

# Cape Verdean Creole – Santo Antão: what we know so far<sup>1</sup>

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The Santo Antão variety (SA) of Cape Verdean Creole (CVC) is not only very little studied but the existing publications, overwhelmingly in Portuguese, are not well known among a wider linguistic audience. This is particularly surprising if we consider that from the first Cape Verdean census, in 1731 (Carreira 1984), until the 1970s Santo Antão has been the second most populous island of the archipelago. The article presents a review of the literature from historical sources about the settlement of Santo Antão, which then serves as a base from which to reconsider current debates about the genesis of CVC. Linguistic data, mainly of phonological nature, from conversations recorded during a short field trip to Santo Antão (Cabo da Ribeira and Vila das Pombas), complemented by existing data on other varieties of CVC, are used to support the proposed hypotheses.

**Keywords:** Cape Verdean Creole, Santo Antão variety, sociolinguistic history, phonology, language description

## 1. Introduction

The goals of this article are as follows. First, we aim to summarize the existing literature on the variety (section 2) and, based on a wide range of historical works, sketch a possible socio-historical scenario of its formation in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and further development until the current linguistic situation (section 3). Second, based on our exploratory fieldwork on the island, we present selected features of SA phonology (section 5) and compare them with the two other varieties of Barlavento for which comparable data is available (São Vicente, São Nicolau), as well as to the variety of the main island Santiago,

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which is the oldest and best-researched variety of the archipelago. SA is unquestionably an outlier among the CVC varieties due to its unusual past. We hypothesize that the early settlement and the subsequent centuries of relative isolation within Cape Verde in conjunction with the extreme landscape and disperse nature of settlement have triggered independent internal developments of the original 16<sup>th</sup> century proto-CVC. The divergence from other varieties of CVC has possibly been further enhanced by contact with dialectal Portuguese spoken by metropolitan and insular settlers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We also show that some of the particularities of SA have partly been adopted in SV under the influx of original SA settlers and later newcomers during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, since this article is a part of a larger project, we point out paths for further research (section 6).

## 2. Review of literature

Publications on Santo Antão variety (SA) of Cape Verdean Creole (CVC), traditionally categorised as belonging to the Barlavento<sup>2</sup> group (with Boavista, Sal, São Nicolau and São Vicente), can be easily summarized in one paragraph. There is a comparative study of different dialects by Joaquim Vieira Botelho da Costa & Custódio José Duarte (1886 [1967]); a short analysis in José Leite de Vasconcellos (1898); occasional comments on SA in Baltasar Lopes da Silva (1957 [1984]), two articles focusing on the phonology of São Vicente, Santo Antão and São Nicolau by José Herculano de Carvalho (1961[1984] henceforth Carvalho 1984a and 1962 [1984] henceforth Carvalho [1984b]), Mary Louise Nunes' (1962-1963) comparative description of phonemic inventories in Santo Antão, Boavista, Fogo e Brava, Manuel Veiga's (1982) comparison of four CVC varieties with a section dedicated to phonology, and Ulisete Rodrigues de Souza's (2007) PhD thesis, which compares Santiago and Fogo (Sotavento group, with Maio and Brava) with São Vicente and Santo Antão varieties within the Optimality Theory framework. The majority of these linguistic analyses that have been published over the span of a century are written in Portuguese and are not easily accessible. In addition, they are often based on data from emigrant speakers in the USA or Portugal or written questionnaires. Apart from these linguistic descriptions there also exist literary texts in SA: The parable of the Prodigious Son (in Costa & Duarte 1886 [1967]: 308-309), a translation of two

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<sup>2</sup> In this paper we will use the term Barlavento as a geographic term, not as label for a linguistic unit.

stanzas of the *Lusíadas* (Teixeira 1898), and a collection of folk stories gathered among emigrants in the USA by the anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons (1923). The native speaker and writer Luís Romano has also published some literary texts and a glossary in SA (1967, 1973). Armando Napoleão Rodrigues Fernandes (1991), which includes reference to uses typical of SA in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, remains, so far, the only dictionary of any of the Barlavento varieties.<sup>3</sup>

Baptista (2014), authored by a native speaker of the variety and also a trained linguist, is the first published monograph dedicated exclusively to the description of SA, with a focus on its phonology, based on fieldwork. Finally, Lang (2014), in his *Arquipélago* article, provides an overview of the state of the art of Cape Verdean dialectology and the features (known so far) that distinguish SA from the other CVC varieties.

The CVC varieties of Santo Antão and São Nicolau (Cardoso 1989), both understudied, are crucial to the issue raised by Lang (2014) as to the causes of the high degree of divergence between the varieties of CVC spoken on the archipelago, particularly between the northern and the southern islands. The main research questions in this context are: Did the northern varieties of SA and SN emerge through regular language change out of an earlier version of CVC already spoken on Santiago and Fogo in the south (Sotavento) under the influence of a contact with more modern dialects of Portuguese due to influx of settlers from continental and insular Portugal? Or are they the result of an independent and more recent process of (re)-creolization of Portuguese in which the Sotavento Creole figured as substrate (Lang 2014: 296-297)?

The goal of our article is to provide an answer, at least in part, to this question.

### **3. Socio-historical setting and its linguistic implications**

Santo Antão island is the second Cape Verdean island in size (770km<sup>2</sup>) but currently has only 6.6% of total Cape Verdean population (43315; 2010 census).<sup>4</sup> Its geography is dramatic, with a volcanic mountain range with peaks as high as 1979m dividing the island into a dry south-eastern and a wetter north-western part with deep valleys, high plateaus, ravines, inaccessible mountain

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed analysis of works mentioned here see Baptista (2014: 190-196).

<sup>4</sup> All statistical data are from the *Instituto Nacional de Estatística Cabo Verde* <<http://ine.cv/>> unless stated otherwise.

tops and spectacular cliff coast. We stipulate that the rugged landscape and the resulting isolation of the communities in hard to access places has played an important role in the formation of SA.

In the following sections we aim to summarize historical, demographic, social and cultural settings that have likely determined the genesis, direction of change and the current language structure of the Santo Antão variety.

### 3.1. Early colonization

Traditional historical sources such as an influential treaty by Lopes da Lima (1844), Brásio (1962) or Carreira's classic study (1972 [2000]) place the beginning of the colonization of Santo Antão, discovered in January 1462, in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century or even as late as the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to prevailing opinions on late and predominantly white colonization, more recent historical analyses such as Matos (1997a, 2003) and volumes of *História Geral de Cabo Verde* cast a different light on the issue.

The *capitania*<sup>6</sup> of Santo Antão was bought by João da Fonseca in 1504 and remained, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, due to hereditary transmission, in private hands of several *donatários*.<sup>7</sup> There is a register of a caravel Santa Luzia which in 1504 arrived in Lisbon from Santo Antão carrying 12687 hides and 67 *quintais*<sup>8</sup> of sebum belonging to João de Fonseca. This suggests that the human presence on Santo Antão had started shortly after its discovery and that the island entered early into a lucrative hide commerce destined to ports of Madeira and Lisbon (Torrão 2001: 101). Following Matos (1997a: 344), slaves “in a number difficult to assess” must have already lived on the island in order to hunt and skin the animals. The early initial occupation is even more plausible if we take into account that valleys of Paúl or Ribeira Grande are one of the very few places on the Archipelago where due to a specific microclimate water is available the entire year.<sup>9</sup> Matos argues that the first phase of settlement resulted

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<sup>5</sup> The idea of a late colonization was probably influenced by a well-known work by a Jesuit priest Baltasar Barreira who in 1606 affirmed that on Santo Antão and São Nicolau there was “nothing more than cattle” (Cohen 2002: 124).

