontier Houses “...sirven negros e indios...”	Díaz, 2012, p. 42	Secondary
Rere	1653	Capitán Felipe de Macaya reports the existace of “...321 personas de servicios entre negros, indios, esclavos y libres...”	Inostroza, 2018, p. 114	Secondary
Concepción	1655	“(Al salir de Concepción) arrastrado por un fuerte temporal de viento noreste, ese barco pasó más allá del puerto de su destino (Valdivia), y fue a estrellarse... en los arrecifes de la costa del sur... El buque se llamaba San José... entre tripulación y pasajeros no llevaba más que treinta y dos individuos, distribuidos en la forma siguiente: 18 epañoles, un clérigo, dos mujeres, cuatro negros y siete indios de servicio”	Barros Arana, 2000, p. 339-340	Secondary

<i>Localización</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1665	Antón, Isabel Azocar's enslaved, in charge of pulpería (marketplace) sales. "(...) indicó que ella había comprado su posición en la pulpería de un esclavo negro de la señora llamado Antón"	Stewart, 2015, p. 213	Secondary
Arauco	1695	Negro Luis, soldier acting as Trumpet	Stewart, 2015, p. 457	Secondary

Finally, it must be said that, although the records may be scarce, there are two considerations in this regard: the first is related to the fact that during the first half of the 16th century the population of the city of Concepción did not reach one hundred people,⁶² so this low record of Afro-descendants would be correlated with the city's demography; the second has to do with the data provided by Vial⁶³ and by Inostroza.⁶⁴

The first author mentions the existence of a religious brotherhood of enslaved in Concepción, which must have had a significant number of members to be able to configure itself as such and have participated in religious festivals. As for Inostroza, he mentions the presence of service enslaved in Rere, a town located about 60 km southeast of Concepción, as shown in Table 2. Granting the fact that within this number subjugated indigenous people are also mentioned, if we are conservative and consider that a quarter of them effectively corresponds to Afro-descendants, this figure is still close to 80 people.

Finally, we must mention the fact that during the 17th century as part of the agreements made in the parliaments of the Defensive War, there is an explicit mention to the obligation of the Mapuche to "devolver a los soldados españoles, mestizos o negros que ingresen a sus tierras",⁶⁵ in agreement with the desertions seen in the 16th century.

The 18th Century

The review of the Afro-descendant presence in the 18th century shows an increase in the mentions (see Table 3). It must be mentioned that during this century, imperial politics was in charge of the Bourbon administration. This

⁶² Jaime Valenzuela, *Las Liturgias del Poder. Celebraciones Públicas y Estrategias Persuasivas en Chile Colonial (1609-1709)*.

⁶³ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*.

⁶⁴ Inostroza, *El mercado regional*.

⁶⁵ Luz María Méndez, "Diálogos entre españoles e indígenas en los Parlamentos del siglo XVI y XVII".

stimulated the realization of multiple registrations and a general census to learn about the social and population composition in overseas territories, as well as taking control of this data from the Catholic Church.⁶⁶ So, compared with the previous century, the rise of mentions can be because of this reason.

Again, it can be established that the trend of the participation of Afro-descendants is concentrated again in the army⁶⁷ —although this time only in positions of lesser hierarchy— and in domestic service.⁶⁸ Within this, two phenomena can be observed: the first of them is that it is the ecclesiastical orders and authorities whom concentrate the greatest number of enslaved at their service,⁶⁹ maintaining the trend observed in the 17th century.

Also, we can see that, although Concepción continues to maintain the largest number of enslaved, there is greater territorial diversification in terms of their presence and their offspring living in both urban and rural areas.⁷⁰ In addition, it must be said that the highest number of mentions of enslaved females occurs during this century compared to previous ones, without considering the cases where their gender has not been established. In this regard, we believe that the phenomenon observed in Santiago by Cussen *et al.*⁷¹ repeated in Concepción. These authors point out that enslaved women were more appreciated by the local growing elite, since their employment in domestic service was a symbol of status. Furthermore, we cannot rule out that this increase is due to the Bourbon policy.

Another important aspect is that enslaved were subjects of right and law, being able to file lawsuits for ill-treatment against their owners, as well as having the possibility of inheriting land bequeathed by them. Consistent with what has been mentioned before, all the accusers of abuses were enslaved females.⁷² Added to this is the statement made by Bishop Azúa in the Synods of Concepción conducted in 1744. Here it is mentioned that the church

⁶⁶ Enrique Fernández, “Desarrollo de la administración borbónica en el virreinato del Río de la Plata y Chile. La cuestión de los censos y los cementerios (1777-1813)”; José Ragás, “Ideólogos del Leviatán. Estadística y sociedad en el Perú (1791-1876)”.

⁶⁷ Stewart, *Historia urbana*; “Elite militar.”

⁶⁸ Julio Retamal, “Fidelidad conyugal en Chile colonial”; Stewart, *Historia urbana*.

⁶⁹ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*; Raúl Sánchez, “Entre la cruz y la razón: El colegio jesuita de la Limpia Concepción (Chile 1610-1767)”; “La Empresa Económica Jesuita en el Obispado de Concepción (Chile): 1610-1767”.

