

Short Exploration of the Word “Jíbaro”

By

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For some of us in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, the word “Jíbaro” (pronounced *he-ba-ro*) evokes images of proud mountain peasants with peculiar garb, customs, and speech. To others, the very same word describes wild, untamed, unsophisticated, backward, “simple” country people. Often the word is applied to wild animals, dogs in particular. Whatever the case may be, what is certain is that “Jíbar” has become a stereotype that is also synonymous with being a Boricua (Puerto Rican).

In this short paper, we explore the origin of the word. This paper is not intended to be academic in structure, but rather a simple exploration by culturally interested researchers. Our mission is to seek the truth and to offer different perspectives on the word and its background. We hypothesize that the word “Jíbaro” is, in fact, an Indigenous term used originally to describe an Indigenous ethnic element in Caribbean culture; however, we take a slightly different route than other researchers.

Note that there are many theories as to where the word or name “Jíbaro” originated. Some claim that it is of Indigenous origin and that it describes a particular Indigenous group. In fact, there are White-Jíbaro and Afro-Jíbaro in addition to Indio-Jíbaro. We can safely surmise that the name may have had a non-Indigenous origin as well. After all, why would Jíbaro of European and/or African descent wish to be called by an Indigenous designation?

Questions we explore:

- 1) When was the word “Jíbaro” first recorded?
- 2) On which islands is this word used?
- 3) Is the word “Jíbaro” of Taíno Indian origin?
- 4) What do the etymologies reveal?

The Shuar Connection:

The earliest record of the word “Jíbaro” comes to us not from the Caribbean but from Ecuador in South America circa 1550. The head hunting/shrinking Shuar and Achuar Indian people used the word “Xibaro,” which translates to “enemy” in their language.¹ Pronounced *Shi-ba-ro*, the Spaniards spelled and pronounced it as “Jívaro.”

Today the word “Jíbaro” is used in a derogatory manner in Ecuador. Besides, many modern Achuar and Shuar people, upon reflection about the taking of *sansa* (headhunting/head shrinking), today think of

¹ Gnerre, Maurizio, 1973. “Sources of Spanish Jívaro.” *Romance Philology* 27(2): 203–204.

this custom as barbarous. The word “Jívaro” is associated with this custom. Therefore the Shuar and Achuar people reject being called anything other than by their tribal names.

The Kalinago Connection:

In the 1640s, Raymond Breton, a French-Dominican priest and linguist, recorded the Carib language on the island of Dominica. His work has been instrumental in that there were many misconceptions regarding the so-called “Carib Indians” (Kalinago in their language). For example, today we know for certain that the people of Dominica spoke mostly an Arawakan language, not Cariban, which was the ancestral language of these people. How did that happen? As the Kalinago made their way up the island chain, they raided Arawak-speaking villages that they encountered. These raids were mostly for women, and the Kalinago raiding parties were mostly composed of men. As they settled the islands, their women increasingly spoke Arawak. In turn, the women taught Arawak to their offspring, both male and female. Gradually Arawak replaced the original Cariban language of which today there is very little trace.

Raymond Breton observed the following phrase among the Kalinago: “Chibarali Cachionna Yabouloupou,” which meant, “the children are born from savages and negroes.”² To the French, as well as the British, the mixture of Indians and Africans produced offspring who were warlike, hostile, savage, and wild.

The French and Spanish Connection:

The French borrowed the orthographic *s*, *x*, *j*, and *ch* from the Spanish language. Thus “Chibarali” would instead be spelled Xíbarali or Xíbara, seeing as how the ending “li,” although common in Kalinago, is uncommon in Spanish. Miguel Cabrera, a Puerto Rican poet, in 1820 wrote: *Coplas del Jíbaro*. By 1835, the French and Americans were using the term “Xíbaro” in literature as well.

In 1849, Dr. Manuel de Alonzo published his book *Gíbaro*. Why the word evolved from Xíbaro to Gíbaro is unclear, but does raise questions. That aside, what does appear clear is that the South American term “Xíbaro” (Jívaro) was close in both sound and Spanish spelling to the Kalinago term “Xíbarali.” Both also appear to have negative inferences. In fact, it was not until the above-mentioned writings that the word “Jíbaro” became connected to Puerto Rican peasantry and rather romanticized.

Indigenous Taíno Connection?

Quite frankly, there is no Indigenous Taíno connection to the term, at least not in this context. The etymology of the word does not fit. We examined the possibility that the word may be a derivative of “jibe,” which in the Taíno Arawak Language means “sifter” and is commonly used when processing casabe bread or making ayaca (pasteles), thus “Jíbero” could be a mix of both the Taíno word “jibe” and the Spanish suffix “ro.” In fact, many words in Spanish end this way, for example

Plumber—Plomero

Joker—Bromero

² Roberts, Peter A., *The Roots of Caribbean Identity*, page 115.

