Black Religions with White Faces: the Creolization of Religious Belief and Cultural Practice in Colonial Angola, Brazil, and Cuba, 1600-1889

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PREFACE

In June 2008, I made my first visit to Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. As part of an intensive six-week Portuguese-language immersion program, I spent much of my time in a classroom, taking part in vocabulary drills, enacting group skits, and writing short essays. The language-learning center at which I studied also organized "cultural events" designed to expose our group of American graduate and undergraduate university students to what the center considered to be the essentials of Bahian culture. Among other activities, we enjoyed samba lessons, a *capoeira*[1] demonstration, and a *Candomblé*[2] ceremony.

The center also regularly took us on bus tours of the area, and I independently toured the area on foot in my leisure time. The prevalence of Afro-Brazilian religious symbolism in the cultural landscape and mundane life of Salvador was striking. I was enchanted by the *Dique de Tororó,* a lake with statues of ten of the major deities of Candomblé: Exú, Ogum, Xangô, Oxossi, Oxalá, Iemanjá, Oxum, Iansã, Nana, and Omolu.[3] Miniature statues of these same *orixá,* and tchotchkes decorated with their symbols were sold in numerous souvenir shops. Seafood restaurants festooned their entrances with images of Iemanjá, the orixá of the ocean. During my daily walk along

[1] Afro-Brazilian martial art which is very popular in northeastern Brazil. Cf. Floyd Merrell, *Capoeira and Candomblé: conformity and resistance in Brazil*, (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005).
[2] Afro-Brazilian religious sect, prevalent in northeastern Brazil. Will be discussed at further length throughout chapter and dissertation. Cf. Paul Christopher Johnson, *Secrets, gossip, and gods: the transformation of Brazilian Candomblé*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press on Demand, 2002).
[3] Exu is the trickster deity of the crossroads; Ogum is a warrior deity; Xango is the orixa of thunder and lightning; Oxala is the paternal orxia of the skies; Iemanja is a maternal sea goddess; Oxum is the female orixa of love and fertility; Iansa is a warrior goddess of the wind; Nana is an elderly "grandmother" orixa, and Omolu is the orixa of healing.

Avenida Sete de Setembro to and from my weekday Portuguese classes, I had to take care not to trip over the massive roots of a centuries-old irôko tree which held sentinel two blocks from the language center. The tree's formidable roots had destroyed the sidewalk and were threatening the underlying structure of the road. Our tour guide, Fred, had explained that, yes, it posed a threat to the road's foundation, but whenever a city official proposed its removal, there would be such a public outcry that its extraction would amount to political suicide.

My temporary "home" for that six-week period was a room in an apartment in the solidly middle-class neighborhood of Graça. My hosts were a middle-aged, childless Brazilian couple who were phenotypically "white,"[4] and proudly proclaimed their "pure Portuguese" ancestry (they were very curious as to my ethnic origins, as my own physical appearance does not correspond in most peoples' imaginations with my Nordic-sounding surname). The majority of my interactions were with the wife, Ana Rosa. She sat with me during meals, speaking to me in Bahian Portuguese, cluing me in on aspects of local culture, the meaning of idiomatic expressions, and she gleefully taught me Brazilian Portuguese obscenities. One Wednesday morning, after showering, and dressing in jeans and a red t-shirt, I sat down to breakfast with Ana Rosa. She looked at me and commented that I must be a daughter of Iansã, the warlike female orixá of wind, as I had

[4] It should be noted here that "whiteness" in contemporary Brazil constitutes quite a different thing than it does in the contemporary United States. Cf. Edward Eric Telles, *Race in another America: the significance of skin color in Brazil*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Marshall C. Eakin, *Becoming Brazilians: Race and National Identity in Twentieth-century Brazil*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). I define "white" as having a majority of one's ancestry derived from Europe, phenotypically appearing as such, and being legally categorized as such. The last part of this definition is the one of the utmost importance to this dissertation, given the fact that I am working with documents from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. If a document refers to a party as "white," (*branco* in Portuguese-language documents, *blanco* in Spanish language documents), I accept that as prima facie evidence that the individual being referred to as such was indeed "white," particularly given the high premium placed on whiteness in a colonial slave society.

unconsciously chosen her color to wear on her day. Ana Rosa's observation surprised me, as previously she had told me that while she respected the rights of Candomblé practitioners to practice their religion, she had no belief in it whatsoever. Ana Rosa attended Catholic mass on most Sunday afternoons and had a strange altar in her hallway on which she had placed a crucifix, a figurine of the Virgin Mary, and a brass representation of the elephant-headed Hindu deity Ganesha.

It was the interim period between my second and third years as a PhD student, and, while my primary purpose for being in Salvador was Portuguese language immersion, I was also under pressure to formulate a dissertation topic. A preliminary visit to the Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia only caused more confusion. I told the friendly archivist that I was interested in colonial religion and slavery, and she brought me a catalog for the "Sesmaria" collection, which appeared to be piles of titles of sale for church lands and buildings from the eighteenth-century. Needless to say, I went back to the apartment in Graça feeling shattered and distressed.

A few nights later, toward the end of the trip, the language school chartered an air-conditioned bus and sent my group to a *terreiro do Candomblé*[5] to attend a semi-public celebration of a feast day for Xangô (the orixa of storms). Our tour guide Fred, himself a Candomblé adherent, told us that Xangô would manifest himself, taking possession of the bodies of his "children" during the course of the ceremony, which Fred referred to as "a beautiful ballet." Fred also told us to also expect Xangô's wife, Iansã (the goddess of wind), his mistress Oxum (the goddess of love and fertility), and, perhaps

[5] Place of worship and ceremony in the Candomblé religion. Hereafter I will refer to it simply as a "terreiro."Cf. Hendrik Kraay, ed, *Afro-Brazilian Culture and Politics: Bahia, 1790s-1990s*, (Boston: Routledge, 2016).

his former wife, Oba (the domestic goddess of the hearth), to show up for the party. To our group's (or mine, at least) excitement, Fred cautioned that Iansã and Oxum often fight when they are within each other's vicinity.

For over an hour, the bus wound through narrow, curvy roads that led to the poorer, heavily wooded and sparsely populated areas outside the city limits of Salvador. We arrived at the *terreiro*, a basic cement block building on a large plot of land. When we departed the bus our group was immediately greeted by a group of men who ushered us into the *terreiro* and divided us by sex—the men were to remain on the left side, while the women were directed to the right. The building was packed tightly with adherents and observers. At first, I could only found room to stand. Being short, I had little opportunity to see the beautiful ballet Fred promised, but I could smell smoke coming from outside which carried the aroma of roasting chicken and some type of gamey meat, possibly goat. About ten minutes after our arrival, a woman abandoned her spot on the front bench (presumably, she had sufficient insider status to know where the bathroom was), and I sat down in order to get a better view of the ceremony. Four men, three women, and a four year old girl, dressed in the ritual garb of Xangô and Iansã danced the same basic steps over and over to equally repetitive drumming. A tall, lean dark complexioned black man sat in the center of the stage. (Fred later explained that this man was the *pãe-de-santo*[6].) Flanking him were guests of honor, one of whom was a fair-skinned, yellow-haired, rather Scandinavian-looking woman dressed in a white, plantation slave-style dress. Another was a middle-aged Caucasian woman wearing what appeared to be American professional attire.

[6] Literally, "father of the saint." The central leader of the terreiro.

Oxum never appeared (nor Oba), and the anticipated fight between entranced devotees did not materialize. For me, the novelty of the dance and music wore off fairly quickly, and my lower back began to ache from sitting on the simple, backless bench, so I shifted around to get a look at the other attendees.

The two white women up front were not exceptional. Besides the white individuals in my own cohort, the audience of about eighty people reflected a cross-section of the racial diversity I had observed and read about in Bahian society. The majority of attendees appeared to be of mixed African and European (and likely, indigenous Brazilian) ancestry, several looked to be of majority black ancestry, but a sizable portion was white Brazilians. The whites did not appear uncomfortable or marginalized in any way by their fellow attendees. On the bus ride back to Salvador, I wondered how long this had been the case in Brazilian society. When I had the chance to get online, I accessed Vanderbilt University's online catalog, as well as J-Stor, and tried every possible keyword search I could imagine. There was nothing. At that moment, I knew I had my potential dissertation topic.

CHAPTER OUTLINE AND OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 deconstructs the historiography and anthropological literature that has shaped the study of African Diasporic religions in the Atlantic World, and examines why the phenomenon of African religious practices on European-descended populations has been largely ignored. This chapter also traces the evolution of cultural creolization theory, especially as it pertains to African-descended populations in the Americas, and calls for a new theoretical paradigm of cultural mixture.

Chapter 2 examines the religious and cultural influences indigenous Angolans had on European-descended peoples in seventeenth and eighteenth century Angola. In this chapter, I argue that it was politically, socially, and economically advantageous for Portuguese settlers and their descendants to adopt, or at least demonstrate a profound understanding of, indigenous Angolan cosmologies, symbols, and cultural references. In Portuguese Angola, blacks had a massive demographic advantage, and in parts of the interior and outside the political boundaries of the colony, held the bulk of the political and economic power. For Portuguese Angolans, many of whom were slave traders, military officers, or exiled criminals from Portugal or Brazil who were hard-pressed to survive and to integrate themselves into colonial Angolan society (often, the Portuguese Angolans fit into all of these categories), my research demonstrates that the better a white Angolan was at acculturating to local cultural and religious practice in Angola, the more successful they were at trade and in military campaigns, and that gaining a measure of status among black Angolan societies was positively correlated with a rise in status in white Angolan society.

Chapter 3 examines the process of the transmission of African religious practices to whites in Brazil during the mid-seventeenth to late-eighteenth centuries. While I have encountered examples of this phenomenon in all of Brazil, I will pay special attention to the regions of Bahia, Pernambuco, and Maranhão. These regions all had large demographic concentrations of Africans and Afro-descendants, and, unsurprisingly, produced the largest number of records with regards to prosecution for African religious practices. Starting in the 1620's, whites often sought out the services of African ritual specialists to heal infirmities, divine the location of runaway slaves or stolen objects, or

to communicate with the deceased. The social prestige enjoyed by African religious specialists gave enslaved Africans a venue by which they could obtain improved conditions for themselves within the sphere of slavery, and gain standing among other Africans. More importantly, it established a ritual space in which popular religious ideology in Brazil was negotiated and ultimately, creolized.

Chapter 4 is an examination of the process of religious creolization in Cuba, encompassing the mid-eighteenth to late-nineteenth centuries. I will argue that a confluence of pragmatic toleration on the part of the Catholic Church with regard to African religious practices, the social proximity of blacks and whites in neighborhoods such as Regla and Guanabacoa, and the introduction of religious symbolism and ideology via popular cultural activities such as gambling resulted in the familiarization of lower-class whites in Havana with African religious practices, in particular those of the Carabalí from West Africa.