⁷⁰ Francisco de Solano, *Relaciones Económicas del Reino de Chile*; Contreras, “Población africana”.

⁷¹ Cussen, Llorca-Jaña and Droller, “The dynamics and determinants of slave prices”.

⁷² Ignacio Chuecas, “‘Venta es dar una cosa cierta por precio cierto’. Cultura jurídica y esclavitud infantil en pleitos fronterizos chilenos (1673-1775)”; Soto, “Las mujeres negras”; González Undurraga, *Esclavos y esclavas*.

shall guarantee the Afro-descendants rights,⁷³ reaffirming the priests as their guarantors, denouncing their enslavers before the authorities in case of abuses against them.⁷⁴ This opens up an interesting perspective on the agency of both enslaved ones and enslavers, in terms of crossed and self-perceptions. This will be discussed further.

Table 3. Mentions of afro descendants in Concepción and nearby areas during the 18th century (prepared by the authors)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1700	Negro Juan Antonio, soldier acting as Trumpet	Stewart, 2015, p. 487	Secondary
Concepción	1700	“...doña Gabriela de la Barra, mujer del maestre de campo don Juan de la Vega y Castillo, dio a luz una niña llamada Catalina... con don Luis de Alarcón Cortés, y la dio a criar a la mulata Francisca de Alarcón...”	Retamal, 2005, p. 63	Secondary
Concepción	1709	María Nicolasa Marquez, enslaved mulata, sold to a new owner and moved from Santiago to Concepción. This after a gruesome story with her previous owner and subsequent litigation	Flusche and Korth, 1983, p. 12	Secondary
Conuco	1717	“Llevó el capitán general Mateo Camaño de orden del Padre Antonio Covarrubias entonces procurador 2 mil pesos a Buenos Aires, para comprar negros con ellos... Compró el susodicho Camaño con los dichos dos mil pesos nueve negros...”	Sánchez, 2009, p. 152	Secondary
Concepción	1719	“La negra Francisca, en 1719, declara en un juicio de redhibitoria, acerca de encontrarse enferma por el exceso de trabajo a que era sometida por su ama”	Soto, 1998, p. 38	Secondary

⁷³ De Azúa, *Sínodo de Concepción*, pp. 135, 136, 139, 150.

⁷⁴ Carlos Oviedo, “La defensa del indio en el Sínodo de Obispo Azúa de 1744”.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1725	In Comisario General Miguel de Ulloa's assets are mentioned "... un negro esclavo nombrado Francisco. Viudo con una hija de seis años, nombrada María Josepha sujeta á esclavitud y el negro de más de edad de sesenta años. Y ten otro negro esclavo llamado Antonio de edad de sinquenta [sic] años, casado con Agustina negra esclava de edad de treinta y sinco [sic] años, con dos hijos, Phelipe y Ramón, el uno de diez años años, y el otro de dos. Y ten otro negro esclavo llamado Joseph de edad sesenta años"	De Segura, 1725	Primary
Concepción	1728	"Este solar pertenecía a María Fernández de Villalta, quien testó ante el escribano de Concepción el 15 de diciembre de 1728, dejándolo a sus dos esclavos negros Juan y Gregoria"	Stewart, en prensa, p. 173	Secondary
Santiago	1733	Joseph married Antonia, both born in Concepción. He is registered as "mulato." She is registered as "negra"	FamilySearch, 2020	Primary
Concepción	1735	Negro Miguel, soldier acting as Trumpet	Stewart, en prensa, p. 252	Secondary
Santiago	1735	Juan de Abila married Manuela, both born in Concepción. She is registered as "mulata"	FamilySearch, 2020	Primary
Concepción	1746-1760	"Toro y Zambrano, obispo de Concepción, detentaba diez esclavos." Also, he "declined to liberate his sister's slaves, Floriana and María Isabel"	Vial, 1957, p. 110; Flusche and Korth, 1983, p. 15	Secondary
Los Ángeles	1762	Brígida Dionisia Mardones, enslaved, mother of eight children and grandmother of four grandchildren, denounces that her granddaughter Maria de la Cruz is kept enslaved, despite her condition of freed woman.	Chuecas, 2017, p. 181-183	Secondary

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1767	“El inventario de 1767 señala la existencia de ocho mujeres y tres hombres: Teresa de Jesús (70 años), dos llamadas Josefa (mulatas de 50 años), Narcisa (mulata de 30 años), Rosa (mulata de 25 años), Marcelina (mulata de 14 años), María Mercedes (mulatilla de 5 años), Gabriela (mulatilla de 3 años), Antonio (60 años), José Antonio (25 años) y Valentín (mulato de 25 años)”	Sánchez, 2006, p. 199	Secondary
Chillán	1770	Polonia Mulata, enslaved, denounces her owner Isabel Balderrama for misstreatments	González Undurraga, 2014, p. 185	Secondary
Coelemu	1779	"Francisco Márquez tiene 50 cuadras de tierra... Las trabaja con libres españoles y mestizos, y solo tiene un esclavo"	De Solano, 1994, p. 133	Secondary
Coelemu	1779	"Claudio Rodríguez tiene 25 cuadras de tierra... Trabaja con libres españoles, mestizos e indios y sólo un esclavo"	De Solano, 1994, p. 133	Secondary
Quirihue	1779	"Gregoria Mendoza, 2000 cuadras de tierra. Padece de langosta, 500 ovejas, 50 vacas, 84 yuntas de bueyes. Un esclavo..."	De Solano, 1994, p. 136	Secondary
Quirihue	1779	"Juan Ángel Palma, 1000 cuadras de tierra... 900 vacas, 30 mulas, 80 yeguas, 16 caballos, 8 yuntas de bueyes. Un esclavo..."	De Solano, 1994, p. 137.	Secondary
Quirihue	1779	"Micaela Llanos, 2000 cuadras de tierra... 100 vacas, 2 yuntas de bueyes, 16 mulas, 50 yeguas, 6 caballos, un esclavo..."	De Solano, 1994, p. 137	Secondary
Conuco	1779	"Antonio Rodríguez, 4000 cuadras de tierra... 500 vacas, 600 mulas, 10 yuntas de bueyes, 150 yeguas, 1000 ovejas, 2 esclavos..."	De Solano, 1994, p. 138	Secondary