<sup>6</sup> A Portuguese colonial territorial division under the administration of a donatary (*donatário*) or captain (*capitão*).

<sup>7</sup> This private ownership of the island which lasted until 1759 is one of the reasons for the scarcity of official documentation (administrative or ecclesiastic) concerning Santo Antão early history (Soares 2002).

<sup>8</sup> A mass measurement. 1 *quintal* was approximately 48 kg.

<sup>9</sup> Fact commented by Valentim Fernandes (1506-1508), who described Santo Antão as “tall and impenetrable and have very good waters” (quoted in Lopes 2005: 24).

directly from actions of João Fonseca, his son (1528) and grandson (1548), who during the 16<sup>th</sup> century introduced several improvements to launch and expand herding and agricultural activities (introducing cotton, among other plants), and established a slave population on the island (Matos 1997a, 2003).

This early population nucleus, located in the place of today's Povoação in Ribeira Grande, must have been stable enough as to justify the construction of a chapel and yearly visits by a priest. According to Francisco de Andrade (1582), "all the inhabitants (moradores) confess and take communion once a year" (quoted in Matos 1997a: 344).

In 1593, together with the Azorean islands of Corvo and Flores, Santo Antão was given to Francisco Mascarenhas, the count of Santa Cruz (Matos 2003) and remained in the possession of the family until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. This royal donation was contested by D. Beatriz de Távora, the widow of the previous owner, Gonçalo de Sousa, who died without descendants in 1585. The widow began a legal procedure against the crown in the intent to claim the possession of the island. The key document of this legal battle is a little known inventory of inhabitants and properties elaborated in 1594 by *escrivão* (an official clerk) António Cunha and analysed in Matos (1997a and 2003).

**Table 1: Santo Antão demography: the 1594 inventory<sup>10</sup>**

Black		Mixed (mestiços)		Total
120	54%	102	46%	222

In 1594 there were 222 people residing in Ribeira Grande (today's Povoação), including one Indian, distributed in 43 households: 120 were black (54%) and 102 of Afro-European descent (46%). It was a young population of slaves (the majority were under 30 years old) who belonged to the *donatário*, and in Matos' words was of "perhaps recent implantation" (Matos 1997a: 346).

Cohen (2002) reinforces the early settlement hypothesis. Based on 1573 and 1595 documents, she argues that in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was sufficient human presence on Santo Antão (and on São Nicolau) as "to mobilize the Church" (Cohen 2002: 125). The type of settlement and status of its people, i.e. "majority black and slaves or, if white, belonging to lower or excluded social strata, embellished here and there by a disenchanting foreigner who stayed behind because of offsprings from his relationships" is the chief reason for lack of recognition of this social space by its contemporary sources (Cohen 2002: 124-126).

<sup>10</sup> Based on Matos (1997a and 2003).

Matos (1997a) also hypothesizes that there must have been some ‘white men’ or other ‘elders’ (*velhos*) “certainly free” whose testimony served to help assess the undetermined number of goats who roamed the island. The inventory shows that, apart from herding activities, the population was engaged in agriculture: there were *hortas* (fruit and vegetable gardens) and most probably maize was grown. As for administrative infrastructure, it was minimal: there was a *feitor* (a foreman) and a clerk working for the donatary (Matos 1997: 347).

Where did those first inhabitants come from? Most likely they were slaves brought from Santiago and Fogo as well as some free inhabitants who during the 16<sup>th</sup> century had been moving to Santo Antão and other northern islands to herd animals and work in agriculture (Torrão 2001: 100-101). Both groups were most probably speakers of the recently emerged Sotavento Creole, whose first attestation dates mid-16<sup>th</sup> century (Carreira 1972 [2000]). We follow Soares (2006) in assuming that some early inhabitants were multilingual and spoke African languages whose use in Santiago is attested in ecclesiastic documentation as late as in 1697 (Soares 2006: 189). Soares suggests that only in the 1700s did CVC become the general language of not only slaves and *forros* (freed slaves) but also of the children of the elite (Soares 2006: 188-190).

Although Santo Antão was the backwater of the Cape Verdean Atlantic slave traffic economy, it cannot be established with certainty at this point how much direct contact and human traffic there was with the African coast due to early pano production and via smuggling on waters that were largely uncontrolled. However, what is clear is that by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the inhabitants of Santo Antão formed a fairly stable community which, for decades, had little or no contact at all with Portuguese - and neither opportunity nor interest in acquiring it.

In the 1650s, Santiago succumbed to a profound economic crisis and social unrest caused by its marginalization in the Atlantic slave trade. Lack of capital caused economic reconversion and a progressive ruralisation of the Santiago and Fogo societies (Baleno 2002). Impoverished owners had to free their slaves and the Sotavento Creole speaking landless masses of *forros* continued their migration to the the Barlavento islands of Santo Antão and São Nicolau, in a movement that got labelled as the ‘second cycle’ of Cape Verde settlement (Correia e Silva 2002).

Yet, we know very little about Santo Antão in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Matos 2003: 264). Its population, based on dispersed, extensive herding economy and markedly different from slave *fazenda* (plantation) type organization of Santiago and Fogo must have been growing as to justify a presence of a

permanent priest (*vigário*) at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Soares 2002: 343, Cohen 2002).

This “silent growth of population”, characteristic of the second cycle of settlement (Correia e Silva 2002: 17), is attested by one of the travellers to Cape Verde by the name of Dapper who “speaks of a village at the North West End [of Santo Antão] island, consisting of twenty huts, which about the middle of the last century [i.e. in the 1650’s] was inhabited by fifty families, governed by a captain, a priest, and a school master, who all spoke good Portuguese, but lived very poorly (Astley ed. 1745: 676)”. It has to be considered that 18<sup>th</sup> century sources aren’t likely to distinguish between Portuguese and Creole, and the custom of Portuguese shifting to Creole is amply attested in several historical sources (Swolkien 2015).

An ultra-peripheral position within the archipelago, only one good port (today’s city of Porto Novo on the south-east), a deficient defense system, lack of effective jurisdiction of the *donatário*, abundant water, meat, fruit and vegetables made Santo Antão an ideal shelter for the pirates of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Matos 2003). Carreira (1972 [2000]: chapter 9) stresses the role played by both marooned slaves (*fujões*) and piracy in the progressive, dispersed settlement of often inaccessible landscape in the interior of the islands of Santiago, Fogo, and Santo Antão. Also, the migration of *forros* from the Sotavento to Santo Antão triggered demographic pressure on the more densely populated northern coast, which offered an easy access to water (*regadio* agriculture) and where the best land had been already occupied and exploited by the *donatário*. This resulted in a population movement to the dry, interior plateaus (*sequeiro* agriculture) and to valleys on the south-west coast.

This internal drift of islanders to ever more remote places made possible the progressive dialectalization of the language in dispersed isolated communities where much of one’s entire life was spent in the same valley and the only effective way of communication was by boat.<sup>11</sup> Boats were also used by Santo Antão slaves or peasants to temporarily hunt goats and collect amber on the deserted island of São Vicente.

The archaeological excavation in the bay of Salamansa in São Vicente (Cardoso & Soares 2010) uncovered a site of an early occupation, around the 17<sup>th</sup> century by, most probably, slaves or *forros* from Santo Antão. The site might have been used for pastoral activities, as a refuge related to piracy or for servicing long distance navigation with salted meat. Although the plan of the excavated house is orthogonal and European in style (similar to traditional

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<sup>11</sup> As for 2018, a locality of Monte Trigo on the south-west coast is still only accessible by boat.