Barbarian—Bárbaro
Cowboy—Vaquero
Fireman—Bombero
Warrior—Guerrero
Person who takes care of mules—Mulero

It is quite clear from these very short examples that the suffix “ro” is common in Spanish. The word “Jíbaro,” however, was adopted by the Spanish very early, at least by the 1550s, so that this explanation does not appear to describe the word in this context.

Exploration:

We, Rene Perez de Liciaga and Jorge Estevez, pride ourselves on leaving no stone unturned in our research. We are, after all, seeking truth and clarity, regardless of where it may lead us. We believe that passion about what is being researched, although very important, can sometimes blind the researcher.

To answer the four questions listed on the opening page, we explored every instance we could uncover and all uses and spellings of the word “Jíbaro.” We know that the word is and has been used to describe rural people (campesinos), primarily in Puerto Rico; however, the word in this context has been used in other regions, too, the Dominican Republic for example. We also know that a version of this word was used to describe Indians (Native Americans) of mixed race.

There are several other terms for “campesino” as well, which we will explore at a later date. They include:

Guajiro—a Cuban campesino of Native descent

Goajiro—Wayuu Indians of the Goajiro Peninsula between Colombia and Venezuela

Maniguero—a Dominican campesino

Jibari—Dominican mountain folk described as Indio

Indio—used to describe Native people

Jabao—used to describe mixed-blood people with black features (phenotypes), but blond or reddish hair and light skin color

Jíbaro, the Dog, and the Yucatecan Connection:

In Mexico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, Jíbaro is sometimes used to describe a wild dog. Considering that the term “Xíbaro” had a negative connotation beginning at the very least in the 1550s, when it was adopted by Spaniards, it makes sense that they could have extended this name to apply to wild dogs or other animals in the above-named countries. There may be another explanation, however, about how the term became associated with feral dogs or other animals.

One hypothesis about the origin of Jíbaro is that it has a supposed Mayan base. There are some who claim that the island Arawak who greeted Columbus were in fact Mayan! That is, in fact, an unreasonable theory.

Some interesting etymological work on the word “Jíbaro” and others were made by Oscar Lamourt-Valentín and others. Lamourt-Valentín is an author of Puerto Rican descent who spent some time in the Yucatan and Chiapas regions of Mexico. He suggests that the word “Caníbaro” is a Native name that arose from a region on the island of Puerto Rico called Caniba and is related to the Proto-Mayan (hypothetical language) word “Can Chib’al’o.”³

Currently there are individuals of Indigenous Puerto Rican descent who claim that “Taíno” is an incorrect ethnic term for the Natives of what today is Puerto Rico, who should instead be called “Jíbaro” since it connects them to supposed Mayan origins. However, the word Jibaro does not appear in any Mayan dialect. This new theory posits that Jibaro derived from the word “Can’Chib’a’lo, which in turn, over the course of time became Jibaro.

We respectfully, yet totally, disagree with this theory. It is obvious to us that although there are striking cognitive similarities, which will be discussed below, they are nonetheless caused by diffusion across the entire Circum-Caribbean region. Diffusion, however, is not causation. Clearly Taíno traded with Mexican and Central American Native peoples. This fact is not, nor has it ever been, in dispute. Trade between the mainland and the islands, however, was usually in one direction. Mayans and Mexica (Aztecs), being nation states, had open trade markets, whereas Taíno did not. Taíno visited these regions and traded for goods, and in the process they no doubt learned new customs and ideas. Yet Taíno and Mayan societies were vastly different.

In the Spanish Chronicles there is mention of Spaniards encountering Taíno people trading along the coasts of Guatemala and Honduras, so we know for certain that Taíno travelled and traded not only among the Caribbean islands, but also in Central America. What is also

certain is that, to date, no definitive Mayan or Aztec relics have been found on any of the islands.

Let’s take a look at how art can show cultural interchange and adaptation. In our estimation, Taíno art is unique, unlike any in the world. Classic Taíno art, also known as Chican Ostinoide or Chicoide, is what defines Taíno culture and differentiates it from the so-called “Sub-Taíno” Mellican Ostinoid or Mellicoide style of ceramics. In the example below, a single figure produces up to five different shapes within one sculpture. This feature is the driving force of Caribbean art, but is totally absent in Central American art forms.