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1779	Mayor Mateo de Sotomayor reports “Que todos componen el número 708 vecinos y sus familias. Con otros pocos individuos de poca consideración suben al número de 6078 personas y entre ellas 35 mulatos y negros”	De Solano, 1994, p. 144	Secondary
Puchacay	1779	“Manuela Quevedo...tiene un mayordomo, su mujer y cuatro hijos. Un esclavo de la dicha señora, casado con siete hijos”	De Solano, 1994, p. 168	Secondary
Puchacay	1779	“ [En] La estancia [de] Domingo Ozores, subsiste en ella con su mujer, una negra y negro esclavo”	De Solano, 1994, p. 174	Secondary
Rere	1779	Corregidor Manuel Montero y Lavín indicates the presence of six mulatos	De Solano, 1994, p. 185	Secondary
Yumbel	1779	Corregidor Manuel Montero y Lavín indicates the presence of five mulatos	De Solano, 1994, p. 185	Secondary
Tucapel	1779	Corregidor Manuel Montero y Lavín indicates the presence of one mulato	De Solano, 1994, p. 185	Secondary
Los Ángeles	1779	Corregidor Manuel Montero y Lavín indicates the presence of three mulatos	De Solano, 1994, p. 185	Secondary
Concepción	1792	Benito Baca “hijo legítimo de Ignacio Baca y Josefa Flores, que era de Concepción. Luego en 1797, Benito Baca fue designado ‘cuarterón’”	Contreras Segura, 2013, p. 222	Secondary

To finalize the 18th century, we would like to refer to some data that should be handled with caution. This corresponds to a demographic study by Carmagnani,⁷⁵ who estimates a total of 76,288 inhabitants in Concepcion by 1781. Of this, 0.7% would have been Afro-descendants. Although this number may sound reduced, this percentage would refer to more than 500 Africans or Afro-descendants in the area. We express our reservations on this number, since the author does not clearly establish whether he refers to the city of

⁷⁵ Marcello Carmagnani, “Colonial Latin America demography: growth of Chilean population, 1700-1830”.

Concepción or the Bishopric of Concepción. Considering the revised data, the figure appears to be more related to the second case.

The 19th century

The presence of Afro-descendants in the 19th century is similar with what was observed previously, such as most of the concentration of Afro-descendants in Concepción (see Table 4). In this regard, we must remember that the 19th century marks an inflection regarding the condition of slavery of Afro-descendants in Chile: the declaration of Freedom of Wombs law in 1811.

Table 4. Mention of Afro descendants in Concepción and nearby areas during the 19th century (prepared by the authors)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1770-1820	“De los 144 varones de linaje africano desposados en Valparaíso, la mayoría (55%) eran criollos nacidos en Chile... repartiéndose la mayoría en porcentajes similares entre Santiago (47%), Valparaíso (46%), Concepción (6%)... en el caso de las novias de linaje africano... sólo cuatro (4%) de Concepción”	Contreras Segura, 2013, pp. 131-132	Secondary
Isla Santa María-Concepción-Talcahuano	1805	The 72 enslaved Senegalese (among men, women and children) mutinied on the Trial frigate, were captured. Of them, nine were executed and two exiled to Valdivia. The names of some of the condemned were Mura, Mori, Babo, Atufal, Matanqui and Lichi	Pinto, 1986	Secondary
Concepción	1807	“Thomas Delphin... one of Concepcion’s most prosperous merchants... married a girl from Lima, who brought to the marriage a few slaves...”	Kinsbruner, 1972, p. 42	Secondary
Concepción	1811	Juan Pablo Fretes, Canonical of the Bishopric of Concepción, grants freedom to his enslaved Joaquín Fretes, José Carmelo Villagrán y María de los Santos	Guarda, 2011, p. 294	Secondary