Santo Antão houses) and several objects of European origin (Portuguese ceramics, a cannonball, a pipe) had been uncovered, the authors stress a strong African presence in the settlement, not only in abundant and diverse African pottery but also in rituals such as burying of a vase mouth down. There are no direct indications as to whether there were any speakers of African languages on the island. But it is likely that by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century inhabitants of Santo Antão had hardly any contact with Portuguese, considering that the island was in private hands conducting business focused on the exportation of hides and cloth and official administration was minimal.

### 3.2. Santo Antão in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

The 18<sup>th</sup> century brought significant administrative, political, social and cultural changes to Santo Antão. At the beginning of the 1700s the island was still owned by the Counts of Santa Cruz (now bearing the title of Marquis of Gouveia). In 1724, the then *donatário* D. João Mascarenhas, involved in an affair with a married noblewoman, escaped to London and, having run out of money, rented the island to a group of British merchants for 27 years. The British quickly established their *feitor* (foreman) and drafted an ambitious plan to send English settlers and develop the islands economy chiefly based on slave trade and cotton garment production to be exchanged in Guinea for “as many slaves as possible”. Although the presence of the foreigners caused general upheaval in the population, the Portuguese crown was slow in reacting and only in 1727 a successful military expedition against the British was sent from Santiago (Matos 1997b).

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century Santo Antão was subjected to the administration of Santiago which was hampered by difficulties in both internal and external communication (e.g. the expedition of 1727 needed 18 days to sail to Santo Antão back and forth). There was very little official administrative state presence (in spite of a substantial human occupation) which was one of the reasons for the British incident (Lopes 2005).

The fear of foreign occupation called the Portuguese crown’s attention to the island. In 1727 a small garrison was established and in 1732 the *ouvidor-geral* (magistrate-inspector) José da Costa Ribeiro (native of Madeira) arrived on Santo Antão with the task of implementing the first municipality on the island – *câmara municipal* of Ribeira Grande – and thus establish the first basic political, financial and administrative structure (Matos 1997b). Costa Ribeiro, in a letter to the king, argued that the fact that the population, which exceeded four thousand people, was divided among *brancos da terra* (i.e. Afro-



Portuguese) and blacks<sup>12</sup> should not be an obstacle in establishing a *concelho* on the island as long as white people, if available, would be in command (Matos 1997b: 194).

After centuries in private hands, in 1727 Santo Antão returned, for the first time, to crown possessions. Based on a series of documents that accompanied the passing of the island from the donatário to the state, Matos (1997b) analyses its economy at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The valleys of Garça and Paúl and localities such as Janela, Lajes, Tarrafal, Guiné, Casas, Cerrado and Mesa were already populated and well cultivated, while Povoação in Ribeira Grande continued as the main urban centre. Apart from wine and rum production there was an indigo dye factory in Paúl. Herding, especially of goats for the production of hides and soap was booming. There was an increase in cotton cultivation and weaving looms (*teares*), and weaving activities were attested.<sup>13</sup> The island was oriented towards the production and export of local products such as expensive *urzela*<sup>14</sup> in high demand of the British developing textile industry.

All these activities required considerable work force. The 1731 first census of Cape Verdean population gives us the following picture of Santo Antão demography.

**Table 2: Santo Antão demography: the 1731 census<sup>15</sup>**

White			Mixed (mestiços)			Freed (forros)			Slaves			Total	
Nr	%P	%T	Nr	%P	%T	Nr	%P	%T	Nr	%P	%T	Nr	%T
10	1.28	0.23	1746	19.7	40.6	1900	12.4	44.2	646	13.2	15	4302	14.4

In Matos's (1997b) and Carreira's (1984) analyses of the 1731 census, Santo Antão stands out in the Cape Verdean landscape. First, the demographic importance of the island is unquestionable. It is at that time the second most populous island of Cape Verde after Santiago. Second, it shows the lowest

<sup>12</sup> The newly created *concelho* (municipality) had 650 *foreiros* (house owners obliged to pay taxes). Matos (1997b) analyses in detail their distribution through over 12 streets of *vila* (village) and a list of benefits and obligations of *moradores* (inhabitants).

<sup>13</sup> Pusich (1810: 627) in his detailed description of Cape Verde at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century comments "it is on this island that the majority of cotton *panos* that serve in the trade with Guinea coast are woven."

<sup>14</sup> Cudbear (*urzela*) is a reddish coloring matter from lichens that until the advent of chemical colorings in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century constituted one of the main exports of Cape Verde.

<sup>15</sup> Based on Matos (1997b).

percentage of whites in Cape Verde (ten people or 0.2% of the national total), often an indicator of Portuguese speakers, although the census does not distinguish between *brancos da terra* (island born (Afro)-Portuguese) and *brancos reinóis* (mainland Portuguese). Third, the majority of the population are mixed (40.6%) and freed (44.2%) in a unique balance, compared to other islands. Finally, and contrary to a common belief that slavery was insignificant in Barlavento, slaves constitute 15% of the population,<sup>16</sup> a figure comparable with that of Santiago (16, 3%; Fogo was a ‘slave island’ with 24.7%). It should be noted that there had been also a quick increase in slaves (150, i.e. 15%) since 1727.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the crown’s administration, the Church presence also increased on the island. In 1755, the bishop D.Fr. Pedro Jacinto Valente moved the seat of the Cape Verdean bishopric from Santiago (ruled in the 1740’s and 1750’s by local oligarchy and dominated by a climate of social insurrection) to Ribeira Grande in Santo Antão, where it remained until his death in 1774. Soares (2002) stresses that this unprecedented decision increased the attractiveness and the political weight of not only Santo Antão, which became the centre of Church decision making, but of the entire Barlavento area. Apart from building a central church in Ribeira Grande and several chapels on the island, bishop Valente had a decisive influence in establishing the social basis of the Catholic Church in Barlavento. One of his main ambitions was to introduce discipline in Church liturgy and administration, especially by fighting “old customs” and local ceremonies held in CVC<sup>18</sup> in a clear intent of the Europeanisation of the Church.

Apart from launching the foundation of the Portuguese municipal administration and Church structures, the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought other political and economic changes. After the execution of Santo Antão’s last *donatário* in 1759 (Ferro 1998: 17) the island had definitely returned to the crown and been given into management of a monopolistic Company of Grão-Pará and Maranhão (*Companhia do Grão-Pará e Maranhão 1755-1778*). The Company, interested particularly in local indigo, cudbear and *panos* (cloth) production, overexploited

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<sup>16</sup> Captain George Roberts who stayed in Cape Verde for a prolonged period in 1720s commented that Santo Antão was a “store-house” for slaves who often grew mutinous, occupied land and fought against the freed (Astley (ed.) 1745: 675).

<sup>17</sup> In 1727, there were over 4000 inhabitants and 502 slaves (Matos 1997b).

<sup>18</sup> Such as *guarda cabeça*, *esteira*, night funerals and polygamy, among others (Soares 2002: 399).

and ruined the island's economy (Baleno 2002).<sup>19</sup> This was particularly aggravated by the 1772-1773 famine in which over 44% of Santo Antão's population died (Baleno 2002: 231).

In 1780 Queen Maria I declared free all the inhabitants of Santo Antão, though later small-scale slavery was reintroduced by the landowners (Évora 2005: 22). The Portuguese crown became increasingly interested in the Barlavento and had ambitious projects of re-populating and whitening the Cape Verdean North. Hence, since the 1780s there have been constant official appeals to Azorean and Madeira's peasants to settle in the Barlavento (Correia e Silva 2000).

There is not, to our knowledge, any modern historical account of this immigration which might have started in the 1780's and continued during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The three volumes of the most comprehensive and authoritative work on Cape Verdean history, *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, do not cover the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, Carreira's (1984) comparative analysis of the 1730 and 1807 Cape Verde's demographic data shows three clear demographic tendencies in the entire colony: the growth of the group of mixed and freed, the decreasing number of slaves in the Barlavento, and a significant growth (55.2%) of the population classified as 'white' on Brava and in the entire Barlavento, principally in Santo Antão.