Chapter 5 ties together the disparate narratives of the previous three and analyzes the larger patterns and implications of the African contribution to popular religion in the Iberian Atlantic World, and discusses the social dynamics of the transmission of religious and cultural practices from blacks to whites. I utilize records pertaining to Angola, Brazil and Cuba in this chapter. In addition, I examine prosecutions for religious practices which were labeled "witchcraft" or "superstition" from Portugal and Spain to demonstrate how the popular religious practices of Europeans and Euro-descendants were similar to those of Africans, and to demonstrate how whites were transformed by their encounters with blacks in the Atlantic World.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

While I arrived at my initial notion of the idea for this project in Brazil, this is a dissertation about the adoption of African-derived religious beliefs and practices by whites[7] in Brazil, Cuba, and Angola. I broadened the scope of my study with the intention of creating a study that was theory rather than place-driven, and I want to (at least begin to) demonstrate that Africans and their descendants exerted an influence on the larger societies in which they were either enslaved or colonized throughout the Atlantic World. Although an examination of the French, British[8], and Dutch Atlantic colonies is outside the scope of this project I would hazard to guess similar observations could be drawn in any society in which African-descended peoples and European-descended peoples had extensive and sustained contact with one another, no matter what the power dynamics were. As has been more extensively explicated in the introduction, the chief argument of this dissertation is that in Iberian Atlantic slave societies, African-

[7] I define "white" as having a majority of one's ancestry derived from Europe, phenotypically appearing as such, and being legally categorized as such. The last part of this definition is the one of the utmost importance to this dissertation, given the fact that I am working with documents from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. If a document refers to a party as "white," (*branco* in Portuguese-language documents, *blanco* in Spanish language documents), I accept that as prima facie evidence that the individual being referred to as such was indeed "white," particularly given the high premium placed on whiteness in a colonial slave society.

[8] Mechal Sobel has written an insightful monograph on the adoption of African-derived religious and cultural practices by whites in eighteenth-century Virginia.Cf. Mechal Sobel, *The world they made together: Black and white values in eighteenth-century Virginia.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987). Other, more recent works, while they do not explicitly deal with the transfer of African religious practices to whites, make an excellent case for the transplantation of African culture and religion, particularly that of West Central Africa, to the southeastern United States. For Louisiana, see Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in colonial Louisiana: the development of Afro-Creole culture in the eighteenth century*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992). For South Carolina, see Jason R. Young, *Rituals of Resistance: African Atlantic religion in Kongo and the lowcountry South in the era of slavery*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2007) and Ras Michael Brown, *African-Atlantic cultures and the South Carolina Lowcountry*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

derived religious ideas, symbols, and cosmology played an important role in the evolution of popular religiosity, ways of thinking about cosmology and proper social order, and ideas about optimal ways of approaching and employing the power of the divine. The change of religious ideas over time in these societies was not simply a top-down, white-black, Christian-"heathen" negotiation. Although the avenues and motivating factors for this religious change varied in each of the colonial societies I examined, hence the "case study" approach writ large that I deploy in this dissertation, the adoption of African religious practices by whites occurred for several basic reasons.

To begin with, European and African early modern worldviews concerning the divine were not all that dissimilar, and thus taking on African practices would not have been the outlandish thing contemporary researchers tend to assume. Secondly, African religious practices were very useful. In the early modern colonial world, African and African Diasporic religions filled demands, which I will discuss in greater detail in the upcoming chapters, that the Roman Catholic church was simply incapable of or unwilling to meet.

A caveat should be mentioned at this juncture. While I am well aware of the presence of indigenous Brazilians in the colonial era, their interactions with non-indigenous peoples in the colony, and the possibility their religious beliefs may have crossed group boundaries, this is a dissertation specifically about the impact of *African* religious ideologies on the larger Iberian Atlantic World. I am not setting forth a theory about an amorphous yet singular "popular religion" which may or may have not existed in colonial Brazil and which may or may not have been influenced by indigenous Brazilian religious beliefs; thus, I am largely omitting them from my discussion, except

in those cases where the documentary evidence warrants it. There is already a sizable and lively (and I daresay, sufficient) historiography about the *Santidade* cults and other indigenous cultural legacies in Brazil.[9]

This project is admittedly, an ambitious and complex undertaking, and cannot be fitted neatly into the categories of "cultural history," "history of religion," or "social history." Further, any work which touches on the topics of race and/or religion (in the case of this dissertation, both) risks raising the hackles of its audience, theoretically, semantically, politically, or personally. I have several goals in writing this chapter. I will first trace the evolution of the "survivals" versus "creolization" debate which has circumscribed the fields of history, anthropology and linguistics with regards to the African Diaspora in the Americas for nearly four decades. Secondly, I will interrogate the literature surrounding African and African Diasporic religion to discover why it strikes many as counter-intuitive that whites would adopt African-derived religious practices. Finally, I will define exactly what I mean when I use the word "religion."

HERSKOVITZ AND SURVIVALS

In 1941, the anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits published *The Myth of the Negro Past*, establishing the groundwork for debates about the persistence of African cultural traits among black populations in the Americas. Drawing upon comparative field studies of Afro-descended populations in the southeastern United States, Haiti, Suriname, and Guiana, and in West Africa, Herskovits concluded that key West African cultural

[9] Cf. Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600,* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), and "Millenarian Slaves? The Santidade de Jaguaripe and Slave Resistance in the Americas," *The American Historical Review*, 104, No. 5 (Dec 1999), 1531-1559. Also, Ronaldo Vainfas, *A heresia dos índios: catolicismo e rebeldia no Brasil colonial,* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995).

traits had survived the trans-Atlantic slave crossing and had persisted over the centuries. He further observed that these cultural retentions could be observed in contemporary Afro-descended populations in the Americas. Herskovits argued for the presence of observable "Africanisms," which could be most easily seen in the family structures, religious practice, language, and artistic expression of black populations in the Americas, and asserted that "African culture, instead of being weak under contact, is strong but resilient, with a resiliency that itself has sanction in aboriginal tradition."[10]

The myth of the Negro past initiated a sea change in the study of Afro-descended populations in the Americas, who heretofore had been largely represented by historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists as essentially *tabulae rasae* whose culture, if they were even acknowledged to have any "culture," could not have possibly withstood the trauma of the trans-atlantic slave trade, and as it is implied, contact with "superior" European customs and Christian religious beliefs. Herskovits' theory was, for his time, groundbreaking, insightful, and valiant. However, his treatment of African cultural "retentions" made no apparent allowance for dynamic change over time and adaptation to the radically different social, political, cultural, and biological environment Africans found themselves in upon disembarking in the Americas. Herskovits also focused solely on the "Africanisms" which emanated from West Africa, seemingly ignoring the possibility of cultural influence from the regions of Congo, Angola, or Mozambique, all major slave trading areas and ports of embarkation. Further, Herskovits' arguments reflected many racial biases of his era at various points, characterizing African cultural

[10]Melville J. Herskovits, *The myth of the Negro past* (1941), (Boston: Beacon, 1958): 19.

retentions in black American Baptist and Pentecostal churches as "hysteria," "emotionalism," and "Negro religious hysteria."[11]

Yet even though Herskovits treated African-derived religious practice in a fairly condescending manner, he did not discount the probability that whites in the Americas saw much of value in religious practices imported from Africa. Herskovits states, ""In the New World, exposure of the whites to Negro practices as well as of Negroes to European forms of worship could not but have had an influence on both groups, however prone students may be to ascribe a single direction to the process from whites to Negroes alone."[12]

MINTZ AND PRICE

The 1976 publication of *The Birth of African-American Culture* by the anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Richard Price established the framework for a debate in African Diaspora studies that continues to persist today. While conceding the possibility of isolated yet sparse cultural retentions among African-descended peoples in the Americas, Mintz and Price argued for widespread cultural creolization among blacks in the New World, asserting that the trauma and social displacement, as well as the ethnic and linguistic diversity amongst any given group of slaves fraught upon Africans in the Middle Passage disallowed the possibility of demonstrable African retentions. Both

[11] Ibid., 232.
[12] Ibid., 232.

scholars further took issue with Herskovits' treatment of social norms in the Afro-American community as a cultural artifact.[13]

What Mintz and Price did argue for, however, was the creation of a new culture, "forged in the fires of enslavement,"[14] which grew out of improvisation, creativity, and the necessity to adapt to circumstances. As with Herskovits, Mintz and Price pay special attention to religion as a "laboratory" by which to observe and/or measure cultural creolization. In their discussion of the possibility of the persistence of African religious beliefs in the New World, they offer a speculative, yet highly plausible scenario on a New World plantation, in which an African-born woman who was the daughter of a ritual priestess in Africa assists in the successful birth of twins. The success of the birth is taken as prima facie evidence of the former woman's spiritual powers, and the larger slave community assigns her the task of ritual specialist. As Mintz and Price conclude from this speculative exercise, "We can probably date the beginnings of any new African-American religion from the moment that person in need received ritual assistance from another who belonged to a different cultural group."[15]

While Mintz and Price have presented the most plausible theoretical framework by which to understand the evolution of the culture of African descendants in the Americas, the backdrop against which they present their argument for the dynamism and creativity of African-American cultures creates a false and incomplete impression of the cultures of European descendants in the Americas. Even while declaring "No group, no matter how well-equipped or how free to choose, can transfer its way of life and the

[13]Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price,"The birth of African-American culture: An anthropological approach," (Boston: Beacon Scholar, 1992): 6.
[14] Ibid, 95.
[15] Ibid., 45-46.

accompanying beliefs and values intact from one locale to another,"[16] the impression they give of the culture of European descendants in the colonies is that of a static, homogeneous monolith incapable or unwilling to adapt to a new environment and new challenges in the Americas (nor in any other colony).

Indeed, a dissection of the dynamics of culture change among Europeans and their descendants was not in the purview of Mintz and Price's essay, and their rather simplistic presentation of white culture in the Americas appears to mostly have been a conceptual prop. Unfortunately, the theoretical device deployed by Mintz and Price in *The Birth of African-American Culture* was taken largely at face value and replicated by succeeding historians and anthropologists dealing with the African Diaspora, the Atlantic Slave Trade, and cultural and religious history in the New World. Without a doubt, "white" cultures had more institutional tools, such as churches, at their disposal for cultural reproduction and in their overseas colonies, as well as military, economic and social power, but whites also faced new and challenging environments in the areas they colonized.

SOCIAL DEATH?