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1812	The census accounts for 2350 persons under the label of “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
San José de la Mocha	1812	The census accounts for 79 persons under the label of “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Ninhue	1812	The census accounts for 518 persons under the label of “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Colemu	1812	The census accounts for 407 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Florida	1812	The census accounts for 1474 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813), 1953, p. 370	Primary
Chillán	1812	The census accounts for 442 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Pemuco	1812	The census accounts for 633 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Los Ángeles	1812	The census accounts for 625 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizo y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Santa Bárbara	1812	The census accounts for 365 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Ranquil	1812	The census accounts of seven persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Talcamavida	1812	The census accounts for 13 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Virquico	1812	The census accounts for 655 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary
Yumbel	1812	The census accounts for 22 persons under the label “Negros, Mestizos y Mulatos”	Egaña, (1813) 1953, p. 370	Primary

<i>Location</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Source</i>
Concepción	1814	Joaquín Fretes, Tadeo Mateluna, (Sargento Primero); Santos Latus (Cabo Segundo de Compañía de Cazadores); Pablo Guerra and Manuel Tobar (soldados) and Anselmo Castro (Cabo Primero de Granaderos), were listed as part of the Batallón de Infantes de la Patria	Contreras Cruces, 2011	Secondary
Concepción	1818	Bernardo O'Higgins orders to guard the Trinitarias order monastery, with a platoon composed of "... negros armados de fusiles y sables"	Muñoz Olave, 1918, p. 151	Secondary
Talcahuano- Concepción	1820	Ramón Freire disembarks at the port with the aim of expelling the Royalist presence in the zone. Among his men was José Romero, known as "El Zambo Peluca". He also participated in the Battle of la Alameda, a definitive victory for the Patriot army	Diggs, 1952	Secondary

From the records collected before that date, it can be seen that there were cases of enslaved people dedicated to domestic service, mostly by landowners⁷⁶ or colonial officials.⁷⁷ Likewise, we can see the participation of enslaved African as part of the marital dowries.⁷⁸ It is quite conspicuous that at this time the participation of Africans or Afro-descendants in the Spanish army completely disappeared from the sources, unlike what was observed previously.

As mentioned above, enslaved Africans or Afro-descendants were considered subjects of law, one of them being the freedom of marriage law. An example of this can be seen in the Valparaíso's records collected by Contreras Segura,⁷⁹ which showed several people married there but born in Concepción. If we compare this situation with the already mentioned mutineers of the *Trial*, it provides evidence of alternative ways of living for enslaved Africans and afro-descendants. As we mentioned previously, this is one of the best-

⁷⁶ Arnoldo Pacheco, "Élite económica de Concepción a comienzos del siglo XIX".

⁷⁷ Amunátegui, *El Cabildo de Concepción*.

⁷⁸ Jay Kinsbruner, "The political status of the Chilean merchants at the end of the colonial period: The Concepción example, 1790-1810".

⁷⁹ Contreras, "Población africana".

known stories by the current *Penquista* society and that has received the most attention, so we will move on to further topics.⁸⁰

The decree of the Freedom of Wombs and the non-admission of new enslaved ones in the national territory, had an impact also in Concepción. Here, the canon Juan Pablo Fretes, granted freedom to his three enslaved.⁸¹ To this we must add the first national census in 1813, under the Carrera administration. Although this excluded Concepción, Egaña⁸² brings together the information collected the previous year, which records the number of a little over 2400 people under the label of “negros, mestizos y mulatos”. Regardless of the percentage of Afro-descendants within this number, it is greater than the one reported by Mayor Sotomayor in the late 18th century.

Before moving on, we must mention the case of the San José de la Mocha Mission. This religious installation was located outside of Concepción and was the place where Mapuche exiles from Mocha Island were moved in the 17th century.⁸³ Here, by the year 1812, the presence of almost 60 people under the label of “negros, mestizos y mulatos” was reported. In this regard, we can say that recent bioarchaeological studies carried out on human skeletal remains recovered in this sector show the presence of African traits in teeth.⁸⁴

Already within the independence process, we must mention the formation of the *Infantes de la Patria* Battalion, made up of enslaved Afro-descendants with a promise of freedom since, with the *Reconquista*, the Freedom of Wombs was null and void. In consequence, the abolition of slavery became a reality by 1823.⁸⁵ This platoon also had the presence of enslaved from Concepción, being able to identify at least six soldiers⁸⁶ from the area within this military corp of the *Ejército Libertador de los Andes*. The last reference that we have of Afro-descendants in Concepción and its surrounding areas during the

⁸⁰ For more details, see Oliver and Zapatta, *Libro de Oro de la Historia de Concepción*; Pinto, “Una rebelión de negros”; Javiera Carmona, “De Senegal a Talcahuano: Los Esclavos de un Alzamiento en la Costa Pacífica (1804)”; Jorge Pinto, “Una rebelión de esclavos y el desarraigo en la historia. El caso de la Fragata Trial, 1804”.

⁸¹ Carlos Guarda, “Negros libres y esclavos en los ejércitos revolucionarios de Chile y el Río de la Plata”, 287-295

⁸² Juan Egaña, *Censo de 1813*.

⁸³ For more details, see Francis Goicovich and Daniel Quiroz, *De insulares a continentales. La historia de los mochanos, desde los orígenes hasta su desintegración social en la misión de San José de la Mocha*.

⁸⁴ For more details, see Pedro Andrade et al., “De desterrados y marginales: reconstrucción bioarqueológica de la población de la misión colonial de San José de la Mocha, Concepción, Chile (siglo XVII al siglo XIX)”.