**Table 3: Santo Antão demography: 1731 vs. 1807 censuses<sup>20</sup>**

Year	White	Mixed (mestiços)	Freed (forros)	Slaves	Total
1731	10	1746	1900	646	4302
1807	500	8000	5000	150	13650

The comparison illustrates well the demographic changes that have occurred in Santo Antão during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. While the population tripled (despite the 1772-1773 famine), there was a drastic reduction of the number of slaves. The group of freed became less important while the mixed gained prominence. What stands out is a huge increase in the population labelled as white. Even though 'white' has been for centuries a social and not racial category in Cape Verde and even we can assume that some whites were in fact *mestiços* we cannot exclude the possibility that others have been Portuguese settlers. It is also very

<sup>19</sup> When the *Companhia* was extinguished in 1778, the list of its properties on Santo Antão shows that the distinction between *ladino* (baptized) and *boçal* (unbaptized) slaves was still made (Ferro 1998: 18).

<sup>20</sup> Based on Carreira (1984).

likely that the white settlers were peasants from the dramatically overpopulated archipelagos of Madeira and Azores, whose massive emigration to Brazil in that period is well documented.

There are other sources that mention the influx of whites to Santo Antão. Lopes da Lima (1844: 73-74) says that “since the end of the last century [i.e. 18<sup>th</sup>] European families started to come, and settle there [Santo Antão] attracted by its excellent air and fertile soil”. According to Brásio (1962: 83) in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the “influx of metropolitan settlers [...] transformed agricultural, social and human aspects of the island [Santo Antão].” There are references in the literature to the role of people from Madeira in building the island’s traditional irrigation system (*levadas*) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rocha 1990: 27) and to cultural similarities between Azorean and Santo Antão traditional feasts (Rocha 1990: 54). There are mentions of 230 emigrants from Madeira who in 1854 sank near Tarrafal Monte Trigo, on their way to Demerara in British Guiana, and were ordered by the governor to remain and “colonize” Santo Antão (Ferro 1998: XXV), and of a colony established by the Canarians (Valdez 1864: 152). Apart from fairly detailed 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial statistics (e.g. in 1880, 50 Portuguese nationals lived in Ribeira Grande; Évora 2005: 43), there is also an ethno-linguistic study that shows the cultural impact of Madeira on sugar production related terminology in Santo Antão (Nunes 2002).

However, the linguistic impact of this population, who settled in a stable linguistic community, was unlikely to be significant enough as to allow us to speak of “re-creolization” of SA. These Portuguese speakers might have contributed to the creation of a dialect continuum and increased the number of speakers of Portuguese as L2. It is likely that their offsprings were bilingual and many of them shifted to CVC – a process which is amply attested in Cape Verdean history (Swolkien 2015). Features such as metaphony, unstressed vowel deletion, the use of *n* as negator, a productive subjunctive suffix *-s*, suppletive verbs, the polite pronoun *bosê*, might have been introduced or reinforced and spread, in an independent development at that time.

Another tendency in 19<sup>th</sup> century Santo Antão is an increasing presence of colonial administration. As the most populous island in the North, it becomes the seat of the *comarca de Barlavento* (district of Barlavento) (Rocha 1990). In 1867, a new municipality is created, *concelho de Paúl*, with seat in Vila das Pombas, causing decades of struggle for local power with Ribeira Grande.

In the valleys of Paúl and Ribeira Grande, a local “bourgeoisie” emerged.<sup>21</sup> Composed of important landowners and merchants, often of liberal and republican, anti-monarchic orientation, it would play a leading role in the riots by the end of the century (Êvora 2005).<sup>22</sup>

This elite was joined by families of several Sephardi Jews from Rabat, Algiers, Gibraltar, and Tangier who in 1850’s fixed their residence in Santo Antão (Serels 1997). Founders of prominent local dynasties (e.g. Anahory, Benoliel, Brigham, Cohen, Benrós, and Wahnnon),<sup>23</sup> Jews invested mainly in commercial enterprises, but some became important landowners (e.g. the Benrós in Paúl; Serels 1997: 83) and higher civil servants. Multilingual and often educated, they contributed to the strengthening of links with São Vicente and opening of Santo Antão to the external world.

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century first primary schools, often run by Church, were created on the island (Rocha 1990). Schooling, however, was available to a small percentage of the children<sup>24</sup> and its effective impact must have been minimal for decades as over half of Santo Antão population remained illiterate until the 1970s.

The first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century represents the final stage of disintegration of the old slave colonial regime, profound economic depression and a political instability which reflected the Portuguese political turmoil. In 1856, a detailed 12 volume slave census shows that on Santo Antão, 62 owners (mainly from Paúl and Garça) had only 169 slaves (out of a total of 5182 in Cape Verde), the majority of which were born on Santo Antão (113) or on other Cape Verdean islands (Carreira 1972 [2000]: 462-463, 492-493). The population of Santo Antão was clearly stratified in light-skinned landowning elite in the urban centres on the coast and *regadio* valleys, a considerable number of small property owners scattered over the island and masses of landless peasants.

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<sup>21</sup> Rocha (1990: 103, 126) born in 1910 in Santo Antão presents a list of the most important local families from Paúl, Ribeira Grande and Garça (the main *regadio* areas) underlying that they “preserve the white type” by marrying relatives. Alfred Ellis (1885: 51) visits Janela (where all inhabitants are black), Povoação (after travelling for hours on a dangerous pathway cut in a cliff), and Vila das Pombas where he appreciates manor houses with gardens and meets a “half-breed Portuguese grandee”.

<sup>22</sup> In 1886, in the climate of social and political instability there is a popular anti-fiscal riot. In 1894, after the decision to abolish *concelho* of Paúl there is another popular revolt which ends in legal process involving Paúl’s chief figures (Êvora 2005).

<sup>23</sup> There is still a village called Sinagoga and a Jewish cemetery in Penha da França.

<sup>24</sup> In 1880 in *concelho* of Ribeira Grande for 14270 dispersed inhabitants there were 5 schools, 3 in *vila*, with approximately 120 students each (Evora 2005: 39).

Since the 1850s these poor peasants would migrate in a constant flux to São Vicente.<sup>25</sup> First seasonally (especially in the years of draught),<sup>26</sup> then settling down and working for the fast-growing Porto Grande of Mindelo, which thrived in that period due to heavy British investments (Gatlin 1990, Correia e Silva & Cohen 1997 Correia e Silva 2000). Once established in São Vicente these inter-island migrants switched to the prestigious urban speech of cosmopolitan Mindelo, on which Santo Antão variety has left an important linguistic impact (Swolkien 2015). The full extent of this influence is difficult to access given the scarcity of SA descriptions. However, section 5 will show some of the phonological outcomes of the interdialectal contact.

### 3.3. 21<sup>st</sup> century and the current sociolinguistic situation

After the Republican period (1910-1926) the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the Estado Novo colonial regime in Cape Verde (Meintel 1984) and the colonial war which led to the country's independence in 1975. Due to a nearly total lack of investments in infrastructure and education, the 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by big migratory movements from Santo Antão to São Vicente and from there to locations abroad (*Linhas Gerais* 1984, Gatlin 1990). Deeply entrenched in the collective memory is also the colonial practice of forced labour in São Tomé (cf. Baptista's 2014 corpus sample stories) and a disastrous famine of 1947.