One of the most influential works on notions of cultural reproduction and transference in colonial slave societies is Orlando Patterson's 1982 *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study*. Highly theoretical in its intent, global in geographic scope, and largely quantitative in its methodology, Patterson's work provided a framework for understanding the capacity of the slave to enact any impact or influence on the culture of

[16] Ibid., 1.

his/or her enslavement. Patterson asserts that "Slaves differed from other human beings in that they were not allowed freely to integrate the experience of their ancestors into their lives, to inform their understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of their natural forebears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory."[17] As such, as Patterson would have it, the possibility for cultural retentions, an improvised new "creole" culture, and, much less, the possibility for influencing the dominant groups in their society would be impossible, given "the total powerlessness from the viewpoint of a slave."[18]

Although Patterson was approaching slavery from a global approach, which included analyses of the phenomenon of human bondage in ancient Greece, China, Africa, British America, among other places, the breadth and sophistication of his work, his sound explanations and his gift for coining metaphors, have contributed to Patterson's enduring impact on the study of slavery in the Atlantic World. As Vincent Brown has astutely observed, "it is often forgotten that the concept of social death is a *distillation* from Patterson's breathtaking survey—a theoretical abstraction that is meant not to describe the lived experiences of the enslaved so much as to reduce them to a least common denominator that could reveal the essence of slavery in an ideal type slave, shorn of meaningful heritage,"[19] and that "those he has inspired have often conflated his

[17] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and social death: a comparative study*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.
[18] Ibid, 1.
[19] Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 114, No 5, (Dec 2009), 1235. See also Vincent Brown, *The reaper's garden: Death and power in the world of Atlantic slavery*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

exposition of slaveholding ideology with a description of the actual condition of the enslaved."[20]

The influence of Patterson's social death theory still lingers,[21] but it has largely been eclipsed by other debates in the study of the African Diaspora, particularly in studies concerning the Iberian Atlantic World. However, the impact of the notion of complete powerlessness continues to persist in approaches to cross-cultural interchanges in colonial slave societies. It seems to be considered unthinkable that religious ideas, cosmologies, rituals or symbols could flow any way but from "top to bottom" in such a hierarchical social and cultural framework. It is not too much of a speculative leap to surmise that this may be indicative of a widespread hesitancy to view the cultural and religious practices of "subalterns," non-Westerners and non-Christians as equally transferable as the religions and practices of the elite, which Brown has referred to as a "residual Victorian understanding of culture as the civilizational achievements of "the West," "Africa" or various other groups, to be attained, lost or re-created."[22]

SHIFT IN STUDIES OF AFRICANS IN ANGLO CULTURES TO AFRICANS IN LATIN AMERICAN CULTURES

But, as numerous monographs and primary documents, as I will discuss at a later point in this dissertation will demonstrate, European populations in the Atlantic World cannot be described as homogeneous. Frank Tannenbaum, for example, observed this in his 1947 *Slave and Citizen.* Tannenbaum proposed a marked difference in the ideologies of the Protestant (usually English) plantation societies in the New World, whose culture

[20] Ibid., 1248.
[21] For a recent example of this, see Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: a middle passage from Africa to American diaspora*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007).
[22] Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," 1245.

and legislation treated African slaves as chattel, and the Catholic (Spanish, Portuguese, and French) colonies, who continued to follow Roman slave laws and required slave owners to baptize and catechize slaves. To Tannenbaum, these legislative, religious and cultural differences resulted in dramatically different slave societies, in which the Catholic slave world exhibited a "milder" form of slavery, and one in which slaves were conceived of as sentient, ensouled human beings rather than mere chattel.

Other works dealing with colonial populations in Spanish America have noted the heterogeneity of "white" populations in that region. Additionally, R. Douglas Cope found in his thought-provoking *The Limits of Racial Domination (1994)),* racial categories imposed by the Spanish elite in colonial Mexico did not matter nearly as much to those who were the subjects of this categorizing—namely, lower-class *indios, mestizos, mulattos, etc*—and that in some instances where an individual could be tracked through the historical record, their race changed over time.[23] The construction of whiteness in the early modern Portuguese empire was similarly slippery, as Paul Lovejoy observes: "...'Portuguese in fact could include mulattos, converted Jews, and in south-eastern Africa those with mixed ancestry from India."[24]

ATLANTIC CREOLES

[23] R Douglas Cope, *The limits of racial domination: plebeian society in colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994); For another interesting examination of the plasticity of racial categories and the construction of whiteness in New Spain, see María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical fictions: limpieza de sangre, religion, and gender in colonial Mexico,* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008). Both of these worls owe a great debt to Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México, 1519-1810: estudio etno-histórico*. (Mexico D.F.: Ediciones Fuente Cultural, 1946).

[24] Paul E. Lovejoy, in Lovejoy, Paul E., ed., *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery,* (London and New York: Continuum, 2000), 12.

In relation to the transcultural aspects of the African Diasporic religions in early modern Latin America, it is also important to consider them through the lens of the Atlantic World framework. In regards to the literature on this aspect of the adoption of Afro-Atlantic religions by whites in Angola, Brazil, and Cuba, it can help to conceptualize the actors on both sides of this equation as Atlantic Creoles, a framework which was famously conceptualized by the historian Ira Berlin in 1996. Berlin describes Atlantic Creoles thusly: "'Atlantic creole,' employed herein, designates those who by experience or choice, as well as by birth, became part of a new culture that emerged along the Atlantic littoral—in Africa, Europe, or the Americas—beginning in the 16th century."[25] In addition to Berlin's exceptionally useful concept of the Atlantic Creole, multiple other historians—most notably John Thornton and Alison Games—have added to this conceptualization of an Atlantic World that emerged in the early modern period, a world that had its own homegrown, "hybrid" culture that could provide fertile ground for the transcultural process of the adoption of African religious practices by people of European descent.

LITERATURE ON AFRICAN RELIGIONS IN BRAZIL

Unsurprisingly, a large body of anthropological literature centered on the survival of African culture has developed in Brazil, with a particular focus on Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé, Umbanda, Macumba, and other sects. As these works were published in the early twentieth century, they were strongly influenced by Herskovitsian notions of "survivals." In turn, the theoretical influence of the monographs written by

[25]Ira Berlin, "From creole to African: Atlantic creoles and the origins of African-American society in mainland North America," In *Origins of the Black Atlantic*, pp. 124-166. (Boston: Routledge, 2013): 126.

Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, Arthur Ramos, Edison Carneiro, and Ruth Landes have guided the long-term trajectory of the study of Afro-Brazilian religions.

The aforementioned forerunners have impacted the broader study of African Diasporic religions, outside of Brazil and the Portuguese Empire. As Afro-Brazilian religions, particularly Candomblé, have attained a sort of cachet of African cultural purity, they are often chosen as the focus of study, "laboratories" of African religious retentions. Consequently, the bulk of North American and European scholarship that focuses on African Diasporic religions tends to deal specifically with Afro-Brazilian religion. Yet the manner in which the early investigators of Afro-Brazilian religions framed the initial debates has typically gone unquestioned, save for the more blatantly racist aspects, and thus these theories and their respective impacts deserve dissection.

The major progenitor of studies of African religion and cultural retentions in Brazil was the Bahian forensic physician, Nina Raimundo Rodrigues. Rodrigues published several works, the most well-known and influential of which is *Os Africanos no Brasil* ("The Africans in Brazil), written during the years 1890-1905, and published posthumously in 1932. Rodrigues, who was white, was heavily influenced by the works of Cesar Lombroso, an Italian physician who sought forensic and racial explanations for the existence of crime; unsurprisingly, Rodrigues treated most aspects of Afro-Brazilian culture as psychopathological, socially deviant, and criminal. Rodrigues attended numerous Candomblé ceremonies in the course of his research, owing to his conviction

that "Of all the African institutions...it was the religious and fetishistic practices which best conserved themselves in Brazil."[26]

Key aspects of Rodrigues' research and theoretical approach to the study of African culture in Brazil have proven to have a rugged self-preservational quality as well. Rodrigues' fixation (which was well-justified) on Afro-Brazilian religion, particularly Candomblé, as a prime source of observable African cultural phenomena, persists in contemporary works on Afro-Brazilian religion. Terreiros do Candomblé (and other Afro-Brazilian religions) are treated as impenetrable vectors of African cultural retentions (and as I will discuss later, agency and resistance) which have somehow been rendered completely ahistorical, and immune to cultural, social and political change and impervious to outside influences. Secondly, despite his general condescension toward Afro-Brazilians and their cultural products, Rodrigues held the religious and cultural forms of the Nagô[27] ethnic group in high esteem, as we can read: "The Yoruba blacks came [to Brazil] with a true, well-developed mythology...in this order of ideas, with their more elevated conception, it is there that they best reveal their capacity for abstract thought."[28] While Rodrigues was essentially reflecting the prevalent prejudices of his day (and to a lesser extent, the present day)—that the Yoruba were the most "civilized" and cultured of all the African groups in Brazil[29]--the practices of the Yoruba have been heavily emphasized in cultural and religious analyses of the African Diaspora in the

[26] Raymundo Nina Rodrigues, *Os africanos no Brasil*, (São Paulo: Companhia editora nacional: 1935), 23.
[27] The West African ethnic group known as "Yoruba" in both English and Spanish. To avoid confusion, I will consistently refer to them as "Yoruba" through the remainder of this dissertation.
[28] Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, 28.
[29] For an illuminating discussion of this elevated valorization of the Yoruba by Brazilian academics, see Beatriz Góis Dantas, trans. Stephen Berg, *Nagô Grandma and White Papa: Candomblé and the Creation of Afro-Brazilian Identity.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

Americas. This tendency is most pronounced in studies of African-derived religion and culture in Latin America. This excessive focus on the Yoruba, who indeed may have been able to preserve a good amount of cultural insularity in the Americas, owing to sheer numbers and their relatively late (typically early nineteenth century) arrival in the Americas provides a part of the explanation for the seeming obfuscation of interracial participation in African religious practices in Brazil and in Cuba. As we will see, the Yoruba had had relatively limited contact with Europeans and Euro-descendants prior to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in comparison with West Central African cultures of Congo and Angola, which had experienced Portuguese colonization starting in the late fifteenth century.

The most profound impact of Rodrigues' work, and the one most salient to this dissertation, is what Ari Lima has described as his "creation of the notion of three incompatible worlds—those inhabited by the barbaric African, the civilized white, and the degenerate yet malleable *mestiço*..."[30] Rodrigues' establishment of a conceptual bifurcation between the "white" and "black" worlds in Brazil has heretofore played a major role in the evolution of the study of the cultures, and particularly the religions, of the African Diaspora. Of course, contemporary scholars would emphatically reject notions of "barbaric Africans" or uniformly "civilized whites." However, we can trace the beginnings of the artificial notion that white and black religion and culture existed in neatly separate and septic spheres in Brazil to Rodrigues' treatment of Afro-Brazilian culture and religion as artifacts of Africanness. The persistence of this concept, particularly among North American scholars coming from a culture in which racial

[30] Ari Lima and Anya, Obianaju C., "Blacks as Study Objects and Intellectuals in Brazilian Academia," *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 33, No. 4(Jul. 2006), 81.

segregation until only recently in historical memory has been the norm, has produced a resultant body of scholarship which treats "black" culture as hallowed and insular, incapable of influencing anyone or any institution not within its genetic or cultural bounds.