³ See Wiki Espanol <https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cimarr%C3%B3n> and Lamourt-Valentin, Oscar, *Cannibal Recipes, A socio-linguistic account of indigenous Boricua-Jíbaro culture*, Iowa State University.



Our Taíno ancestors had a perception of reality that was indeed multifaceted. This multifaceted focus in Taíno art is evidenced in the fact that one object can tell a multitude of stories. This makes it clear that Taíno and Maya were two distinct cultures. It is probable, of course, that Taíno borrowed some customs from the Maya as well as from other Meso-American peoples, but these influences were sparse. This conclusion, of course, comes from pure speculation and conjecture more than from definitive evidence. Whatever interactions Taíno may or may not have had with the Maya or Aztecs, it is clear that they did not borrow Mayan or Aztec concepts of wearing clothes, village structure, political organization, art, planting methods, and most importantly, language, among other customs. Besides, at the height of Tainan culture, the Mayan civilization was in decline. One can imagine during this time that some small groups of Maya traveled to the Caribbean, but this would be an assumption with absolutely no supporting tangible evidence.

Sven Loven's *Origins of the Tainan Culture* still gives us one of the clearest windows into the world of the Taíno nearly a hundred years after it was written. Within this enduring work, he often mentions the presence of Yucatan Mayan influence, which is indeed scant. We can chalk it up to simple maritime influence, especially in language, as explained below.

It is a well-known fact that 7,000 years ago migrations from the Yúcatan arrived in the Caribbean. These were, in fact, the first people to arrive on the islands. They were not Mayan. In fact, no one truly knows who these people were. Archaeologically they are referred to as the Casimiroid, although this designation is currently being revised by modern archaeologists. The Mayan civilization had not yet risen. It would be another 3,000 years until the dawn of the Mayan civilization, when the Maya rose out of the jungle. At about this same time, the first wave of Arawaks began arriving in the Caribbean. Mayans had little, if any, impact on the development of the Taíno culture.

The only Caribbean-Meso-American linguistic connection that has ever been made that was not caused by diffusion, comes to us from the Ciguayo people of the Samaná Peninsula of Hispaniola. A mere two

words have survived from that language: “tuob”—the Ciguayan word for gold, and “Quezqueya”—a candidate for the Indigenous name of the island of Hispaniola (of which there most likely several). Both of these words can be found in Honduras in the Eastern Tolan language. The American linguist Julian Granberry stated that the Ciguayo were the last remnants of an ancient Jicquen/Hokan-speaking people who preceded the Arawak into the Caribbean.⁴

This exploration reveals the weakness of a hypothetical connection between the Classic Maya, which arose 4,000 years ago, and the Classic Taíno, whose ancestors arrived in the Caribbean at that same time period. To suggest that Puerto Ricans are in fact a separate Mayan ethnic group is simply not true. Believe it or not, there are some who claim such a thing. Biologically, historically, linguistically, and culturally, we know this attractive notion is simply not true.

Molecular Ancient DNA sequencing has unequivocally confirmed that Native migrations to the Caribbean were primarily from South America, not Central America. In 2015, Dr. Hannes Schroeder, a geneticist and Assistant Professor at the Natural History Museum of Denmark, and his team were able to extract DNA from a skull found in the Bahamas. This skull was 1,000 years old! The skull’s DNA conclusively pointed to a South American origin. No surprise there; however, they then matched this Ancient DNA with that of Modern-day Puerto Ricans (164 individuals to be exact), and every single one of their Native DNA markers matched those of the tooth in addition to that of their South American ancestors.⁵

It is true that Central American Native DNA can be found in the Caribbean today, but most of this DNA is ancient. For example, some villagers in the town of Azua, in the Dominican Republic, have been found to possess mtDNA Haplogroup D, which is not consistent with Taíno, but can be readily found in Central America. This lineage is scant and was found to have entered the island some 4,000 years ago.

Other notable differences between Maya and Taíno:

1) Homes:

Taíno	Bohio and Caney	Round or Oval	Made of Yagua & Cana,	Anyone in the village could live near the sacred houses used as temples
Yucatecan Mayan	Otoch, also Nah	Rectangular	Made of Stone as well as Plant fibers	The peasantry were not allowed to live near the temples

⁴ Granberry, Julian and Gary S. Vescelius, *Languages of the Pre-Columbian Antilles*, pages 27-33.

⁵ Schroeder, Hannes, et al. “Origins and Legacies of the Caribbean Taíno,” February 20, 2018, <https://www.pnas.org/content/115/10/2341>.