Portuguese colonial rule left dismal literacy rates, especially in the rural areas. In 1982, 51% of the Santo Antão population above 15 years old was illiterate (Costa 1992) and only in the 1990s the situation improved. However, a more generalized access to the secondary education which came with the opening of several *liceus* in Santo Antão has only been achieved in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century saw an enormous improvement in the literacy rates on the island (in 2017, 76.5% the population age 15 and above and 97.7% of the population under 15 years old was literate). Although higher education is still a privilege of the few (in 2017, 8.5% of Cape Verdean population held a university degree), approximately one third of the university students in São Vicente come from Santo Antão. It is clear, that the exposure to education in

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<sup>25</sup> Santo Antão speakers constituted the original 1797 population nucleus of São Vicente and have made an important proportion of its population ever since (Swolkien 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Due to draught and overgrazing there were several famines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1831-33, the population of Santo Antão was reduced by half (Êvora 2005: 46).

Portuguese of the current generation of young adults (such as our interviewees IRD or NRI) is unprecedented in the island's history.

In the early 1980s another trigger of a longterm language change appeared on the island – drivable roads. The first roads were cobbled, but in 2010 a modern asphalt road connecting north-west and north-east coastal urban centres with Porto Novo and a ferry to São Vicente was opened. Still, several scattered villages and hamlets in the southern coast and on the south-western plateau remain off the electric grid and are accessible only via dirt tracks by jeep or by boat. In spite of improvements in agricultural techniques (e.g. water retention and distribution system) and a steadily growing tourism, Santo Antão is one of the poorest islands of the Archipelago. Since 1940, the island has lost, proportionally, more than a half of its population due to an exodus of young people to Mindelo and Praia and, particularly, to Sal in search of jobs.<sup>27</sup> In spite of recent severe visa restrictions, emigration to EU countries and the USA continues. These rapid demographic changes affect the linguistic situation on Santo Antão – the variety is losing its speakers. Younger people settle on other islands and switch to local speech. Older and more conservative speakers who stay behind in Santo Antão will soon disappear while their speech remains largely undocumented and undescribed.

Our interviewees not only comment on perceived generational language change but they also voiced observations regarding dialectal differences within SA, which are not commented by Baptista (2014) but which can be deduced from the transcripts of texts from different locations in Santo Antão in Rodrigues de Souza (2007). We cannot say more about this at this point, nor would we like to make statements about the extent of these differences which require further fieldwork.

#### **4. Methodology**

The authors conducted one week of research on the island of Santo Antão as a self-financed pilot project in February 2018. Two full days were dedicated to recording sound and video in the town of Vila das Pombas (site 1 on the map below; Vila das Pombas is the seat of *concelho* of Paúl, one of the three administrative districts on the island) and one in Cabo da Ribeira (site 2), ca. 20km up the Valley of Paúl. In each location two types of data were collected,

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<sup>27</sup> The depopulation is particularly visible in isolated south-west communities in the area of Tope de Coroa where primary schools often run only one age-mixed class.

a set of descriptions using the video stimulus “pear story” (Chafe 1980), and interview style conversations, mostly about historic, political or personal events that would interest and engage the interviewee (see Table 1).

Whereas Vila das Pombas is on the coastal road, today well connected with other urban centres of Santo Antão and, due to its colonial architecture itself a place of touristic interest, Cabo da Ribeira is distinctly more rural and isolated. The use of and access to Portuguese in Cabo da Ribeira, via schooling or as a means of communication, has been very limited. Therefore, we would expect the data from Cabo da Ribeira to represent a variety of SA that is less influenced by either Portuguese or other varieties of CVC such as the more prestigious urban variety of São Vicente. The interviews were conducted by both authors in SV (São Vicente Creole) and by Naylene Inocência, a native speaker from Vila das Pombas, in SA.<sup>28</sup>

Figure 1: Map of Santo Antão<sup>29</sup>



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<sup>28</sup> We would like to address our special thanks to Naylene Inocência for her invaluable help. We are also very grateful to Danira Monteiro from Ribeirão, Cocolí for her help with transcriptions.

<sup>29</sup> Based on: <https://www.google.com/maps/>.



**Table 4: Informants' metadata**

Person code	Gender/age/location	Data type	File name
MSD	(f/54/CDR)	Interview	CDR070218AC4a-d
IRD	(m/25/CDR)	Interview & pear story	CDR070218AC2a
MMC	(m/67 /VDP)	Interview & pear story	VDP060218AC9a-b, VDP060218AC10a-d, CDR070218AC2
HRI	(f/51/CDR)	Interview	CDR070218AC7a-b
RRC	(f/54/VDP)	Interview & pear story	VDP060218AC8a, VDP060218AC7
ERC	(f/39/VDP)	Pear story	VDP060218AC2
RLG	(f/10/VDP)	Pear story	VDP060218AC6
NRI	(f/23/VDP)	Pear story	VDP060218AC
LPP	(f/10/VDP)	Pear story	VDP060218AC8
AFS	(f/42/VDP)	Pear story	VDP060218AC3
AMS	(m/48/VDP)	Interview & pear story	VDP060218AC3b

**Abbreviations:** CDR – Cabo da Ribeira; VDP – Vila das Pombas; f – female; m – male.

## 5. Selected features of Santo Antão Phonology

The historic processes described in detail in section 3 have shaped the development of SA and are reflected in the phonology of the varieties of CVC spoken in Santo Antão. So far, the development of SA is little studied and little understood, but the data presented below make it clear that SA occupies an outlier position among the CVC varieties (see also Lang 2014) due to its geographic peculiarities and its unique and complex settlement history. We hope to contribute to the ongoing discussion about the origin and nature of the regional variation with CVC.

SA is phonologically similar to the CVC of São Vicente (for SV, see Swolkien 2015; Baptista 2014), while both differ from the main Sotavento variety of Santiago (ST; Quint 2000; Lang 2013) in terms of syllable structure, phoneme inventory and phonological processes such as final devoicing and vowel assimilation. 0 shows some features that distinguish the northern varieties SV and SA from the southern ST.

**Table 5: Distinctive features of SA and SV varieties as opposed to ST**

Feature	SV/SA	ST	Gloss
a/o-metaphony	<i>gót</i>	<i>gátu</i>	‘cat’
final devoicing & vowel deletion	<i>amik/emik</i>	<i>amigu</i>	‘friend’
interconsonantal unstressed vowel deletion	<i>txkansá</i>	<i>diskánsa</i>	‘to relax’
[s]/[ʃ] word final	<i>nhax/nhex</i>	<i>nhas</i>	‘our (pl.)’
[s]/[ʃ] before consonant, voice assimilation, vowel deletion	<i>pxká</i>	<i>buska</i>	‘to look for’

The phenomenon of unstressed vowel deletion present in the European Portuguese since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Teyssier 1982) seems to be accelerated both in SA and SV. As a result, both varieties have syllable structures allowing for consonant clusters and a more complex syllable structure than Portuguese (Baptista 2014). In comparison to ST, SA and SV share the syllable final and pre-consonantal pronunciation of ST [s] as [ʃ], and the deletion of word-final [u] and [i] and unstressed vowels in general, that are attested in cognates in ST and Portuguese. The raising of [a] to [o] in certain environments and selected lexical items (i.e. metaphony; see subsection 5.2 for examples) is typical of SA, SV as well as São Nicolau (SN). However, in at least some varieties spoken on SA, this trait has generalised to a type of vowel harmony in which [a] is always assimilated to [e] when occurring before [i] and to [o] when occurring before [u]. In both SA and SV, final devoicing is strictly enforced, although liaison rules seem to apply in SA (example 15) whereas in SV there is a strong tendency to devoice word-final consonants no matter what the phonological context. Regressive assimilation of [+/-voicedness] is also common. Carvalho (1984a, 1984b) considers these phonological specificities of Barlavento as generalisations of processes attested in Portuguese dialects.