Nina Rodrigues' student, Arthur Ramos, also a forensic physician, rejected his predecessor's notions of the racial inferiority of Afro-Brazilians, but succeeded in replicating many of Rodrigues' major ideas. Ramos, like Rodrigues, was preoccupied with locating African "retentions," and this is apparent in his investigations of Bahian Candomblés and other Afro-Brazilian religions, including *macumba* in southeastern Brazil.[31] Like his mentor, Ramos was particularly impressed by what he viewed as the "purity" inherent in the rituals, symbols, and social structure of the Bahian Yoruba Candomblés. As Kelly E. Hayes has noted, "Within Ramos' analytical framework, religious legitimacy was framed not only in terms of purity of African origins—but in other national contexts as well—but also in terms of collective acts of submission to transcendent gods."[32] And while Ramos did not view Afro-Brazilians and their culture as inferior in a racial or congenital sense, he nonetheless categorized them as a "backwards class" whose culture and religion were the products of widespread "magical thinking." Ramos hypothesized that improved access to education would eventually lead to the

[31] African Diasporic religions in Brazil are numerous, region specific, and each worthy of academic analysis. A discussion or inventory of these is outside the scope and intent of the present work, but for an excellent field study and analysis of *macumba*, see Kelly E. Hayes, "Black magic at the margins: Macumba in Rio de Janeiro. An ethnographic analysis of a religious life," (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2004).
[32] Kelly E. Hayes, "Black Magic and the Academy: Macumba and Afro-Brazilian 'Orthodoxies,'" *History of Religions,* Vol. 46, No. 4 (May 2007)

abandonment of these manifestations of "magical thinking," and eventually, African-derived religious practices altogether.[33]

However condescending his view was of Afro-Brazilian religions, particularly those which did not seem to have a purely "Nagô" provenance, he made several key observations about the influence of African religious beliefs and practices on "white" Brazilians. In his 1942 *A acculturação negra no Brasil,* Ramos made mention of "The [high] number of whites, *mulatos,* and individuals of all colors who consult black *feiticeiros* for their afflictions,"[34]and further speculated that "we can say that the gradual 'de-Africanization' of the black was accompanied by the de-Europeanization of whites in Brazil...and the white accepted African cultural elements."[35] Indeed, Ramos seemed to be making some early graspings toward the creolization theory which would emerge 34 years later. Ramos' comments about the cultural impact of Africans on white Brazilians, along with similar observations made by Herskovits in *The Myth of the Negro Past*, raises the question of why these observations never elicited any future lines of research by succeeding anthropologists, historians, and other social scientists. For no clear reason, the matter seems to have been dismissed entirely. It may be partly due to Ramos' (and other researchers) clear elevation of "pure" Nagô candomblés and his derision of religions such as macumba, which due to their mixture of West African, "Bantu," and European elements were degraded and could not be taken seriously; apparently, to Ramos, the Old World, whether it be Europe or Africa, was the only legitimate birthplace for religion. Perhaps part of the answer can be found in the examination of two other

[33] Arthur Ramos, *O negro brasileiro,* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1940-6), 32.
[34] Arthur Ramos, *A aculturação negra no Brasil,* (São Paulo: Companhia editora nacional, 1942), 11.
[35] Ibid., 12.

works that have come to be regarded as part of the theoretical canon of Afro-Brazilian religious and cultural studies, which came in quick succession to Ramos' work.

There has also developed an excessive focus on the Bahian Candomblés as paradigmatic of Afro-Brazilian religion *in toto.* As stated before, "Afro-Brazilian" religion is not an easily categorizable thing. There are numerous local variants of it in any Brazilian city with a sizable African-descended population, many of which have been given scholarly attention, but nothing near the scale or the prestige of Candomblé. Indeed, early researchers such as Nina Rodrigues seized on the Candomblés as vehicles of African retentions for good reason. However, because of the resultant entanglement of scholarly interests and political interests of the Candomblés, we should be hesitant to focus solely on the literature surrounding it, as Candomblé in its present form is a construction of African-ness. Terreiros seeking to enhance their prestige amongst their competitors as well as high-status "protectors" offered a venue for white, sometimes foreign anthropologists and historians in which to perform their research, and the researchers produced articles and monographs analyzing the African retentions they saw exhibited and performed in the Candomblés. Ostensibly, an ambitious mãe-or pãe-de-santo would reference these works for clues on "how to be authentically African," as this seems to be the present touchstone by which a Bahian terreiro's status is measured. Further, along with the insistence on "African retentions" in the Candomblés has come an academic spotlight on traditions that are recognizably Yoruba, or at least West African. This bias would also lead to a misperception of the "miscibility" of African-derived religions in a racially heterogeneous society. As I will demonstrate in this dissertation, for reasons of centuries of historical contact, multiple points of "compatibility" with early

modern European worldviews--and what John Thornton has observed in numerous works as the inherent adaptability of West Central African cosmology and religious frameworks—West Central African beliefs appear to have been more easily adopted and have taken greater root among European descended populations in Brazil. Thus, we still have an incomplete picture of the influence African symbolic systems, ideologies and cosmologies affected the larger societies into which they were transplanted.

FREYRE AND LUSOTROPICALISM

Any large-scale study of the cultural aspects of Portuguese colonization must contend with the Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre. In his best known work, *Casa Grande e Senzala (The Masters and the Slaves),* Freyre set forth a theory of development of Brazilian civilization that could extend to other reaches of the Portuguese Empire. Focusing on the interplay of Portuguese and African (and to a slightly lesser extent, the indigenous Brazilian) cultural elements in the development of contemporary Brazilian society, Freyre asserts that the adaptability, what he calls "the singular predisposition of the Portuguese to the hybrid,"[36] provides a good part of the explanation of the success of Portuguese colonization. Freyre traces this cultural malleability of the Portuguese to centuries of cultural mixture in Portugal, centuries of exposure to Jewish and Moorish peoples, as well as the lack of Portuguese women settlers in the early days of the colonies. Additionally Freyre recognized the extensive, to use Bastide's terminology, "interpenetration" that occurred between blacks and whites in Brazil, what he observes as

[36] Gilberto Freyre, Trans. Samuel Putnam, *The masters and the slaves: A study in the development of Brazilian civilization*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956): 4

"the African influence seething beneath the European."[37] Freyre additionally observed the influence of African religious beliefs, although he qualified this influence as "animistic or fetishistic," on the broader Brazilian society.[38]

Freyre's consideration of the inherent adaptability and elasticity of continental Portuguese culture is particularly salient, especially with regards to religious culture. As Freyre stated of Portuguese Catholicism, "theirs was a liturgy social rather than religious, a softened, lyric Christianity with many phallic and animistic references of the pagan cults."[39] Indeed, Gilberto Freyre and Lusotropicalism have come under fire as conservative apologetics and as denials of the racism that permeates contemporary Brazilian society. However, as my larger analysis will demonstrate, there seems to be a definite truth in Freyre's assertions of cultural malleability, or at least a marked willingness to observe and consider the cultural practices of "outsiders," particularly those whom they colonized.

The group of forensic physicians, anthropologists and others who form the early twentieth century corpus of academic literature on Afro-Brazilian religions are of special importance to my broader discussion, most obviously because a large section of it is devoted to Brazil, but also because these works have had a broader impact on African Diasporic studies at large. For various reasons, including the relative receptiveness of the Bahian Candomblés, the political isolation of Cuban researchers following the 1959 Cuban Revolution, and quite possibly, the self-conscious "Africanization" of the subjects of academic study, the methodological examples established by Rodrigues, Ramos,

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.,78.
[39] Ibid.,30.

Carneiro and Landes have largely set the paradigm for studies of African-derived religion, through all of Brazil, and outside the Lusophone world. It is from this corpus that some of the very ideas underpinning this dissertation—the transfer of African symbols and beliefs to whites in slaves societies, the sufficient resiliency of African religions to not only survive the Middle Passage and take root in the Americas, but to be transferred to other, more powerful groups, but the paradigms established in the literature concerning Afro-Brazilian are some of those which are most overdue for re-examination.

LITERATURE ON AFRICAN RELIGIONS IN CUBA

Brazil was not the only locus of research into and theorizing about African cultural retentions and African-derived religions. Fernando Ortiz, originally a lawyer by profession who trained himself in anthropology, published multiple works dealing with Herskovitsian-style retentions he observed in Cuba, as well as manifestations of African religion, and most importantly, their broader impact on Cuban culture and national identity. While his early publications[40] took a disparaging view of Afro-Cuban religion, manifesting the prevalent view of that time that Afro-Cuban religions were a form of psychopathology, atavistic, and hotbeds of criminality. Ortiz' stance toward Afro-Cuban religions evolved over the course of his career, and he grew to have a more celebratory stance toward the [survival] of African religious beliefs on the island and what he saw as their integral role in the construction of *cubanidad.*

And indeed, while Ortiz' works are highly literary in style and seem to have a definite agenda of the creation of a national mythos and identity, Ortiz' influence on

[40] Cf. Fernando Ortiz, *Los Negros Brujos,* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1995).

Afro-Cuban cultural and religious studies cannot be understated. It is difficult to say if Ortiz' impact would have remained so strong had not the Cuban Revolution effectively stifled public displays of *la Santería,* abakuá, and Palo Mayombe, among others, as well as sustained academic inquiry into African-derived religions on the island. However, Ortiz' theory of *transculturación* is remarkable in that it presaged Mintz and Price and in that it did not favor the contributions of one race or ethnic group over that of another. Every element—European, African, Amerindian[41], Chinese—contributes equally to a larger amalgam which is a combination of, yet looks different from, its constituent parts.

With regards to the available historiography, and anthropological literature, about the Cuban side of this equation, there is a relative dearth of material about African Diasporic religions and cultural exchanges following the work of Ortiz. The lack of available literature is the direct result of the political realities of Cuba: due to the decades-long travel embargo that the United States imposed on Cuba, many researchers were simply unable to travel to the island to perform scholarship. Additionally, the Castro government, in true Marxist-Leninist fashion, frowned upon the mention of religion, and so actively suppressed intellectual inquiry into this subject. Thus, there is a pronounced lack of historical and anthropological literature regarding religion (of any kind) in Cuba for much of the twentieth century. With that being stated, more recent works by Manuel Barcia, Maria Carmen del Barcia, Matt Childs, Stephan Palmie, Gloria Garcia and Miguel Barnet have been published, which add depth to the current historiography and anthropological literature of Afro-Cuban religions such as Santeria, Abakua, and Palo

[41] The inclusion of Amerindian elements into Cuban culture is historically questionable, and an assertion for which Ortiz' work has drawn criticism.

Mayombe.[42] Further, Pablo Gomez includes a retelling of the story of Paula Erguiliz, who was an African healer who appears in seventeenth century documents from Cuba, demonstrating that African religious practices were being actively used in Cuba as early as the seventeenth century.