2) Stone work

- Taíno used stones for tools, spiritual practices, and jewelry; they did not build homes made of stone, relying instead on plant materials that could be easily replaced after storms or floods and on caves for protection during hurricanes and other emergencies.
- Maya made use of stones to build great temples, cities, houses, etc.

3) Corn versus Yuca (manihot esculenta)

Although corn was introduced to the Spaniards in the Tainan Caribbean, the crop simply did not have the same significance as it did with Meso-American people. Tubers such as yuca, batata, mapuey, lerén, and yautía were the principal Taíno carbohydrate crops. Yuca was not only consumed but revered. The casabe bread made from bitter yuca (poisonous unless properly processed) is a prime example. Neither yuca nor casabe, however, played any significant role in Mayan culture. Corn, on the other hand, was not only the principal carbohydrate crop of the Maya, they also deified it, revered it, and its image was placed in temple walls, ceramics, etc. The Mayan corn god was “Yum Caax.”



4) Linguistics

Historically, anthropologically, and linguistically, we know that the Garifuna/Kalinago peoples, formerly known as Caribs, initially spoke two languages, one for the men and one for the women. This remarkable distinction arose from the fact that the “Carib” men were patrilineal. They actually kept their women on islands as they went off on raiding parties. They primarily raided Taíno and Igneri peoples who lived near the ocean, more often than not raiding for women who spoke Taínan languages. These women were then placed on isolated islands with no means of escape. Their women continued to speak Tainan languages, while their men spoke the original language, but their offspring eventually spoke a blended language. This is how both Garifuna and Kalinago came to be.

English	Yucatec Mayan	Taíno	Arawak
Sing	K'aay	Areito	Arete—Chane Arawak
Black	Boox	Jagua (hawa)	Awa—Chane
Man	Xiib	Eyeri	Wadili—Lokono
Woman	Ch'up	Inaru	Hiaru—Lokono
Water	Ha'	Ni	Uini

So then what about Can'Chib' al'o/Canibaro/Jíbaro in the Caribbean?

In Mexico, Cuba, and Hispaniola, the word "Jíbaro" literally means wild dog or any animal once domesticated that goes feral. As one can imagine, it is also used in a derogatory manner. Thus to call someone a "Jíbaro" is to call him or her wild, untamed, savage, etc. This is the exact assessment the Spaniards had of the Shuar people, whom they viewed as savages. After all, they were head hunters who also shrank the heads of their enemies and wore them around their waists.

The Spaniards who arrived in the Caribbean, as well as later migrations of Canary islanders, brought with them huge mastiff dogs that were used to track down the fleeing Taíno people. In the Dominican Republic and Cuba, many of these dogs escaped or were released by their owners. In time, they became the scourge of the islands, often killing livestock and people. A.O. Exquemelin was an eye witness to this, as he reported in depth in his memoirs.⁶ Thus wild dogs were a very tangible reality in the Caribbean, hence the fear of dogs and perhaps the association with the word "Jíbaro" referring to living in those maroon communities most of which were off the Spanish grid. Escaped Indians were considered wild. Some Spaniards reported Indians leaving their encomienda's to find foods the Spanish could not provide such as grubs and insects that were part of Taíno dietary customs and were found in the jungles..

We feel that the true origin of the terms "Caníbaro" or "Caniba" (which gave rise to the word "Cannibal") is not Mayan, but rather Portuguese or Canary islander, at least in the Spanish Caribbean.

The linguistic misunderstandings that must have occurred during first contact between Taíno and Spaniards led to many myths we are only beginning to unravel today. For example, in William F. Keegan's excellent book, *Taíno Indian Myth and Practice: The Arrival of the Stranger King*, he mentions how Taíno beliefs surrounding certain cemí (spiritual objects) called "Caribe" may have given rise to the word "Cannibal." These cemí, Keegan noted, were said to eat the flesh off human beings who had died. They would then travel to Soraya, the island of the dead. Upon hearing these stories, the Spaniards wrongly surmised that the word "Caribe" (dogs) sounded similar to the unrelated word "Canis" (Latin for dog). The Lucayan Taíno, states Keegan, also mentioned a people who lived east of them called Kalina. It is an easy assumption that Kalina, Caniba and Caribe became fused in the minds of the Spaniards.

⁶Exquemelin, A. O., *The Buccaneers and Maroons of America: Being an Account of the Famous Adventures and Daring Deeds of Certain Notorious Freebooters of the Spanish Main.*

Canary—Not just a pretty yellow bird!