The varietie(s) of Santo Antão have had a heavy influence on the development of SV, given that many of the settlers who came to populate the desert island of São Vicente in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came from Santo Antão, and there is still a constant movement of people between the two neighbouring islands. Due to its rugged terrain that has only in the last few decades been connected with drivable roads, Santo Antão has high levels of geographic variation. In general, it seems that some of the specificities shared by SA and SV are applied more consequentially in SA, such as vowel assimilation (metaphony; see section 5.2) and unstressed vowel deletions. These traits, together with differences in intonation and vowel realisation became typical for SA speech – especially the more rural inland varieties – whose speakers reportedly suffer ridicule in the urban environment of Mindelo. For instance,

not phonemic but highly iconic lengthening of stressed vowels with a falling intonation and a shift in vowel quality from [u] to [ɯ] and [a] to [æ] is perceived as very rural and conservative even within the island and is used to evoke rustic and ‘backwards’ speech in humoristic sketches by a local theatre company (Danira Monteiro p.c., Sept. 2018).

Baptista (2014) provides a very thorough picture of SA phonology, some of the main points of which we will briefly summarise. In this paper we use an adapted version of the ALUPEC (the alphabet officially approved by the Cape Verdean government for the use of writing CVC). ALUPEC has been developed on the model of Santiago variety, which means that the orthographic representation of some specificities of Barlavento varieties has not been standardised. However, we follow the precedences set by Swolkien (2015) for SV and Baptista (2014) for SA in using a close phonetic transcription and in avoiding historicizing tendencies.

### 5.1. Phonemes of Santo Antão Creole

SA has 16 vowel phonemes, made up by eight oral vowels and eight nasal vowels. Vowel length is not phonemic. Of these 16 vowel phonemes, only 10 occur in unstressed syllables. The open vowels [a], [ɛ], [ɔ] and their nasal counterparts [ã], [ẽ], [õ] only occur in stressed syllables. Carvalho (1984a: 42) describes the system as typically Portuguese vowel system of the Brazilian type.

**Table 6: Vowel phonemes in SA**

	Oral			Nasal		
	<i>front</i>	<i>central</i>	<i>back</i>	<i>front</i>	<i>central</i>	<i>back</i>
<i>high</i>	i		u	ĩ		ũ
	e		o	ẽ		õ
	ɛ	ɐ	ɔ	ẽ	ẽ	õ
<i>low</i>		a			ã	

The orthographic representation of the vowels combines stress and aperture. Canonical stress falls on the penultimate syllable for oral vowel final words (e.g. *kefuka* [ke' fuka] ‘oil lamp’) and on the last syllable for consonant final words (e.g. *talvex* [təl'veʃ] ‘maybe’). In canonically stressed syllables only aperture is marked by diacritics: the phonemes [a], [ɛ] and [ɔ], which only occur in stressed syllables, are distinguished from [ɐ], [e] and [o] by using an acute accent. In words with uncanonical stress patterns, such as when for example a final vowel bears the stress (e.g. *panhá* [pə'ɲa] ‘grab’, *kontsê* [kõ'tse] ‘to get to know’),

stress and aperture are marked using diacritics, the circumflex for closed vowels and the acute for open vowels and those that do not distinguish aperture (*tfísil* ['tfisil] ‘difficult’).

**Table 7: Representation of vowel phonemes in SA**

phoneme	unstressed	canonical stress	uncanonical stress	Example and Gloss
/a/	/	á	á	<i>káza</i> ['kazə] ‘house’ <i>katá</i> [kə'ta] ‘to collect’
/ɐ/	a	/	(â)	<i>káza</i> ['kazə] ‘house’
/e/	e	e	ê	<i>kebésa</i> [kebe'sɐ] ‘head’ <i>bebê</i> [be'be] ‘to drink’
/ɛ/	/	é	(é)	<i>véla</i> ['vɛlə] ‘candle’
/i/	i	i	í	<i>tfísil</i> ['tfisil] ‘difficult’ <i>xtrubí</i> [ʃtru'bi] ‘to distribute’ <i>kzínha</i> ['kziŋɐ] ‘a little bit’
/o/	o	o	ô	<i>koza</i> ['kozɐ] ‘thing’ <i>konpô</i> [kô'po] ‘to fix’
/ɔ/	/	ó	ó	<i>xkóla</i> [ʃkɔlə] ‘school’ <i>ótím</i> ['otim] ‘great/best’
/u/	u	u	ú	<i>gurdura</i> [gur'durɐ] ‘fat’ <i>bonbú</i> [bô'bu] ‘to carry on back’

**Key:** ( ) = not attested

Nasalisation is indicated in the orthography by the sequence vowel + /n/ (*txon* [tʃõ] ‘ground’). In order to disambiguate from a vowel followed by the nasal alveolar [n], we use /nn/ in these cases: *ónn* [ɔn] ‘year’. In keeping with ALUPEC, we write the first person singular pronoun N, although its pronunciation is subject to assimilation and can be realised as [ũ]. The equivalent of the conjunction ‘and’ is spelled ‘y’ and pronounced [i].

The consonantal phoneme inventory of SA is identical to the one of SV (Swolkien 2015). See Table 7 for IPA values and corresponding orthographic representation.

**Table 8: Consonant phonemes in SA**

		<b>bilabial</b>	<b>labiodental</b>	<b>alveolar</b>	<b>palatal</b>	<b>velar</b>	<b>uvular</b>
plosive	voiceless	/p/ <p>		/t/ <t>		/k/ <k>	
	voiced	/b/ <b>		/d/ <d>		/g/ <g>	
fricative	voiceless		/f/ <f>	/s/ <s>	/ʃ/ <x>		
	voiced		/v/ <v>	/z/ <z>	/ʒ/ <j>		
affricate	voiceless				/tʃ/ <tx>		
	voiced				/dʒ/ <dj>		
nasal		/m/ <m>		/n/ <n>	/ɲ/ <nh>		
liquid	lateral			/l/ <l>	/ʎ/ <lh>		
	rhotic			/r/ <r>			/R/ <rr>
glide		/w/ <u>			/j/ <i>		

For a discussion of diphthongs, syllable structure and stress patterns see Baptista (2013, 2014).

## 5. 2. Metaphony

One of the iconic traits of the Creole of Santo Antão, or at least some varieties spoken within the island of Santo Antão, that distinguishes it from all other CVC varieties is the consequent application of a type of vowel assimilation, usually referred to as metaphony in Romance linguistics. Metaphony is a trait of many Romance languages and dialects, and usually involves the assimilation of neighbouring vowels to stressed or unstressed [u] and [i]. The assimilation to stressed vowels is referred to as strong metaphony, to unstressed vowels as weak metaphony (see E-Ching 2015 for a discussion of metaphony in Creole languages including Cape Verdean). Metaphony as a historic process is a feature of several Portuguese varieties, cf. the raising of [e] to [i] and of [o] to [u] in pretonic syllables in European Portuguese (see Carvalho 1984a: 42) and Brazilian Popular Portuguese (*menino* [mi'ninu] ‘child’, *dormir* [dur'mir] ‘sleep’) when they occur before stressed [i] and [u]. This is also common in Cape Verdean varieties (see Carvalho (1984a: 40) for examples).

In a type of metaphony specific to the Barlavento region, the vowel [a] assimilates to [e] before [i] (henceforth a/e metaphony) and to [ɔ] before [u] (henceforth a/o metaphony). A/o metaphony is attested in all Barlavento except possibly Boavista (see Lang 2014: 278), while a/e metaphony is typical of SA.

The rounding of stressed [a] before [u] in words that have deleted the final -u corresponding to the Portuguese masculine ending -o, is applied consequently in SA, SV and in SN (see Table 9), although both Cardoso (1989)

and Carvalho (1984a) have noted that some items in SN do preserve the ending -u without assimilating [a] to [o].