AFRICAN-DERIVED RELIGIONS AS SPACES OF RESISTANCE, AGENCY AND REVOLT

A significant turn in the historiography of the African Diaspora in the Americas occurred in the 1990's, with the publication of several works, dealing largely with Brazil, but also with Cuba, Haiti, and the varied British plantation societies, all focusing on the myriad ways in which slaves and free blacks carved an identity for themselves in slave societies, actively resisted the cultural encroachments of European-descended peoples, and organized revolts. Unsurprisingly, slave religion received a good deal of attention, not as a vector of African cultural survivals or a laboratory of creolization, but as spaces in which Africans and African-descendants could create and maintain a sense of cultural and social identity separate from the larger, white-dominated society, and more importantly as spaces of social and political organization. Through organizations such as Catholic *cofradías* and *irmandades* (lay Catholic brotherhoods), Afro-descendants, both slave and free, were able to solidify ethnic identities, arrange for proper burials for their members, and procure the freedom of enslaved members. This body of work typically

[42] Cf. Manuel Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2008); María del Carmen Barcia, *Burguesía esclavista y abolición*, (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1987); Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the struggle against Atlantic slavery*. (Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press, 2009); Stephan Palmié,*Wizards and scientists: explorations in Afro-Cuban modernity and tradition*. (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2002); Miguel Barnet, *Biografía de un cimarrón*, Vol. 1. (La Habana: Ediciones Cubanas, 2015); Pablo F. Gómez, *The experiential Caribbean: Creating knowledge and healing in the early modern Atlantic*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2017).

focuses on the nineteenth-century, in the period just before or following abolition. With this literature, we thus see a shift from the dissection of ritual and symbols in the never-ending quest for African continuities, to a focus on the ways in which Afro-descendants deployed religion, be it Roman Catholicism, Islam, or a religion of African provenance, in the quest for freedom, for a modicum of cultural autonomy, or to revolt against the established social order.

One of the earliest and most illustrative works of the utility of African religious practices for social and political organization, and its sometimes key importance in the embryonic development of larger slave/black revolts and revoluations is João José Reis' 1986 *Rebelião escrava no Brasil: A história do levante dos Malês, 1835,* which was translated into the English language in 1993 as *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia,* thus making it more widely accessible to the international academic community. In this work, Reis analyzes the social dynamics in nineteenth-century Bahia that led to a violent 1835 revolt in Salvador, led and mostly comprised of African-born Malê, who were Muslim. While Islam was not the focal point of Reis' analysis and argument, he emphasizes the importance of literacy in Islam as key in the organization of the revolt—most of the Malê leadership was literate. More interesting was their use of *mandinga* pouches, leather pouches probably of West African cultural origin that typically held items such as herbs, roots, stones, and other religiously significant items such as prayers or Koranic verses. While I will discuss the origins, spread, and import of the mandinga pouches more extensively in later chapters, I will state here that Reis demonstrated the utilitarian role the pouches played in transmitting messages between planners of the revolt. Reis' work is not only remarkable in that he

was among the first to demonstrate how African-derived religious cultural practices and objects played roles in slave resistance and revolt, but also in his succinct illustration of the non-monolithic nature of the Bahian Afro-descendant community.

Perhaps Reis' greatest contribution was the nuanced manner in which he "embedded" African religious practices and objects into a larger social and political framework. Whereas a host of English, Portuguese, and French language historical and anthropological monographs which sprang in the 1990's which dealt with African-derived religions in Brazil and (in other locations?) tended to focus solely on the religion itself with only passing mentions of social, economic and political conditions in the broader society, Reis' focus was more on the transplanted West African Islamic religion and Candomblé as both products of, and contributing factors to, the larger society.

Islam and Candomblé were certainly not the only manifestations of black religiosity in Brazil and in the larger Americas. In the 1990's and 2000's, a sizable body of historiography focused on the lay Catholic brotherhoods (*cofradías* in the Spanish-speaking world and *irmandades* in the Lusophone Empire). Several works, focusing on this phenomenon throughout varied Latin American countries, have argued that hey functioned as spaces of not only worship and social organization among blacks both slave and free, but they also served as vehicles for the transmission of African religious practices and symbols, and well as the maintenance of ethnic African identities, either real or fictive. Roger Bastide noted that, in Bahia, organized *terreiros do Candomblé* had a strong geographical correlation to sites of prestigious black lay Catholic brotherhoods.[43]

[43] There is a flourishing historiography with regard to the lay black Catholic brotherhoods in colonial Brazil. Cf. Marina de Mello e Souza, *Reis negros no Brasil escravista: história da festa de Coroação de*

Thus, the historical discussion has thoroughly established importance of lay Catholic brotherhoods in the maintenance of ethnic identity, the avoidance of a Pattersonian "social death" among Afro-descended communities, and the reproduction of African religious and cultural symbols, beliefs and practices. The prevalence of the phenomenon of the assignment of (dual meanings) to various cults of the Virgin Mary throughout Europe and all colonized societies—her confoundment with varied African and Amerindian deities and pre-Christian European goddesses—provides enough subject material for several dissertations. In Brazil, the maternal oceanic goddess Iemanjá is often associated with the Virgin Mary. In Cuba, we see that this same goddess, referred to as Yemaya in Spanish-speaking societies, is closely tied with the cult of the Virgen de Regla, on the outskirts of Havana. On the eastern side of the island, the cult of the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre brings to mind Oshún, the Yoruba goddess of carnal love and sensuality to the minds of many Cubans and Cuban descendants.[44] It is only feasible to consider that the sites of this, for lack of a better term, "syncretic process" were the lay Catholic brotherhoods, as the majority are dedicated to one of the multitudinous avatars of the Holy Virgin of Roman Catholicism.

Thus, the lay Catholic brotherhoods, with their lack of strict clerical supervision, their atmosphere of camaraderie, and their seeming capacity to churn out evidence of

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Rei Congo, (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2002), Elizabeth W. Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary: memory and history in Minas Gerais, Brazil*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), Lucilene Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas: irmandades de africanos e crioulos na Bahia setecentista*, (São Paulo, SP: Alameda, 2011), and Mariza de Carvalho Soares, Trans. Jerry Dennis Metz, *People of faith: slavery and African Catholics in eighteenth-century Rio de Janeiro*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

44 María Elena Díaz contends, however, that the association of Oshún with the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre is a twentieth-century construction, cf. María Elena Díaz ,*The Virgin, the king, and the royal slaves of El Cobre: negotiating freedom in colonial Cuba, 1670-1780*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 312.

religious syncretism in colonial societies would seem a logical point of departure for investigating the transmission of African religious practices to whites in slave societies. The *compromissos* (charter statements) of some predominately black confraternities allowed for the entrance of whites into their membership. The 1727 compromisso of the Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos de Vila do Ribeirão do Rio de Janeiro explicitly allowed for the entrance of whites[45]; however, there is no evidence that whites actually ever did join black confraternities in significant numbers, if even at all. In some instances, white men would be assigned by the church sponsoring the black confraternity to supervisory offices, but there is no historical evidence to suggest that lay Catholic brotherhoods provided in any significant way the manner in which African religious practices were communicated to whites. Indeed, the black confraternities sponsored and enacted public displays which communicated African religious symbols, dances and practices. As I will show in my dissertation, the major venues of transmission of African religious practices, beliefs and symbols to European-descended peoples were the battlefield, the bedroom, trading routes, gambling halls, and plantations. While the historiography which has amassed around the lay Catholic brotherhoods in the Americas and in colonial sub-Saharan Africa has provided a good deal of insight into the maintenance and creation of African cultural practices and the ways by which Afro-descendants employed the system to work for them, the fact remains that the lay Catholic brotherhoods in the Iberian Atlantic World were sharply divided by race, ethnicity and class. The well-deserved focus on the lay Catholic brotherhoods in the Americas and in

[45] ANTT, Ministerio do Reino, "Compromisso de Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos de Vila do Ribeirão do Rio de Janeiro," Livro 528-D, 6f.

West Central Africa has also contributed to the appearance in the larger historiography of religion in the Americas of a racially bifurcated "popular religiosity" in these societies, which evolved along, divided, parallel lines.

The new emphasis on the role of culture and religion in the formation of African-American "alternative communities" and resistance brought about by the cultural turn of the 1980's and 1990's and exemplified through works such as that of Reis and the various inquiries into lay Catholic brotherhoods brought greater dimension to studies of post-emancipation black communities in Brazil. One of the best exemplars of this turn is Kim Butler's 1998 *Freedoms Given, Freedoms.* Butler's work closely examined and compared post-abolition communities in both São Paulo and in Salvador, but as my own work on Brazil focuses chiefly on the Northeast, I will focus on Butler's contentions concerning Salvador. Butler spends a significant amount of "time" discussing the prevalence of Afro-Brazilian cultural products, including *capoeira* and Candomblé in Salvador, their utility as a means of cultural resistance and maintenance of identity for Afro-Brazilians, many of whom were at this point in time, newly free. Curiously, while painting a portrait of a well-"Africanized" Salvador, in which African leisure activities, symbols, and other cultural artifacts had permeated quotidian life and the cultural landscape, she asserts that "It may well be said that there were (at least) two Salvadors, one white and Brazilian, one black and African. Of all the social groups considered here, none so clearly exemplifies the concept of the alternative community as does the African-based culture of Salvador."[46] Nonetheless, it emerged in Butler's research that to a visible segment of the nineteenth-century Bahian population, one's personal pedigree did not

[46] Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms given, freedoms won: Afro-Brazilians in post-abolition, São Paulo and Salvador*, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 189.

necessarily circumscribe one's choice of religious practice. For example, Butler notes that "Candomblés began to be frequented by members of Bahia's middle and upper classes, including whites, and some moved into the position of ogan. Candomblé, which had already moved from an exclusively African realm into the broader preto community, now began to enter Brazilian popular culture,"[47] while simultaneously observing that "Bahia's elites were well aware of the spread of Candomblé, and they did not approve. Regulation of African cultural expression had once been the purview of individual slaveowners."[48] One might conclude from these statements that white interest in Candomblé arose only in the post-abolition period, when Butler contends, rightly, that racial tensions in Bahia were extraordinarily high, class and color lines in Bahian society were hardening. So, are we to take that the "middle and upper class" whites who joined the Candomblés and attained positions within the organization were simply eccentric, mystical and daring souls? Or, were they so filled with venom for abolition and upward mobility for blacks that they went to considerable personal financial and temporal expense to "infiltrate" the Candomblés so they could control the direction the new religion took, just as their slave-owner forebears supposedly controlled African cultural expression in centuries past? Of course, the focus of Butler's work was the development of communities of free people of color in the period immediately following abolition, but the manner in which she treats documentary evidence of white participation in "black" religions exemplifies the observation made by Brazilian anthropologist Beatriz Góis Dantas that "In characterizing Candomblé *terreiros*—above all the purest ones—as havens of Africanness and resistance, authors who adopt this methodological stance

[47] Ibid, 204.
[48] Ibid, 201.

implicitly accept that the presence in Brazil of cultural traits that originated in Africa necessarily indicates black resistance."[49]And, I would also add, this methodological approach implies that there existed a unilateral hostility of whites toward African religious practices in their midst.

Expanding the concept of Candomblé as a space of black social and cultural resistance into a full-length monograph, *A Refuge in Thunder,* the historian, poet and political activist Rachel E. Harding argued that "Candomble became a collectivizing force through which subjugated peoples organized an alternative meaning of their lives and identities that countered the disaggregation and the imposed subalterity to which they were subjected by the dominant social structure."[50] Using a variety of mid-nineteenth century sources from Bahian archives, Harding illustrates well the evolution of Afro-Bahian Candomblé into a political machine in post-abolition Bahia. I completely agree with Harding's stance that Afro-Brazilian religion provided a space by which black Brazilians could maintain a sense of solidarity and identity apart from the dominant structure, however, I do take issue with several aspects of her argument, which I will further delve into in Chapter 3, which discusses the transfer of African religious practices to whites in colonial Brazil.