As early as 1492 through the 1530s, the Caribbean islands saw an influx of Canary Islanders. In fact, as late as the 1980s, Canary Island people migrated back and forth between the Americas and their original island homes. Early explorers such as the Phoenicians, were probably the first to “discover” the Canary Islands. Their islands were visited by many groups throughout their history. Columbus stopped there before heading to the Americas in 1492. Later, in 1502, Nicolás de Ovando left the Canary Islands with many of its inhabitants bound for the Caribbean as well. And many Indigenous Canary Islanders were sent to the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico as slaves.

The Canary Islands, which lie southwest of Spain and Northwest of Africa, were inhabited by the Guanche, who originally migrated to the islands from the African mainland. The first recorded name of these islands comes from the Roman savant and author Gaius Plinius Secundus (born 23 CE) aka “Pliny the Elder, who called them Caniario. The term is spelled and pronounced the same in Portuguese and Spanish. Some assume that the island must be the home the Canary, the bright yellow finches sold at pet shops. But in fact, the name derives from Canis—dog in Latin. This is significant.



The Indigenous Guanche people of the Canary Islands had many odd beliefs, according to the Romans. One of them is that the islanders deified the dog. Invading Romans marveled at the multitude of dogs that lived in the islands and recorded the Canary Islander beliefs surrounding the dog. In his *General History of the Canary Islands*, historian Agustin Millares Torres writes that the derivation of the large, powerful Pressa Canario Dog (Canis Lupus Familiares), also known as Dogo Canario and Canarian Molosser, took part in the myths, funeral customs, and even gastronomy of the Native Guanche people. The Guanche believed that demons appeared to them as big fleecy dogs called “Tibicenas” on the island of Gran Canaria and “Irnene” on the island of La Palma. These dogs were even mummified to travel with their owners to the afterlife. Sometimes they were eaten as well.⁷

It is easy to see the linguistic connections relating to dogs and the words Canis, Caniba, and Canario. Add this to the fact that Indigenous Taíno people believed that when a person died, a dog-faced cemí ate the flesh off the body to allow the soul to travel to Soraya, the land of the dead, as noted by William F. Keegan.

⁷ See <https://www.presascanarios.es/historia>

“False friends,” Cognates & False Cognates

Some words are spelled and appear to sound the same across different languages. In Linguistics, this is called *False Friends*. Some examples of false friends are:

Táino	Caribbean Indigenous word that translates to “relatives.” Root word “ita” translates to blood. The Spanish mistakenly thought the term meant good or noble people.
Táino	Ancient town in Milan, Italy, whose name derives from either Taginus (a Roman surname) or from the Eastern Celtic “Taivyn,” which meant “tai,” signifying good, and “vyn,” signifying wine.
Taeeno	A surname in India
Táino	A surname in Italy
Taina	An Indigenous name for a girl from the Guarani people of Brazil
Comandante	“Commander” in Spanish
Commandment	“An order” or “holy order” in English
Bagua	Táino word for ocean
Bagua Zen	Chinese Kung fu style
Bucaro	“Vase” in Spanish
Bucaro	A Jíbaro who leaves the campo and never returns (Caribbean)

Cognates:

Words that are cognates, from the Latin word “cognatus,” which means “blood relative,” both have a similar etymological background (origin and historical development), yet can mean different things. For example, the samples below both relate to flat surfaces, yet have different meanings, although both have the same Latin origin.

Tisch or Table	German	Latin Discus
Dish or plate	English	

On the other hand some words sound the same but are not related. These are False Cognates (not to be confused with False Friends). Examples of this would be:

Genes	Refers to a unit of heredity
Jeans	Refers to denim or dungaree pants created in 1871 by Levi Straus

These types of linguistic variations have been a part of the word “Jíbaro’s” history from the moment the Spaniards first recorded it.

JÍBARO

Our team wishes to apologize to any individual or groups of people who may take offense to our work on this word. We did not set out with negative intentions, far from it. Our quest for the truth sometimes takes us down unexpected roads, but we dare tread on them.

There are many people who, to this day, take offense at being called a Jíbaro. The Shuar and Achuar people collectively reject this word today. In 2011, Shuar linguist Tuntiak Katan Jua was the first to officially propose that Jívaro/Jíbaro be replaced with “Chicham.” (Private conversation with linguist Dr. Simon Overall.) Note that the Shuar do not care whether the word is spelled with a V or a B, as both have negative implications.

Some may argue that Jívaro and Jíbaro do not have the same etymological origins, but the fact is they do. The word was first recorded by Spaniards who spelled it Xívaro, later Xíbaro. Others believe that the Spaniards carried the word “Jíbaro” to South America from the Caribbean. At first this team believed this theory, too, until we conferred with linguist Dr. Simon Overall, who pointed out that, in fact, Spaniards had been using this term in its various spellings since 1550.