⁸⁵ Thomas Mareite, “Slavery, resistance(s) and abolition...”, pp. 372-403.

⁸⁶ Hugo Contreras, “Artesanos mulatos y soldados beneméritos. El Batallón de Infantes de la Patria en la Guerra de Independencia de Chile, 1795-1820”.

Patria Nueva, is the participation in the forces that were seeking to defeat and expel the Royalist army.⁸⁷

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

After this review, we can establish three lines of discussion regarding the presence of Afro-descendants in Concepción. The first of them refers to the continuous mentions in the historical sources. In this regard, during the 16th century their number was important, and then almost disappeared from the records in the 17th century. They became regularly present again in 18th and 19th century sources.

It must be established that fluctuation of enslavement in Concepción is just a reflection of the national reality. In fact, it is worth mentioning how the arrival of the enslaved to Chile occurred between the 16th and 19th centuries, to understand how their presence in the country came to be.

At the beginning of the Conquest, two trade routes by which enslaved Afro-descendants arrived in Chile have been identified. Both were monopolized and controlled by Portuguese enslavers, trafficking people from Western Africa.⁸⁸ The first of these was the Pacific route, which connected Panama-Philippines-Lima, the latter being the port from which Chile was integrated and from which the kingdom received its enslaved. This route was maintained until the end of the 16th century. The second route was the so-called Continental, which was also controlled by Portuguese enslavers installed in Brazil, from where the enslaved passed to Buenos Aires, to then cross the Andes and reach Chile. This route replaced the previous one, remaining until the first half of the 17th century.

Added to these routes is the fact that nobles (both bureaucratic and military) and clergymen were allowed to move their enslaved ones with them when requesting permission to enter Chile. In this way, many of the enslaved who arrived during the 16th century did not do it by a formal route but entered following their enslavers to the south of the New World. The latter seems to be the main way in which many of the enslaved historically registered during this time came to Concepción.⁸⁹

During the 17th century, two events occurred at a national and even continental level that affected the arrival of the enslaved in Chile. The first of these refers to the fact that the local economy was sustained mainly by the *encomienda system*, which meant a drop in the arrival of enslaved.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Muñoz Olave, *Las Monjas Trinitarias*. Irene Diggs “Zambo-Peluca”.

⁸⁸ Mellafe, *La introducción*; Cussen, Llorca-Jaña and Droller, “The dynamics and determinants of slave prices”.

⁸⁹ Mellafe, *La introducción*.

⁹⁰ Vial, *El africano en el Reino de Chile*.

The second is the fact that the Portuguese left the slave trade since their disputes with Spain. This reduced the arrival of enslaved people to Chile and to the Americas. Human trafficking did not resume until the end of this century by the Portuguese, although with much less strength than in previous years. Additionally, French traffickers will be added, to supply the demand for African labor to the New World.⁹¹

As can be seen, the decrease in the number of Afro-descendants in Concepción at this time is not a phenomenon that should be considered isolated. On the contrary, it responded to a continental circumstance of reduction of human trafficking and not to the traditional arguments that explained this absence, such as the low adaptability to cold.

With the dawn of the 18th century, the arrival of the enslaved was revitalized throughout South America, because of the entry of English human traffickers since 1713.⁹² Hence, the English Seat of Buenos Aires, became the main supplier of enslaved to Chile, following and formalizing the old Continental route and adding a route through the Magellan Strait.⁹³ Both routes continued until the 19th century. Considering this, we can once again observe a similarity between these data and what happened in Concepción, where an increase in the presence of Afro-descendants compared to the previous century can be seen.

It must be remembered what has been mentioned by Cussen *et al.*,⁹⁴ concerning the price of enslaved people. Regarding this, it is important to recall the increased number of enslaved females who arrived in Chile during the 18th century, despite their higher price compared with enslaved males. Then, it is believed that the statement that enslaved were not present in Chile due to their costs, does not seem to have any historical support, at least during the 18th century. However, what in fact seems like consistent is that the possession of enslaved female Afro-descendants has been identified as restricted to the sphere of domestic service, which became a symbol of aristocracy.

Before moving on, we must mention an important event that also occurred at the imperial level and that was also present in Concepción and surrounding areas: the promulgation of the Laws of the Indies in 1680.⁹⁵ In them, the rights held by the enslaved were established. It should be remembered that the possession of enslaved people before the enactment of this law was regulated

⁹¹ Adela Dubinovsky, "El tráfico de esclavos en Chile en el comercio mundial en el siglo XVIII".

⁹² Mellafe, *La Introducción*; Dubinovsky, "El tráfico de esclavos".

⁹³ Alex Borucki, "The Slave Trade to the Río de la Plata, 1777-1812: Trans-Imperial Networks and Atlantic Warfare".

⁹⁴ Cussen, Llorca-Jaña and Droller, "The dynamics and determinants of slave prices".

⁹⁵ Montserrat Arre and Karrizzia Moraga, "Litigios por sevicia de negros y mulatos esclavos. Estrategias de 'sobrevivencia social' en Chile colonial (siglo XVIII)".

by the Seven Parties of Alfonso X.⁹⁶ However, enslaved people now had the possibility of having a formal defender to ensure their rights, in the person of the Defender of the Poor, an official of the Royal Audience. Furthermore, during the 18th century, we see numerous judicial cases of enslaved demanding justice against abuses committed by their enslavers.⁹⁷ Although these were concentrated in Santiago, the sources reviewed show that these processes also occurred in Concepción, Chillán and Los Angeles.