Overall, the extensive body of historical and anthropological literature that has coalesced during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has produced a skewed portrait of the place of African derived religion in Brazilian society and culture, and has largely ignored how these religions have impacted the cosmologies, religious beliefs and

[49] Beatriz Góis Dantas, Trans. Stephan Berg, *Nagô Grandma and White Papa: Candomblé and the creation of Afro-Brazilian identity,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1.
[50] Rachel E. Harding, *A refuge in thunder: Candomblé and alternative spaces of blackness,* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 1.

practices of white Brazilians. Although the initial researchers of these religions repeatedly remarked upon their spread to whites, that question was abandoned in favor of the quest for African survivals, the excessive focus on Candomblés due to their organization, and their accessibility and willingness to open their doors to researchers, and the trend in the 1980's and 1990's of agency/revolt/resistance monographs in the varied disciplines of African Diaspora studies.

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF TRANSCULTURATION

While the historiography of African Diasporic religions took a highly racialized and binary turn in the 1980's and late 1990's, and persisted well into the 2000's, the framework by which these religions and their evolution in the New World has been replaced by a much more fluid paradigm that has been widely shaped by the influence of Atlantic World historiography. When considering such Afro-Atlantic religions as Candomble, Umbanda, Palo Mayombe, and Santeria, and the manner in which their transplantation and spread throughout the Americas serves as a barometer of cultural interchange, as well as social interactions between Europeans and Africans in the early modern period, the most productive method of analysis is to not necessarily regard the evidence of whites practicing African religious rituals from a *religious* perspective, but rather one that is cultural. Indeed, as this dissertation will demonstrate, there are hundreds of documented examples of European-descended individuals engaging in ritual practices and ceremonies that are African in their provenance. However, the fact that such early modern individuals were engaging in such rites does not necessarily mean that they bought into the entire African cosmology nor became full-fledged religious "converts." Given that African religious rites held a great deal of value with regards to healing

properties (both physical and psychological), provided a likely venue of social interaction, and may simply have been regarded by some as a form of cultural spectacle and entertainment, it is crucial to keep in mind that participation in such ceremonies does not necessarily equate to actual belief.

However, given the preponderance of archival evidence that whites actively participated in Afro-Atlantic religious ceremonies, it is necessary to decipher what it all meant. The actual documentation of these practices in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, which typically derives from prosecutorial documents such as Inquisition court records, or from third-party witness accounts that are often written by member of various orders of the Roman Catholic Church, does not provide any clues as to what the white participants in these ceremonies were actually thinking as they participated, or if they had any genuine belief in what they were doing. What these documents can reveal, however, is that Early Modern Europeans in Angola, Brazil, and Cuba, were clearly comfortable enough with the rites so as to attend them and actively engage in the activities, which was no small investment of time. As my own experience at a "tourist Candomble" in Bahia in 2008 demonstrates, and something to which these documents often allude, is that Afro-Atlantic religious ceremonies are by no means a brief affair. These ceremonies can often last several hours, and occasionally days; even though the possibilities for entertainment were extremely limited in, say, the backlands of eighteenth-century Angola or the rural outskirts of seventeenth-century Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, it does not stand to reason that a person would spend such a large amount of time at an Afro-Atlantic religious ceremony unless there was a certain degree of emotional or psychological entanglement.

And, this notion of psychosocial "entanglement" fits in neatly with the paradigm of "entangled histories" that was set forth by Eliga Gould[51] which he defines as thus: "entangled histories, by contrast, examine interconnected societies. Rather than insisting on the comparability of their subjects or the need for equal treatment, entangled histories are concerned with "mutual influencing," "reciprocal or asymmetric perceptions," and the intertwined "processes of constituting one another." While Gould was writing from the perspective of a British Atlantic historian, this concept can easily be applied to the interactions between Europeans and Africans in the Iberian Atlantic. When considering the significance of the appearance of Europeans in historical records relating to African religious rites, it is important to consider the "religious" aspect of these practices as but one portion of a multidirectional exchange which not only involved ritual actions, but also social customs, economic goods, and a multitude of cultural practices and beliefs. Further, in order to properly understand the dynamics of these "entangled histories," it is also crucial to consider the flow of goods, people, and ideas throughout the whole of the Atlantic World in the Early Modern period.

The Atlantic World not only facilitated the exchange of goods, peoples, flora and fauna, diseases, but the exchange of ritual practice and cosmologies as well. The work of John Thornton, Linda Heywood and Kalle Kananoja regarding the Christianization of the Kongolese in the late fifteenth century notwithstanding, the majority of the historical and anthropological literature focusing on the exchange of ritual practices and cosmology—often referred to as "popular religion"—has treated this exchange as unidirectional and

[51] Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled histories, entangled worlds: the English-speaking Atlantic as a Spanish periphery,." *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 764-786.

essentially a top-to-bottom process.[52] We speak of the "Christianization" and catechism of Africans and indigenous Americans after conquest and enslavement by European peoples, and alternatively of the resistance of the conquered to these cosmological confrontations as evidenced by African retentions. However, little to no attention has been paid, in either the anthropological or historical literature, to the adoption of West Central and West African religious practices (and indigenous American) by individuals of European descent. In a nutshell, there has been no in depth study of the ways in which the conquered influenced the worldviews of the conquerors.

While the multidirectional flow of ritual practices and cosmologies can no doubt be observed in all parts of the Atlantic World, the Iberian Atlantic World provides a seemingly perfect laboratory in which we can observe this phenomenon. Starting as early as the eighth century CE, Iberians began to import African slaves to the Peninsula, and with this first contact, the exchange of ideas began. The Iberians may have had a more porous culture with regard to the multidirectional exchange of religious ideas, the Iberian Peninsula having been a cultural cross roads and a very cosmopolitan area. Stuart Schwartz has recently observed that the Spanish and Portuguese were much more tolerant of the religious practices of the Judaic and Islamic peoples who formed part of their population.[53]

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[52] Cf. John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Linda M. Heywood, and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic creoles, and the foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Kalle Kananoja, "Infected by the Devil, Cured by Calundu: African Healers in Eighteenth-century Minas Gerais, Brazil," *Social History of Medicine*, 29, vol 3 (2016), 490-511.

[53]Stuart B. Schwartz, *All can be saved: Religious tolerance and salvation in the Iberian Atlantic world* (Stamford: Yale University Press, 2014).

In early modern Portugal, and its extensive overseas empire, which stretched from Brazil as far east as Macau, this religious and cultural tolerance, and the attendant multidirectional exchange of ideas is far more apparent and appears in the historical records at a very early point in the empire. This multidirectionality appears in a vast array of records, be they Portuguese Inquisition investigations and trials, governmental correspondence or other records. Portugal began to import African slaves into its own borders as early as 1441[54], and several historians have found evidence of Africans practicing their native religions in Portugal[55], and even sharing their practices with Portuguese locals.

In early modern Spain, the open practice and exchange of African religious ideas is not as abundant in the records as it is in Portugal. Port towns such as Seville and Valencia had significant African slave populations beginning in the fifteenth century as well.[56] In my own research I found documentation from the *alegaciones fiscales*, essentially prosecutorial investigations from the Spanish Inquisition attesting to he presence of African religious practitioners, who typically offered services related to healing. However, these records are confined to portions of Spain that had significant African populations, and early records for Spain's colony in Cuba are even less abundant for the very early modern period. As we shall see, explicit documentation describing the open practice of African-derived religious practices does not appear until the latter half of the nineteenth century in Cuba. One might infer from this absence of documentation that

[54] A. Saunders, *A social history of black slaves and freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
[55] James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World*, (Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press, 2011).
[56] Debra Blumenthal, *Enemies and familiars: slavery and mastery in fifteenth-century Valencia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

the adoption of African-derived religious practices by Euro-descendants in Cuba did not actually take place until such a late period, but as I will discuss in the fourth chapter, this is more likely indicative of a greater tolerance for African religious practices by Spanish officials, both ecclesiastical and secular. Indeed, palpable concern on the part of officials tasked with the maintenance of the colonial order regarding visible manifestations of African religious practice by Afro-Cubans and "white" Cubans alike does not appear in the historical record until complaints about nanigos, all-male religious sects descended from West African Carabali practices began to raise public alarm, for reasons I shall discuss at a later point.

Further, while this chapter has largely discussed the development of the study of African-derived religions in Brazil, and particularly that of Candomblé in Bahia, this dissertation will examine the adoption of African religious beliefs and practices by European-descended peoples not only in Brazil, but also in Cuba and in Angola. The 1959 Revolution drove almost all religious practice in Cuba underground, hence making ethnological studies nearly impossible,[57]with the exception of Lydia Cabrera's formidable body of work on Afro-Cuban religions. As for Angola, there are currently no comprehensive publications that deal solely with religious creolization in the region. Linda Heywood,[58] John Thornton,[59] and Roquinaldo Ferreira[60] have discussed religious and cultural interchanges in their own larger works, and the Finnish Africanist Kalle

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[58] Linda M. Heywood, "Portuguese into African," in Linda M. Heywood, *Central Africans and cultural transformations in the American diaspora,* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[59] John K. Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[60] Roquinaldo Ferreira,*Cross-cultural exchange in the Atlantic world: Angola and Brazil during the era of the slave trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Kananoja has recently completed a dissertation[61] which is an excellent comparative examination of this phenomenon in Angola and Minas Gerais, Brazil. However, for the most part, there is a lacuna in Angolan historiography concerning religious and cultural interchanges.

In addition to these works, a multiplicity of published articles speaks to the multidirectionality—or, to revive a phrase coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, transculturation—of cultural and ideological exchanges that are inherent in the Afro-Atlantic religions. For instance, Marina de Mello e Souza has observed the persistence of religious symbolism from West Central Africa in Afro-Brazilian religious practice, such as *minkisi/inquice.*[62] The anthropologist Wyatt MacGaffey has observed that minkisi appear frequently as symbols which were traded in commercial slaving activities along the coasts of West Central Africa. Cecile Fromont[63] and Elizabeth Kiddy[64] have similarly noted a prevalence of West Central African symbols that have taken root within Afro-Brazilian communities, especially the practice of ritualized dances for the King of Congo. Robert Voeks[65] has written extensively on the transplantation of African medicinal and healing practices to Brazil in the Early Modern period, and William R. Bascom[66] has noted a similar emphasis on the use of symbolic plants and

[61] Kalle Kananoja, "Central African Identities and Religiosity in Colonial Minas Gerais," (Unpublished PhD Diss., Åbo Akademi University, Åbo, Finland, 2012).
[62] Marina de Mello e Souza,"Catolicismo negro no Brasil: Santos e Minkisi, uma reflexão sobre miscigenação cultural." *Afro-Ásia* 28 (2017).
[63] Cécile Fromont, *The art of conversion: Christian visual culture in the Kingdom of Kongo*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2014).
[64] Elizabeth W. Kiddy, *Blacks of the rosary: memory and history in Minas Gerais, Brazil*, (Philadelphia: Penn State Press, 2005).
[65] Robert A. Voeks, *Sacred leaves of Candomblé: African magic, medicine, and religion in Brazil*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).
[66] William Bascom, *Ifa divination: communication between gods and men in West Africa*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1969).