Jíbaro and Jívaro both refer to wild dogs, wild things, and supposed “wild people.” We also find that for both the Taíno and the Guanche, the dog was a special animal that often was included in their funerary and spiritual traditions. The Taíno believed that dog-faced cemí ate the flesh off the body of the deceased as their souls traveled to Soraya (isle of the dead). The Guanche even mummified their dogs. Surely, canines played a very important role in the psyche of both these people.

The Latin word for dog, “canis,” was subsequently responsible for the rise of words such as caniba, cannibal, etc. Columbus coined the term after meeting the Lucayan Taíno people in the Bahamas in 1492. These Natives told him two different stories, which he mixed up. They told him about the dog-faced cemí who ate human flesh. They also told Columbus about a people who lived to the east called Kalina—these were the so-called Caribs, known today as Kalinago.

Thus “caniba” would come to symbolize cannibals, who supposedly were wild men who ate people.

In 1550, Spaniards encountered a group of people who called themselves Shuar, with a peculiar custom of cutting off the heads of their enemies, whom they called Jívaro. These heads were then shrunken (sansa) and worn around the Shuars’ belts to cause fear, shock, and awe among their enemies. The word became part of the Spanish lexicon as well as part of Spanish lore and imagination. The mere mention of Jívaro, therefore, conjures up wild people, much like caniba and cannibal did in the Caribbean. For two hundred years, Jívaro, spelled Xibaro at the time, would be a frightening part of much Spanish literature.

By the 1600s, the French were acquiring islands in the Caribbean as well as the Spanish. On Dominica, they met the so-called cannibal Caribs, who no doubt, although powerful warriors, were no more cannibals than were their sometimes enemies and often times trading partners, the Taíno.

A French linguist recorded the phrase “Chibarali Cachionna Yabouloupou,” which referred to the children of Blacks and Indians. These people probably did not live in the towns, but rather in the bush. The term “Xibarali” became synonymous with wild peasant people. To Europeans, the uncontrollable Caribs who married the “savage Black men,” implied that their offspring would be wild, fearsome people. It is no wonder that Europeans often tried to keep Africans from intermarrying with Indians.

By this time, both words were basically spelled the same. They are “false friends,” which in time, began to share cognate qualities. On the one hand, Spanish, French, and English were aware that Xíbaro means wild, enemies, heathens. On the other hand, they also had Xibarali, which also conjures up images of wild, untamable people. Thus the two terms, existing side by side, would become one and the same, especially when referring to mixed-blood peasantry.

By 1820, the words “Jíbaro” and “Gíbaro” were fully entrenched in the Caribbean. In Mexico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, the term “Jíbaro” is used describe the scores of wild dogs living in the countryside (we know this happened for a fact in the Dominican Republic). It was at this time, in the early 19th century, that the word first appeared in Caribbean literature.

During this period, the word was also being used to describe peasantry. In the Dominican Republic as well as Puerto Rico, the term was used to refer to a mixed-blood individual, like it was used on Dominica. The term fell out of use in the Dominican Republic, however, because it also meant wild dog. In Puerto Rico, the term “Jíbaro” simply described peasantry. Thus on Hispaniola, the word had to compete with a “double negative.” Besides, there were other terms used for the peasantry, including guajiro, which was used for a while, as well as maniguero, Jíbari, Indio. and campesino.

In Puerto Rico, the name became connected only with campesino. In the minds of Spanish authorities, there is no doubt that the words “campesino” and “Indio” basically meant the same thing as Jibaro, referring to often-illiterate country bumpkins who spoke funny, dressed funny, and had a lot of backward, often laughable customs. This was, is, and has always been the stigma associated with the campesino, and not just in the Caribbean, but across Latin America in general.

The term “Jíbaro,” however, just as “Guajiro” in Cuba and “Guajiro/Jíbaro/Jibari/Maniguero” in the Dominican Republic, have always been applied to peasantry regardless of race. Nowhere in the literature do we find mention of “Jíbaro Indians,” for example. In Puerto Rico today, there are Jíbaro descendants who clearly have Indian phenotypes, but there are African Jíbaro phenotypes as well as European Jíbaros. All of these people are mixed! Thus it can be deduced that the original meaning of “Xibarali” as mixed-blood people with Indian, African, and Spanish genes (those of other Europeans, as well), continued.