According to Gonzalez Undurruga,⁹⁸ this legal spaces defined the agency of enslaved people and enslavers articulating a judicial context, which is moved from the metropoli to the american colonial territories.⁹⁹ In the first term, it can be acknowledged that there are many court cases regarding defense for enslaved people against the Spanish, which evidences the possibility of acquiring freedom as well as their quality of subjects of law. In the second term, some enslavers viewed enslaved people as property, which meant that they didn't possess any kind of rights. This view acknowledged enslaved people's behavior as damage to their owner's interests. From the perspective of enslaved people, they perceived themselves as subjected bodies (a term that will be discussed later on), but with a social agency, which found its expression in the longing for freedom and civil rights. Finally, the idea of a "good slave"¹⁰⁰ can be observed, whose rights are always violated by abusive enslavers, which only aims to damage the enslaved individual, which had as their only asset to offer their own bodies.

These agencies are evidenced in Gonzalez Undurruga's exhaustive¹⁰¹ revision of legal history during colonial times in Chile, mainly in Santiago, but which also can be found in the legal history of other American viceroyalties. As a consequence, it can be said that enslaver-enslaved relationships were diverse, but always disputing the cross-perceptions of both parties and the often ambiguous legal matters regulating their relationship. Therefore, enslaved bodies alternate between a subject and an object without a distinctive

⁹⁶ Arre and Moraga, "Litigios por sevicia de negros".

⁹⁷ Gonzalez Undurruga, *Esclavos y Esclavas*.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Ireton, "Black Africans".

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ For more details, see Carolina González Undurruga, "Los usos del honor por esclavos y esclavas: del cuerpo injuriado al cuerpo liberado (Chile, 1750-1823)"; González Undurruga, "'Para que mi justicia no perezca'. Esclavos y cultura judicial en Santiago de Chile, segunda mitad del siglo xviii"; *Esclavos y Esclavas*; "Residencia, tránsito y fuga. Una aproximación a la litigación esclava entre Valparaíso y Santiago, 1743-1813"; "La esclavitud en los registros judiciales y en las "leyes de libertad" (Chile, 1810-1823)"; María Velázquez and Carolina González Undurruga, *Mujeres africanas y afrodescendientes: experiencias de esclavitud y libertad en América Latina y África. Siglos xvi al xix*.

difference between the two, configuring a liminal space and changing status in which enslaved people are and develop. This became a place of resistance and insubordination dictated by the body and its agency.¹⁰²

In Concepción this can be seen in Juan Valiente and his search for fame, fortune and freedom for him and his offspring,¹⁰³ as well as in those individuals which actively participated in the Ejército Libertador. Similarly, in non-religious and religious defenders of enslaved people rights, we can mention enslavers that testify in court in favor of their enslaved, acknowledging their limited social rights, as well as enslavers being accused of ill-treatment by their enslaved. Enslaved men and women searching for justice not only represented themselves, but their offspring as well, searching for social recognition and the possibility of freedom.

Going back to our lines of discussion regarding the presence of Afro-descendants in Concepción, the second one refers to the labors performed by enslaved Afro-descendants in Concepción. During the 16th century, many of them served as part of the army, being able to access, in the case of freedmen, important positions in the military elite. This phenomenon continued during the 17th century, until it almost disappeared during the 18th century, and reappeared strongly during the independence process of the 19th century, although on the Patriotic side.

Another situation that we can observe in this review, is that enslaved Africans and their descendants were used mainly in domestic and agricultural service tasks, mostly linked to wealthy neighbors and to religious orders. This is consistent with what was stated about the fact that acquiring enslaved Africans was a privilege that only a small group could access.

In addition, the situation of Afro-descendant women should be analyzed. As can be seen from our review, only those freed and married to conquerors were able to access better living conditions. We can account for this situation only in the early moments of colonial times. For the rest, the fact of serving in agricultural and domestic tasks seems to remain constant, which made them vulnerable to ill-treatment by their enslavers.

Considering all of the above, we can then establish that, unlike what has been suggested in traditional local historiography, the presence of Afro-descendants in Concepción and its surrounding areas does not seem to be so anecdotal since they were a constant population for almost 300 years. Although the cases are mainly concentrated in Concepción, which is to be expected since

¹⁰² Laura Casals, "Africanos y afrodescendientes en el Buenos Aires tardocolonial: una mirada sobre el cuerpo."

¹⁰³ Carolina González Undurraga, "Los usos del honor por esclavos y esclavas: del cuerpo injuriado al cuerpo liberado (Chile, 1750-1823)".

it is and was the main city, the truth is that we can register their presence in a vast nearby territory (see Figure 1).