African-derived healing methods in Cuban Santeria. On a darker note, Diana Paton[67] has observed that the ritualized use of specific plants for poisoning people has been transplanted to the English Atlantic, specifically in the Jamaican religion of Obeah.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this dissertation fills a significant lacuna in the historiography of the Atlantic World, the African Diaspora, and Latin America by demonstrating that religious practices in the early modern Atlantic World were multidirectional, and whites adopted African religious practices with some regularity. While some of the early twentieth century work regarding the African Diaspora in the Atlantic World touched on this concept, the idea appears to have been entirely abandoned in the mid-twentieth century for various reasons. Overall, this dissertation will reignite this conversation, and incorporate it into larger discussions of religious and cultural exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World.

[67] Diana Paton,"Obeah Acts: Producing and Policing the Boundaries of Religion in the Caribbean," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 13, no. 1 (2009): 1-18.

CHAPTER 2

ANGOLA

In 1731, a Portuguese sergeant-major, Francisco de Butyrago, published a strange treatise, entitled *Arvore da Vida, Thezouro descuberto da Arvore Irmaa da que se fez a cruz da nossa Redempção.*[68] (Tree of Life, Discovered Treasure of the sister tree in which is made the cross of our redemption.) In the tract, which is part religious rhetoric and part botanical study, Butyrago recounts his experiences in Angola with the acacia plant, which he described as being "often-used and held in high esteem by most of the unconverted blacks and many of the whites"[69] in the region of Angola and Congo. Butyrago waxes poetic about the virtues of acacia for healing physical ailments and its usefulness for various spiritual illnesses, including diabolic possession. In the first part of the tome, Butyrago includes several anecdotal "case studies" to prove his point about the acacia tree, including a case of a young boy named André who was relieved of his "bewitchment" through the use of acacia pods[70]. He also describes the travails of a woman named Maria Antonia who manifested several symptoms of demonic possession such as keeping magical pouches known as *bolsas*, and was exorcised through the strategic deployment of acacia by Lourenço Luiz, a Catholic priest[71]. Butyrago also presents an allegorical tale about two female friends, a white woman named, rather appropriately, "Branca," and her black companion, "Parda," who both found themselves

[68] Francisco de Butyrago, *Arvore da Vida, Thezouro descuberto da Arvore Irmaa da que se fez a cruz da nossa Redempção*, (1731), Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Microfilmes, FR437.
[69] Ibid,7f.
[70] Ibid,17v.
[71] Ibid,19v.

the victims of bewitchment[72]. Fortunately for Branca and Parda, the acacia plant was readily available to alleviate the hex that had been placed upon them.

The second part of Butyrago's work is a schematic list of the cornucopia of useful plants to be found in Portuguese West Central Africa, complete with the names of the plants in both the local language and in Portuguese, drawings of the plants, their medicinal uses, their usefulness for spiritual warfare, and occasionally, their flavor and aromatic properties. For instance, Butyrago includes a plant named *Pau Quiseco* primarily for the reason that "whites and unconverted blacks both like it very much because it smells very good."[73] Unfortunately, Butyrago does not give much autobiographical information, and it is impossible to ascertain how much time he spent in Angola or how he obtained authority on such matters. However, *Arvore da Vida* is representative of several key elements that are basic to the process of multi-directional religious exchanges in Portuguese Angola. As we will see, members of the Portuguese military figure prominently in Inquisition cases related to idolatry, *feitiçaria* (magic, sorcery, witchcraft), *superstição,* and other related charges. Also, the charges often involve use of herbs and indigenous plants for healing purposes. Thirdly, there is a high level of multi-directional creolization that takes place in Portuguese West Central Africa. The Kongolese and many Angolan groups readily took to Catholic Christian practices, and the facility of the transfer of religious notions and ideologies seems to have been mutual, judging by the abundance of documentation of white Angolans engaging in indigenous West Central African religious and magical practices.

[72] Ibid., 38f.
[73] Ibid., 74 f-v.

Arvore da Vida's 1731 publication came at a relatively late stage in the Portuguese colonization of West Central Africa, and it is evidence of a two-centuries old process of religious and cultural creolization that began with the Portuguese conquest of Kongo. The driving forces for this creolization are complex. First, Portuguese and African conceptions of the divine, the cosmos, the order of nature, and proper social order were not as divergent as one might think, as has been remarked upon by George E. Brooks[74] and John Thornton[75]. Second, religion and politics were thoroughly intertwined in seventeenth and eighteenth century Angolan society. This dynamic is especially salient when we consider the balance of power between Portuguese settlers and indigenous people in colonial Angola. As I will demonstrate, an active engagement with local customs and practices could only benefit whites in Angola (that is, until they fell prey to the Inquisition), and this includes religious practice.

There have been several key contributions to the historiographical and anthropological literature of colonial West Central African religion, most notably Wyatt MacGaffey's detailed ethnographical work[76] and John Thornton's assorted works which discuss the Christianization of the Kongo under Portuguese rule and set forth his oft-cited thesis that the West Central African religions, being the products of processes of continuous revelation, were particularly amenable to the incorporation of Catholic

[74] George E. Brooks, "The Observance of All Souls' Day in the Guinea-Bissau Region: A Christian Holy Day, An African Harvest Festival, An African New Years' Celebration, or All of the Above(?)", *History in Africa*, Vol. 11 (1984), pp.1-34.
[75] John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 236. "Africans and Europeans had somewhat different systems of religious knowledge, as well as a completely different set of basic revelations, but they still had a number of major ideas in common. Had they not shared these ideas, the development of African Christianity would probably not have been possible."
[76] Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and society in central Africa: the BaKongo of lower Zaire,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.)

Christian symbols and practices.[77] Linda M. Heywood observes that Portuguese settlers and their descendants in Angola adopted a whole range of local cultural practices, including religion.[78]Most recently, Kalle Kananoja has argued for the centrality of religion to the maintenance and formation of West Central African identities in Minas Gerais, Brazil.[79] However, despite the wealth of documentation that exists in Lisbon archives and in published primary sources from colonial Angola, there has yet to be a detailed examination of the strong religious influence indigenous Angolans had on Portuguese settlers and their descendants.

This chapter will examine the process of cultural and religious Africanization of white populations in Angola in close detail, paying special attention to the social, political and economic relationships between white, black and mixed-race Angolans to provide insight into exactly how Angolan religious practices were transmitted to whites in the colony. Further, it will demonstrate that it was advantageous on multiple levels for whites in Angola to adopt, or at least demonstrate a profound familiarity with, local rituals, symbols, and concepts of the order of nature and of society.

A caveat should be mentioned here. As the sources I use are invariably written by Catholic clergy, officials of the Portuguese Inquisition, and colonial government officials, Angolan religious practices are rarely referred to as "religion" in these documents.

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[77] John Thornton mentions this thesis in several works. He first develops it in *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World,* 239-262. He also sets forth this thesis of "continuous revelation" in *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and in "Religious and Ceremonial Life in the Kongo and Mbundu Areas," in Linda M. Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and cultural transformations in the American diaspora,* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[78] Linda M. Heywood, "Portuguese into African," in Linda M. Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and cultural transformations in the American diaspora,* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[79] Kalle Kananoja, "Central African Identities and Religiosity in Colonial Minas Gerais," (Unpublished PhD Diss., Åbo Akademi University, Åbo, Finland, 2012).

Instead, Angolan religious practices are labeled with such terms as "idolatry," "diabolical rites," "witchcraft," "sorcery," and "superstition." These descriptions are not those of the author, they are citations of documentary material.

BACKGROUND

When the Portuguese first arrived in Angola, they encountered varied groups of Bantu-speakers, the first of whom to be subjected to colonial rule were the Mbundu. After a protracted war that spanned half a century, the Portuguese governed the Mbundu through a proxy leader.[80] The goal of Portuguese colonization in Angola, as with most of the Iberian conquests, had two overarching goals: economic expansion through the capture and export of slaves, as well as through the appropriation of mines, and the promulgation of the Catholic faith. The Portuguese established two major centers, which they termed *reinos* (kingdoms): one at Luanda, on the coastline in what had formerly been Mbundu territory, and which also included the nearby interior *presidios* (military forts) at Cambambe, Massangano, Ambaca, Muxima, and Pungo Andongo and the reino of Benguela, also in former Mbundu territory.[81]Early on in the colonial project, the Portuguese found that the silver mines in the interior, which had been in the national mythos since the mid-sixteenth century, were not as abundant as they had anticipated, and they redoubled their slaving efforts.[82] Colonial governors staged military campaigns,

[80] David Birmingham, *The Portuguese conquest of Angola,* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1.
[81] The establishment and subsequent development of Benguela has a fascinating social and economic history that is outside the purview of this dissertation. See Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port on the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[82] Ibid, 16, 24.

under the guise of recapturing runaway slaves or collecting delinquent tributes from local chieftains, for the purpose of capturing yet more slaves.[83]

These constant wars and battles led to the development of a strongly militarized and mercenary society and culture. The seat of the colonial government, as well as that of the slave trade, was located in Luanda. However, Portuguese Angola also consisted of a vast backland, ruled over by disparate Bantu-speaking groups, some of whom were willing to engage in negotiation with the Portuguese colonists, and others who were decidedly hostile. However precarious the situation in the Angolan hinterlands was, it was rich in populations to plunder for the slave trade, salt mines, and silver mines, and the motives to establish hegemony were powerful. The Portuguese established multiple *presidios,* or military forts, in the interior, to be managed by military officers, typically a *capitão-mor* (captain-major). The capitaes-mores not only carried out official orders in the interior, but typically functioned as slave traders as well, and the position had the potential to be extremely lucrative.

But the position also had the potential to be extremely dangerous. War was a frequent companion in seventeenth (and eighteenth) century Angola, and numerous accounts from Angola throughout the centuries attest to the inhospitable nature of Angola's tropical climate to Europeans, as well as the frequency and intensity of disease which often struck European colonists. Although Angola had the potential to build fortunes, few Portuguese men voluntarily set sail for the colony.

[83] Ibid, 25.