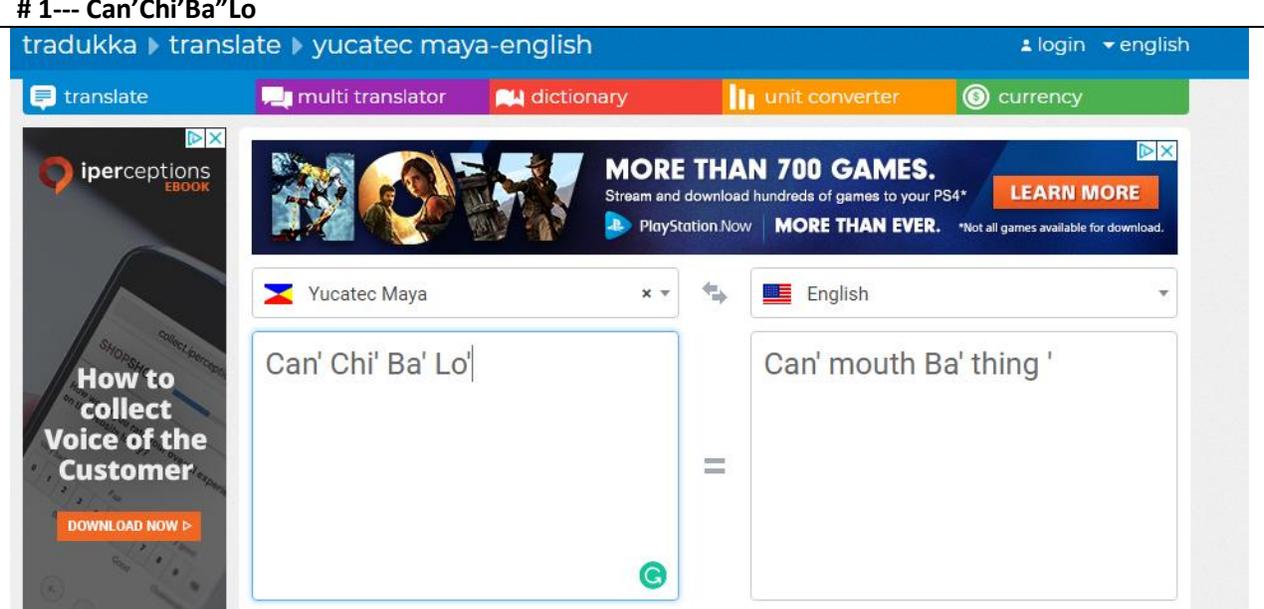
The era “Indigenismo” and Caribbean literature began in the 1840’s. The words Jibaro and Indio would become intertwined in a much deeper yet romanticized manner. However the word Jibaro was applied to all campesino, regardless of race or racial mixture. Just as the term “color Indio” in the Dominican Republic was applied to anyone with melanin in their skin who did not appear pure black, whether they had Indian ancestry or not, so too would Jibaro encompass all Puerto Rican peasantry. Genetics today, reveals that basically all Campesino regardless of phenotype, especially on the Spanish speaking Caribbean islands do indeed have various levels of Native American ancestry.

These claims can no longer be ignored of course. After all one of the origins of the word itself meant exactly that, mixed blood Indian people. Is it a coincidence that many Jibaro feel they have Indigenous ancestry? Probably not. But the word did not have neither a Taino, nor Puerto Rican origin, the word comes from either South America or Dominica or both!

There is a “False Friend” relationship among the words Can’Chi Ba lo, Canibaro, Xíbaro & Xibarali.

Using an on-line Yucatec Mayan dictionary, we attempted to translate some words relative to this article: <https://tradukka.com/translate/yua>

1--- Can’Chi’Ba”Lo



tradukka ▶ translate ▶ yucatec maya-english login english

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iperceptions EBOOK

How to collect Voice of the Customer

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PlayStation Now MORE THAN EVER. *Not all games available for download.

Yucatec Maya English

Can' Chi' Ba' Lo!

Can' mouth Ba' thing '

This was our first attempt. The word order did not translate.

#2 ----Can'Chib'Ba' Lo

The screenshot shows a web browser interface for a translation service. The page title is "tradukka ▶ translate ▶ yucatec maya-english". There are navigation buttons for "translate", "multi translator", "dictionary", "unit converter", and "currency". A sidebar on the left features an advertisement for "iperceptions EBOOK" titled "How to collect Voice of the Customer" with a "DOWNLOAD NOW" button. The main content area has a header for "MORE THAN 700 GAMES." with a "LEARN MORE" button. Below this, there are two dropdown menus: "Yucatec Maya" and "English". The input field contains the text "Can'chib'al'o" and the output field shows the translation "Can 'chib' to the ' or".

Second the attempt using a different spelling produced the same.

It is possible that this dictionary was not adequate. Every other dictionary we used, however, yielded similar results.