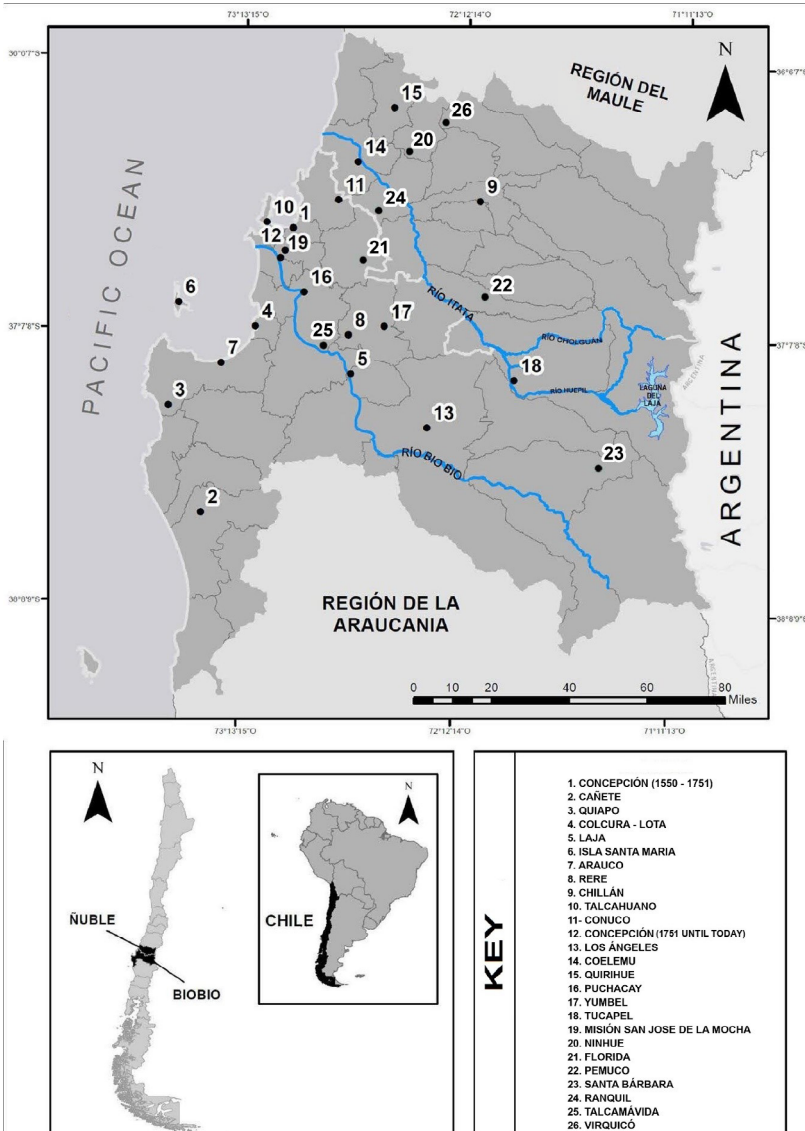


Figure 1. Map of Concepción and surrounding areas.

Faced with all this evidence, our third line of discussion regarding Afro-descendants in Concepción seems more relevant, which has to do with the reasons why their presence has been underestimated, not only from formal historical records but also from local imaginaries. In this regard, we believe that this is due to two main reasons. The first of them has to do with the fact that despite the existence of data that registers Afro-descendants on a daily basis in the area until the 19th century, their presence has been relativized. In this regard, we must also seek the answer in national processes that marked the construction of the history of Chile, to which the local Concepción history did not elude.

In this sense and in a rather theoretical frame identified post hoc, the Chilean colonial society could be understood as a caste society marked by linguistic, geographical, religious and biological components. Thus, blood, lineage and inherited characteristics, all of them socially constructed, defined the “quality” of people and their location in the social stratification. All the above was defined by the concept of “race,” which ultimately determined their position and attributes in colonial society.¹⁰⁴ To this social categorization, another relevant factor must be added: gender. Women were a group whose bodies and relationships were determined by their condition. For example, the African feminine body was reduced to their potential for maternity and subjugated to the political-economic interests of (re)production of enslaved bodies.¹⁰⁵ This articulation of the social fabric had its origins in the conceptualizations of European castes.¹⁰⁶ In the case of Chile, this allowed the development of a racialized, segregated society and an identification/estrangement towards different ethnic groups according to the previously mentioned characteristics. It is worth mentioning, that although the above was primarily due to socially constructed body/blood characteristics, this could be modified by legal/religious means (for example, through marriage).¹⁰⁷ These widely disseminated narratives during the colonial period were perpetuated over time and influenced subsequent historical construction and interpretations.

It must be taken into consideration the fact that the writing of the “Official History of Chile” had exponents,¹⁰⁸ who carried out a process known today as “symbolic whitening”.¹⁰⁹ This refers to the systematic and institutionalized eradication of all population components that departed from the stereotype of the “modern civilized European white man”, an icon of cultural evolutionism

¹⁰⁴ Arre and Capetillán, “E aquí, pues, dos razas distintas”.

¹⁰⁵ Gonzalez Undurraga, “Mujeres esclavizadas”.

¹⁰⁶ Ireton, “Black Africans”.

¹⁰⁷ Gonzalez Undurraga, “Mujeres esclavizadas”.

¹⁰⁸ Arre and Barrenechea, “De la negación”.