**Table 9: Strong metaphony of the a/o type<sup>30</sup>**

SA	SA	SN	ST	Portuguese	Gloss
<i>gól</i>	<i>gól</i>	<i>gòl</i>	<i>Gálu</i>	<i>galo</i>	‘rooster’
<i>bronk</i>	<i>bronk</i>	<i>brònk</i>	<i>Bránku</i>	<i>branco</i>	‘white’
<i>trobói</i>	<i>trabói</i>	<i>trabòj</i>	<i>trabádju</i>	<i>trabalho</i>	‘work’
<i>ólt</i>	<i>ólt</i>	<i>òlt</i>	<i>Áltu</i>	<i>alto</i>	‘tall’
<i>lórg</i>	<i>lórck</i>	<i>làrg<sup>u</sup></i>	<i>Lárgu</i>	<i>largo</i>	‘wide’
<i>órk</i>	<i>órk</i>	<i>árku</i>	<i>Árku</i>	<i>arco</i>	‘arch’
<i>kansód</i>	<i>kansót</i>	<i>kansòd</i>	<i>kansádu</i>	<i>cansado</i>	‘tired’

SA also productively applies weak and strong metaphony, where other varieties do not, or do so only sporadically. This concerns a/e-metaphony in its strong and weak version as well as a/o-metaphony in its weak version (Table 10).

**Table 10: Metaphony in SA and its absence in SV**

Type	SA	SV	Gloss
Strong a/e	<i>bextent</i>	<i>baxtánt</i>	‘a lot’
	<i>idéd</i>	<i>idát</i>	‘age’
	<i>tfikuldéd</i>	<i>difikuldát</i>	‘difficulty’
Weak a/e	<i>emig</i>	<i>amik/emik</i>	‘friend’
	<i>kemín</i>	<i>kamín/kemín</i>	‘path’
	<i>Meria</i>	<i>Maria</i>	‘Mary’
	<i>bé</i>	<i>bá/bái</i>	‘go’
	<i>kefê</i>	<i>kafê</i>	‘coffee’
Weak a/o	<i>kezinha (&gt; kaza+inha)</i>	<i>kazinha (&gt;kaza+inha)</i>	‘house-Dim’
	<i>orroj</i>	<i>arrox</i>	‘rice’
	<i>kotxupa</i>	<i>katxupa</i>	‘catchupa’
	<i>oltura</i>	<i>altura</i>	‘height’

A/e-metaphony has not been reported for São Nicolau (Cardoso 1989: 29 provides *amíg<sup>u</sup>* ‘friend’). The lexicalised instances of a/e-metaphony in SV might be the result of language influence from Santo Antão, where it is fully productive to the extent that it occurs even with proper names and in derivations, whereas in SV it is marginal and possibly connotated with SA speech. Speakers of SA (HRI, NRI) have commented that use of such forms such as the pronunciation of *Maria* as *Meria* has caused ridicule in São Vicente. We have

<sup>30</sup> SN examples are according to Carvalho’s (1984a, 1984b) orthography and ST examples according to Lang *et al.* (2002).

witnessed speakers of SV describing SA as “sounding like goats”, because of the pronunciation of the high frequency item *bé* ‘go’ (*bá/bái* in SV).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the application or not of weak metaphony and the degree of aperture of the [e] sound is indicative of dialectal difference within Santo Antão (speakers spontaneously provide examples such “we [in Paúl] say *etun* ‘tuna’, *esin* ‘so’ they [in Bordera] say *atun*, *asin*” (HRI, NRI; see section 3.3). Even within the small sample of this study conducted in one valley of Santo Antão, variations occur:

(1) *kond mi N terminá quarta klas n’oltura, nox pai-x*

when 1Sg 1Sg finish fourth grade Prep height 1Pl.Poss father-Pl

*n dá podê*

Neg TAM can

‘At the time when I finished fourth grade my parents didn’t have the means.’ [VDP060218AC3b (AMS)]<sup>31</sup>

(2) *Esin, pei-x táva...*

So father-Pl TAM

‘So, the parents were...’ [CDR0702184a (NRI)]

In Santo Antão, and this seems to be another specificity, metaphony even works across several syllables, not just the adjacent one to the metaphony trigger as in the examples provided by Carvalho (1984a: 39, 41): SA *donót* ‘damned’ (cf. SV *danót*, Port. *danado*); *kotód* (cf. SV *katót*, Port. *catado*). See also Lang (2014: 277), who provides a compilation of items, quoted from Baptista (2014) in which weak metaphony spreads over several syllables (e.g. *kozók* [ko’zók] ‘jacket’, cf. Port. *casaco*; *borót* [bo’rót] ‘cheap’, cf. Port. *barato*). Apparently, metaphony also operates across word boundaries in SA, as shown by the instances of *nhe/nha* ‘my’ and *na/no/ne* ‘in’, in the following examples:

(3) *N vrá oi N dze “ua! oiá **nhe medrinha**”.*

1Sg turn 1Sg say Int see 1SgPoss god.mother

‘I turned and said: Oh, look, that’s my godmother!’ [CDR0702184a (MSD)]

<sup>31</sup> The code refers to the file name and the segment the example has been retrieved from the abbreviation in brackets refers to the speaker. For metadata see section 4.

- (4) *kom nha mǎi tá goxtá d'lavá*  
 as 1Sg mother TAM like Gen wash  
 ‘As my mother liked to wash [laundry]...’ [CDR0702184a (MSD)]
- (5) *El dze: Bzot te bá katá kefê, kex kefê k jent*  
 3Sg say 2Pl TAM go collect coffee, Dem:Pl coffee Rel people  
*t'otxá no txon.*  
 TAM find Prep ground  
 ‘He said: You will go collect coffee, the kind that people find on the ground.’ [CDR070218AC7a (HRI)]
- (6) *el txpejá na se bolói, el dá-nox kex pex*  
 3Sg put Prep 3Sg.Poss basket, 3Sg give-1SgO Dem:Pl fish  
 ‘She put it in his basket and gave us the fish.’ [CDR070218AC7a (HRI)]
- (7) *...lá ne kemin.*  
 there Prep road  
 ‘There on the road.’ [CDR070218AC4a (MSD)]

Metaphony also applies to morphophonological processes. In both SV and SA, the second person plural object clitic *-b* (tonic form *bo*) causes assimilation of final stressed *-á* to [o]. In SA the third person singular *-l* (tonic form *el*) and third person plural *-x* (tonic pronoun *ex*) cause assimilation of verb final *-á* to [e] (see Table 11). The trigger for these assimilation processes seem to be elided vowels of the object pronouns as present in their tonic full forms.

**Table 11: Morphophonological metaphony**

SA	SV		Gloss
<i>levó-b</i>	<i>levó-b</i> take-2SgO	> <i>levá +b(o)</i>	‘take you’
<i>leve-l</i>	<i>levá-l</i> take-3SgO	> <i>levá +(e)l</i>	‘take it’
<i>longe-x</i>	<i>longá-x</i> reach-3PIO	> <i>longá + (e)x</i>	‘reach them’



The examples have shown that among the CVC varieties spoken in the Barlavento region, SA applies metaphony in the highest degree. Not only has SA types of metaphony unattested or rare in SV and SN (weak metaphony, a/e metaphony), it also allows metaphony to spread, work across syllable boundaries and is active between verbs and their affixes (although this might be true to SN as well). Further research is needed to determine whether metaphony is an innovation of SA that has spread across the Barlavento region or whether it was already a trait of early CVC of the second wave of settlement that has been generalized on Santo Antão.