CAN'CHIB'AL'O—Does not translate to Jíbaro or anything remotely similar. ***At a later date we will provide interviews with Yucatecan speakers and their feelings on this word and subject***

#3 Canibaro

The screenshot shows the same translation website interface as above. The input field now contains the text "Canibaro" and the output field shows the translation "Canibaro".

This word, Canibaro did not translate at all. Neither did Jíbaro, Xíbaro, Xívaro, Jívaro or Xibarali. Clearly these words are not Yucatecan Mayan.

Summary #1

1. The word “Jíbaro” was spelled “Xíbaro” as early as 1550, a full 250 years before it first appears in Caribbean literature.
2. The word derived from the Shuar/Achuar Indian name for enemy, which was spelled “Jívaro” by the Spanish.
3. The word became associated with wild things based on its early descriptions of the so-called head-hunting “savages” of the Ecuadorian Amazon.
4. The Shuar people no longer collect “sansa” (shrunken heads) and now take offense to the term Jíbaro or Jívaro as a group name for themselves, preferring to be called Shuar and Achuar. They consider Jíbaro/Jivaro to be a derogatory term.
5. The Kalinago word Xibarali translates to mixed African/Indian people. Its close spelling to Xíbaro could easily be mistaken for the word Xíbaro.
6. Xibarali, as in the case of the Garifuna/Garinagu people, were known to be strong warriors. Also known as Black Caribs, they were said to be cannibals, just as their “Yellow Carib” brethren, the Kalinago, were.
7. The word’s connection to wild dogs in some countries cannot be ignored.
8. Islanders in Dominica, which is in close proximity to Puerto Rico, of course used Xibarali in their descriptions of a mixed-blood African and Indian. Most Puerto Ricans, as do other Caribbean peoples, fit this racial description.
9. Canary islanders, who no doubt had adopted the word Jíbaro like everyone else, were probably associating the word Xíbaro with the description of wild dogs.
10. The stigma of being Indian/African, a mixture of both, along with the continuing stigma of the rural people of the islands, who are seen as wild, uneducated, and backward, may have given rise to the marriage of these two terms, which eventually led to Jíbaro being used to describe rural people, most notably in Puerto Rico.
11. Cubans, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans, all have some percentage of Native ancestry (atDNA) ranging from 5-30 %

The stigma of being *campesino* haunted and continues to haunt rural people of the Caribbean, regardless of their racial composition. Jíbaro’s be they white, black, Indian, mixed etc is still nothing more than a Jíbaro in the eyes some people, especially city dwellers. The fact that a person is from the countryside alone qualifies him or her to be stigmatized and associated with stupidity and backwardness—in essence, they are lumped together with the concepts of wild or savage animals. In the minds of many, the same applies to being Indian.

We feel that Taíno, Jíbaro, Guajiro, Jíbari, Maniguero, and Indio are all acceptable terms that denote Indigenous ancestry. In fact, they all basically mean the same thing: Mixed blood Native people from the periphery who live in the monte. Considered by some to be backward, Nonetheless, we are proud our Taino roots, and our campesino customs, Que viva el Jibaro!.

Thank you Dr. Lynne Guitar, Jerry Roman, David Campos,
and especially

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Dr. Overall pointed us in a direction we had not yet considered which helped us complete this puzzle. Be on the lookout for a truly academic paper from Mr. Overall.

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- 2) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%ADbaro>
- 3) *El Secreto Mejor Perdido* by Roberto Reyes
- 4) Tony Castanha – *The Myth of Indigenous Caribbean Extinction*
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- 6) A.O. Exquemelian- *The Buccabees and Marooners of America. Being an account of the famous Adevnetures and daring deeds of Certain Notorious Freebooters Of The Spanish Main*
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- 8) <https://www.pnas.org/content/115/10/2341>
- 9) **Dr Simon Overall *Lecturer in Linguistics* Department of English & Linguistics**
- 10) Julian Granberry
- 11) Julian Granberry and Gary S. Vescelius Languages of the Pre-Columbian Antilles. Pages 27-33
- 12) *Origins and genetic legacies of the Caribbean Taíno*
- 1) Word reference encyclopedia <http://www.wordreference.com/definicion/cimarr%C3%B3n>

- 2) Wiki Espanol <https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cimarr%C3%B3n>
- 3) **Lamour-Valentin**, "Cannibal Recipes," A socio-linguistic account of indigenous Boricua- Jíbaro culture, Iowa State University, ..
- 4) Subject people and colonial discourses
- 5) Canibaro surname
<https://lastnames.myheritage.com/last-name/canibaro+cocho>