¹⁰⁹ Carlos Tur Donatti, “La Argentina blanca y europeizada. La agonía de un mito oligárquico”.

that permeated different social sciences (and from there, the republican society) during the 19th century. Clearly, this condition was not fulfilled by enslaved Africans, whose mere mention was seen as an existential contrast to the aforementioned imaginary of national identity.

During this century, racialism was developed in political, social and historical discourses, based on apparently “objective” perspectives provided by biology studies, raising “race” as the central axis. Thus, the concept of “race,” which originally obeyed scientific, biological and aesthetic elements, began permeating other areas such as politics, linking itself with nationalist discourses and defining its relationship with the concept of “nation” as a synonym of “race”.¹¹⁰

This was the task of the country's intellectual elite during the 19th century, a social group that built the History of Chile based on the idea of progress driven by traditional positivism, where the idea of the white, modern, saxon man emerged as the dominant group and as the only subjects with historical agency.¹¹¹ They not only legitimized its position on the rest of the population, making a history based on their version of the events but also built constant feedback that helped them keep and perpetuated their privileges. The positivist context in which this historiography developed, allowed national history to generate a hegemonic identity that departs from the native inhabitants of Chile and any other cultural background present at the time. Therefore, the existing minority groups were left aside. On the one hand, they were not part of this select group in charge of writing history and, on the other, their incorporation into history went against the principles that this reduced group sought to develop and reproduce.

After the War of the Pacific (1879-1884), the construction of the Chilean nation was defined based on these ideas around the concept of “race,” privileging those mestizo people over minorities since they presented a history linked -although imperfectly- to the European imaginary. The aforementioned was valid for the offspring of Europeans and Indigenous since this type of union indicated the possibility to “validate” this new “breed” as mestizos, a caste with at least a European component and a percentage of “blood” from a population who was never legally enslaved. On the other hand, the offspring of Europeans and Afro-descendants had other labels (such as “mulatto”, “moor,” among others), which meant that they were not at the same level.¹¹² The foregoing allows us to understand that the mestizos were the only present in the racial-national imaginary of the 19th century and later, explaining the process of racial-cultural assimilation from historical symbolic whitening.

¹¹⁰ Arre and Capetillán, “E aquí, pues, dos razas distintas”.

¹¹¹ Del Río, “El lado negro”.

¹¹² Arre and Capetillán, “E aquí, pues, dos razas distintas”.

Our second reason to explain the disappearance of Afro-descendants from the historical and social construction of Concepción, must do with what Mellafe¹¹³ stated. He indicates that after the abolition of slavery, many of the Africans and Afro-descendants who lived in Concepción moved to areas with less hostile weather and geopolitical conditions. An example of this is found in the marriage records of Valparaíso already mentioned.¹¹⁴ To this we add what was indicated by Grubessich,¹¹⁵ who states that the abolition of slavery produced a decrease in endogamy that many Afro-descendants would have maintained (by option or imposition) during the colonial period, producing a greater number of exogamous marriages, preferably with people of indigenous descent. For this author, the reason for the search for exogamy would have been aimed for social recognition and participation by Afro-descendants. Again, this correlates with the search for acceptance and social participation through a kinship mechanism, which allowed descendants to go phenotypically unnoticed.

It is our belief that a mixture of both factors exposed above contributed to the disappearance of the image of Afro-descendants as part of the *Penquista society* between the 16th and 19th centuries, despite the much historical data showing a clear presence in Concepción and surrounding areas. Undoubtedly, the data presented in this study only correspond to a part of the history of the Africans forcibly brought to Concepción, and of their descendants born in the city.

Summarizing, we can say that the “facts” which encourage the belief that the number of Afro-descendants in the current Biobío and Ñuble areas was low and had no impact on the social conformation of their populations¹¹⁶ lack a basis in historical reality. It must be remembered that, as Valenzuela¹¹⁷ has stated, Chilean society rose within a framework of marginality, within the South American colonial reality, a fact that also had repercussions in the slave trade.¹¹⁸ In this regard, we must consider that given the distance from Santiago, the geopolitical tensions with the Mapuche and recurrent natural disasters, transformed Concepción and its surrounding areas into a peripheral zone within this already marginalized reality. Despite this, the processes of arrival and ownership of Afro-descendants in the area did not vary considerably with respect to those experienced at the national level, the main factor of difference being the demographic and spatial scale.

¹¹³ Mellafe, *La introducción*.

¹¹⁴ Contreras, “Población africana”.

¹¹⁵ Grubessich, “Esclavitud en Chile durante el siglo XVIII”.

¹¹⁶ Campos, *Historia de Concepción*.

¹¹⁷ Jaime Valenzuela, *Las Liturgias*.

¹¹⁸ Cussen, Llorca-Jaña and Droller, “The dynamics and determinants of slave prices”.

Finally, it is necessary to state that we do not attempt with this research to lead this subject to a closure. On the contrary, we believe it is essential to review other and more unpublished primary sources, to broaden the discussions, being able to position it and contrast it with other topics, such as indigenous slavery in southern Chile and the presence of enslaved Africans on a continental level. As indicated above, we believe it is necessary to enrich this research by reviewing the reliability of the collected mentions; even so, we consider that this unpublished compilation provides fertile ground for, in future research, to problematize the phenomenon of Afro-descendants in Concepción.

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