### 5.3. Consonant assimilation processes

In SA, like in SV, final devoicing of plosives and fricatives applies (ex. 8). However, when the next segment starts with a vowel or a voiced consonant the devoicing is suspended (ex. 9 & 11). Nasal consonants do not seem to trigger voicing of preceding consonants (see ex. 10).

(8) *Hm, te fka lonx.*

INT TAM stay far

‘Hmm, it is far.’ [CDR0702184a:13 (NRI)]

(9) *Á-l tá fka lonj á bo n dá fka pert d'ex.*

Already-3Sg TAM stay far already 2Sg Neg TAM stay close Gen.3Pl

‘It was far, you wouldn’t be able to stay close to them.’  
[CDR0702184a:14 (MSD)]

(10) *ma nunka tif nen sobon om, nen... góra k ten*

but never exist:TAM even soap Omo even now Rel exist

*ex koza*

Dem:Pl thing

‘But we never had neither washing powder, nor... now these things are around’ [CDR0702184a:101 (MSD)]

- (11) *tiv un...un psoa k ta ben na bisikléta, n'e...*  
 exist:TAM Art.indef person Rel TAM come Prep bike QT  
 ‘There was a person, who came by bike.’ [VDP060218AC3b:1 (AMS)]

Some words ending in [ʃ], like *nox* ‘we’ and *ex* ‘they’, have the [ʃ] voiced when followed by a vocalic onset:

- (12) *noj éra kuat irmon*  
 1Pl be:TAM four brother  
 ‘We were four brothers’ [VDP060218AC3b:18 (AMS)]

- (13) *ke nox pai-x n dá podê dá jent xkóla.*  
 Conj 1Pl.Poss father-Pl Neg TAM can give people school  
 ‘Our parents couldn’t send us to school.’ [VDP060218AC3b:19 (AMS)]

In consonant clusters, even across word boundaries, consonants assimilate to the voicedness value of the following consonant. As a result, sequences of consonants tend to be either voiced or unvoiced. This phenomenon has also been attested in SV for some of the items, but it is applied quite consistently in our small sample of SA.

- (14) *El te txkunfiá t' kex mnin e k tá k kex fruta.*  
 3Sg TAM suspect Gen Dem:Pl child Foc Rel TAM with Dem:Pl fruit  
 ‘He suspected the children that had the fruits.’ [VDP060218AC2:8 (ERC)]

**Table 12: Voicing assimilation in lexical items**

SA	SV	Gloss
<i>vze</i>	<i>fazê</i>	‘do’
<i>ffikulded</i>	<i>d(i)fikuldát</i>	‘difficulty’
<i>t'kel</i>	<i>d' kel</i>	‘of this (Gen Dem)’
<i>txpux</i>	<i>t(x)pux</i> (cf. ST <i>dipos</i> )	‘later’
<i>zbi</i>	<i>sbi/zbi</i>	‘go up’
<i>zgi</i>	<i>sgi/zgi</i>	‘follow’
<i>zgunda</i>	<i>sgunda/zgunda</i>	‘second’

This phenomenon is also attested across word boundaries. In example (15) we have *ej* instead of the regular form *ex* for the third person plural and in example (16) the genitive morpheme *d* is devoiced to *t* due to the following voiceless consonant (cf. also *t'kex* in example 14).

(15) *Ej bé ej de-l asixtensa na kel bisikléta.*

3Pl go 3Pl give-3SgO assistance Prep Dem bike

‘They came and they helped him with his bike.’ [VDP060218AC3b:8 (AMS)]

(16) *Mnininha-x t' kel época, bzot n dáva revindiká es*

girls-Pl Gen Dem era Pron.2Pl Neg TAM revindicate Dem

*direit de... bé pe xkóla?*

right Gen go Prep school

‘You girls of that era, you didn’t revindicate the right to go to school?’ [CDR0702184a:9 (NRI)]

While the varieties of SA and SV are similar to each other to the extent that they are perfectly mutually understandable, SA is characterized by phonological features that are unique within CVC as whole. Other features, even though attested in SV, have been generalised much more in SA, cementing its status as outlier.

Of the four types of metaphony that involve the realisation of [a] only one is attested in SA, SV, and SN. The other three (strong a/e metaphony, weak a/e- as well as weak a/o-metaphony) only occur in SA. Metaphony across word boundaries is so far only attested in SA. Unstressed vowel deletion, although present in SV, seem to be more pronounced in SA and judging from the sparse material it is much less so in SN, which has words in final -u. Also, the assimilation of voicedness within consonant clusters is applied more consistently in SA than in SV where it also occurs. In SA it even works across word boundaries.

## 6. Conclusions

The examination of the socio-historical past of the Santo Antão variety has pointed out several facts. As early as the 1500s, a settlement of Sotavento Creole and African languages speaking slaves and *forros* (freed slaves) existed on the island. The original human nucleus, reinforced by a continuous influx of the Sotavento inhabitants during the 17<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a progressive occupation of the island's interior. The presence of the official apparatus until 1732 on the privately owned island was residual, the population lived in extreme internal and external isolation, and, contrary to common assumption, a considerable slave workforce persisted on the island, albeit in a peasant-like economic structure. This particular social setting combined with its extraordinary landscape made Santo Antão, from very early on, a hotspot for internal language change and dialectal innovation.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the first state and Church institutions were established, followed by a plausible influx of metropolitan and insular Portuguese speakers in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the arrival of these speakers to a stable community did not seem to originate processes associated with creolization but rather with intensive contact of related languages, CVC, and Portuguese. Various degrees of bilingualism and language shift caused the introduction of modern Portuguese phonological features into the prevailing CVC, such as metaphony, the pronunciation of syllable final [s] as [ʃ], and extensive unstressed vowel deletion. The isolation of the settlements on the extreme topography of Santo Antão, which continued until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has allowed these features to be generalised. In Portugal, the spread of these features, some of which are dialectal and typical of southern varieties of the Algarve (Carvalho 1984a: 43), has been halted by the institutionalization of written Portuguese (Carvalho 1984a: 45). In Santo Antão, as we have shown, the impact of schooling could not have been significant until modern days.

Our phonological data show that SA is an outlier in Cape Verdean linguistic geography and the historical scenario explains its singular character, which has partly extended to SV due to heavy settlement of Sant Antonians in São Vicente since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The perceived “Portuguese character” of the western Barlavento varieties is the outcome of a combination of specific ancient and recent historic and geographic conditions on Santo Antão and might not be indicative of a fundamental Barlavento/Sotavento distinction. In our understanding these innovations are result of language contact between Portuguese and a CVC variety that had at that point already diverged from the CVC spoken in Santiago through several centuries of natural language change

exacerbated by a fragmented geography. The innovations attested in SA are not fundamental enough to justify a re-creolization approach to the entire Barlavento region. We also fail to see how the integration of Portuguese settlers into a stable CVC speaking community would have triggered something as strong as a second wave of creolization. To settle the question, data from São Nicolau and Boavista would be needed, as well as a better understanding of morphology and syntactic features of Santo Antão. We hope that, with the morphosyntactic analysis of SA features (negator, fully productive subjunctive suffix, suppletive verbs, past perfect structures with an auxiliary, TAM particles and a semi-gramaticalized *kabá*) currently in preparation, we will be able to expand and reinforce our position.

### Abbreviations

**Art**=Article; **Conj**=Conjunction; **Dem**=Demonstrative; **Foc**=Focus; **Gen**=Genitive; **Indef**=Indefinite; **Int**=Interjection; **O**=Object; **Pl**=Plural; **Poss**=Possessive; **Prep**=Preposition; **Pron**=Pronoun; **QT**=question tag; **Rel**=Relative; **Sg**=Singular; **TAM**=Tense-Aspect-Mood

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