To augment the body of government servants and soldiers who were dispatched to Angola, Portugal turned to its contingent of *degredados,* or convicted criminals who had been sentenced to exile, often with forced colonization as part of the punishment. Timothy J. Coates observes that "documentation on exile as punishment in Portugal begins with the High Middle Ages and continues until this practice was abandoned in 1954."[84] Secular courts often sent convicts to Angola for crimes such as murder and theft, but exile to Angola from Portugal or Brazil was a favored punishment by the Holy Office of the Inquisition as well,[85] sometimes for offenses such as witchcraft, sorcery, or superstition. Selma Pantoja found that between the years of 1633 and 1763, the Portuguese Inquisition was responsible for the exile of 180 individuals, not including family members who accompanied them, to Angola.[86] A Portuguese woman by the name of Maria Antonia Oliveira was found guilty by the Inquisition in 1639 for, among other things, invoking the devil to appear in physical form in her home, and using herbal remedies to cure sick people who retained her services. Oliveira was sentenced to a period of five years' exile in Angola.[87] Laura de Mello e Souza relates the story of Maria Barbosa, a *mulata* from Bahia, Brazil, who had been banished to Angola for a period of several years, during which time the Angolan governor, Manuel de Silveira, hired her for

[84] Timothy J. Coates, *Convicts and Orphans: Forced and State-Sponsored Colonizers in the Portuguese Empire, 1550-1775,* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), xiii.
[85] Toby Green, *Inquisition: the Reign of Fear,* (London: Macmillan, 2007) and Laura de Mello e Souza, *O Diabo e a terra da Santa Cruz: feitiçaria e religiosidade popular no Brasil colonial,* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1986) also contain numerous examples of religious convicts being sentenced to exile in Angola by the Portuguese Inquisition.
[86] Selma Pantoja, "Inquisição, degredo, e mestiçagem em Angola no século XVIII," *Revista Lusofona da Ciência das Religiões,* No. 5/6 (2004), p. 120.
[87] Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Inquisição, Cod. 9, 1, 019, "Sentensa de Maria Antonia do Lugar do Seyxo por culpas de feiticeira,"89f-93f.

divination services, which were reported to be uncannily accurate.[88] A 1656 letter from the Portuguese Overseas Council asking for more degredados to be sent to Angola mentions the constant need for more people owing to the high rate of illness among Portuguese settlers in Angola, and states that an added benefit would be the ease of surveillance facilitated by congregating convicted criminals and people with "vices" in one place.[89] These "vices" included witchcraft, superstition, and the use of unorthodox healing methods. Although no detailed study exists of the exact nature of the crimes of individual degredados exiled to Angola, it is not unthinkable that a significant portion of the Portuguese exile community in Angola was comprised, at least partially, of individuals with a predilection for non-Catholic religious practices.

The religious aspect of the Portuguese colonial project in Angola was largely the parcel of two major Catholic religious orders, the Society of Jesus and the Capuchin order. Although a lengthy discussion of the presence of the Catholic orders in Angola is outside the purview of this chapter, it is important to note two major aspects of their evangelization efforts in the region. First, Catholic priests were no more immune to the illnesses, violence and other tribulations that accompanied European settlement in the region than were military officers, government officials, and degredados. This may have presented less of a problem for native-born West Central African Catholic clergy. John Thornton notes that the Catholic Church began to intermittently admit indigenous Kongolese to the regular orders in the seventeenth century, partially as a result of King Afonso's enthusiastic adoption of Catholic Christianity, and perhaps, the seeming facility

[88]Laura de Mello e Souza, Trans. Diane Grosklaus Whitty, *The Devil and the Land of the holy cross: witchcraft, slavery and popular religion in colonial Brazil*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 115.
[89] Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Angola, Caixa 6, No. 39, 1f.

with which Kongolese people adopted Catholic religious practices.[90] Regardless of the inclusion of indigenous West Central African clergy in the Catholic evangelization effort, numerous reports of the inefficacy of catechism abound in seventeenth century records.

Catholicism provided a lubricant for relations between Portuguese military officers and Angolan sobas[91] in the early seventeenth century, as the French geographer Pierre Davity attested in 1637: "Most of the sobas, or Lords of Angola are subject to the Crown of Portugal, and they gave the captains protectors, as is according to their custom, as well as to the Jesuits who the Governors of Angola begged to accept the post, knowing that the sobas held religious clergy in high esteem...however, regardless of the local custom, some of the sobas revolted and defeated the Portuguese."[92] Davity goes onto describe how a few decades later, the Portuguese regained control of the formerly rebellious chieftains, but had to exert extra pressure against the soba of silver-rich Cambambe.

Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, a Portuguese infantryman in Angola whose personal accounts of his time in the colony, *Historia geral das Guerras Angolanas,* has become one of the lynchpins of seventeenth-century Angolan history, makes frequent mention of the "idolatry," "*ritos gentilicos*[93]*,*""sacrifices" and use of ritual healing practices he witnesses in the course of the military campaign of which he was a part.[94] A

[90] John Thornton, "The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491-1750," The *Journal of African History,* Vol. 25, No. 2 (1984), 163.
[91] Angolan tribal chieftain.
[92] Pierre D'Avity, *Description generale de l'Afrique, seconde partie du monde,* (Paris: Chez Claude Sonnius, 1637), pp. 569-70.
[93] Roughly translated, "rites of the unconverted."
[94] Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História geral das guerras Angolanas, 1680,* Tomos 1-3, (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1972). The references to the persistence of indigenous Angolan religious customs are rife through all three volumes in the book. For a recent, very thorough, and intriguing English-language examination of the "creolized" nature of Catholicism in West Central Africa and the continuance

letter written to the Governor of Angola, Fernão de Sousa, in 1632 by a Jesuit missionary makes mention of the rampant "idolatry" he witnessed in the Angolan *sertão.*[95] Yet another letter warns of the alarming lack of Catholic clergy in the backlands *presidio* of Massangano, and bemoans the fact that blacks and whites alike who resided in the presidio were going without hearing Catholic Mass.[96] A Catholic clergy member, Francisco Banha, wrote a letter in 1674 to the then-governor of the colony, Francisco de Tavora, decrying, among other things, the "mulattos and New Christians[97] who have been ordained, and children of mulatto clergy, who lack an understanding [of the Catholic faith], do not say Mass, and have never seen a Breviary, all living amongst the blacks, and engaging in the superstitions of the blacks, spending entire days without fear of God or without saying Mass."[98]

It is also important, at this point, to note the inextricability of politics from religion on both sides of this cultural equation, both Portuguese and indigenous Angolan. John Thornton mentions that "the Portuguese in Angola often linked conversion [to Catholicism] to acceptance of Portuguese sovereignty. Many of the independent [Angolan] states accepted or rejected clerical ministrations and baptisms depending on

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of indigenous Angolan religious practices well into the eighteenth century, see Kalle Kananoja, "Central African Identities and Religiosity in Colonial Minas Gerais," (Unpublished PhD Diss., Åbo Akademi University, Åbo, Finland, 2012).

[95] *Monumenta missionaria africana*. *Africa ocidental*, v.5 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1952-1988), 238. "Sertão" is the Portuguese word for "backlands."

[96] MMA, v.8, 172.

[97] For thorough treatments of the New Christian presence in Portuguese West and West Central Africa, see Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in western Africa: empires, merchants and the Atlantic system, 1580-1674*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora: Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[98] Biblioteca da Ajuda, 50-V-37, *Movimento do Orbe Lusitano, Tomo III*, 165v.

their relations with Portugal."[99] Perhaps the most visible and remarked-upon example of this behavioral tenet in seventeenth-century Angola is Queen Nzinga.[100] An apparently charismatic and strong-willed woman, Nzinga consolidated several groups in the sertão to form an army against the Portuguese, and eventually became the queen of the region of Matamba. When Nzinga realized the potential military, political and financial fruits of an alliance with the Portuguese, she submitted to baptism in Luanda in 1622, taking the Portuguese name Dona Ana de Souza. A few years later, however, finding herself mired in a succession dispute, Nzinga decided her lot was better cast with the Imbangala, a nomadic group in Angola who were renowned for being fearsome and ruthless warriors, cannibals, and practitioners of malignant sorcery. Nzinga entered into marriage with an Imbangala leader, and engaged in their religious customs, as entry into this group was impossible without also adopting their religion. Later, she renounced Imbangala ways and once again became a devoted Catholic. By certain measures, Nzinga was a very enthusiastic Catholic and promulgator of the faith. Kananoja, drawing upon Brasio, notes that Nzinga bragged in a 1662 letter of over 8,000 baptisms and 700 Catholic marriages having taken place under her oversight and aggressive catechizing.[101]

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[99] John K. Thornton, "On the Trail of Voodoo: African Christianity in Africa and the Americas," *The Americas*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Jan. 1988), 264.

[100] While a more thorough discussion of Queen Nzinga is impossible in this dissertation and would do injustice to her legacy, there is a substantial Lusophone historiography which details her political finesse, personal power, and military strength. See Selma Pantoja, *Nzinga Mbandi: mulher, guerra, e escravidão*, (Brasilia: Thesaurus, 2000), Adriano Parreira, *Economia e sociedade em Angola na época da rainha Jinga: século XVII* (Lisboa: Editoral Estampa, 1997) and João Maria Cerqueira de Azevedo, (Braga: Gráficas A. Costa, 1949). Unsurprisingly, Nzinga is mentioned quite frequently in a number of published primary sources from seventeenth-century Angola. See Antonio Brasio, ed., *Monumenta missionaria africana*, Antonio de Oliveira Cadornega, *História geral das guerras Angolana*, Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi de Montecuccolo, *Istorica Descrizione de tre regni Congo, Matamba ed Angola*, (Bologna, 1687), and Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985).

[101] Kananoja, "Central African Identities," 164.

To summarize, there were multiple factors in seventeenth-century Angolan society that would facilitate the multidirectional transfer of religious practices, and encourage the voluntary adoption of indigenous Angolan religious by Portuguese settlers in the colony. First, there was a population of largely involuntary settlers who had been expelled from their homeland, who likely retained only superficial ties with their families in Portugal or Brazil, if any at all, and who were probably financially indigent. This contingent of Portuguese settlers was a group with very little to lose. Further, Angola was a high-pressure environment, one in which Europeans often fell prey to tropical diseases and/or became casualties of the constant warfare that plagued seventeenth-century Angola.

However, for those who survived and adapted quickly to the new biological, social, and political environment in which they found themselves, the rewards could be abundant. As we shall see, men who arrived in Angola as penniless, reviled men had the opportunity to redeem themselves and quickly acquire privilege by rising through the ranks of the Portuguese military, and success in the local slave trade. Clearly, colonial Angola was an environment that favored the opportunistic, the enterprising, and the morally flexible. And, for Portuguese degredados and voluntary settlers alike, rising in the hierarchy, or even surviving, depended on an ability to adeptly navigate the local social and political environment. In order to gain access to slaves, trade goods, and trading routes, ambitious Portuguese and Portuguese-descended Angolans would have to develop relationships of trust and reciprocity with local chieftains, traders, and warriors. And, as the example of Queen Nzinga demonstrates, the development of political

alliances in Angola often depended on participation in local religious rituals, and the adoption, or at least the appearance of the adoption of, the accompanying belief system.

So it should come as little surprise that whites in Angola were being denounced to the local representatives of the Inquisition of Lisbon for their adoption of local religious practices starting from an early point in the seventeenth century. A man denouncing several individuals for participation in rites in Luanda in 1626 stated that one of the most scandalous things he witnessed at the event was a "white woman performing witchcraft in the manner of the local heathenry."[102] In 1627, a man referred to only as "Nicolão," a native of Benavente whom the denouncer thought was perhaps a *christão-novo* (New Christian), was accused of using bolsas[103] in the local fashion.[104] Leonardo Ferreira da Moura, reporting to the Portuguese Crown on local military, social and political conditions in Angola in the mid-to-late seventeenth century[105], mentioned in his report that "many whites and almost all the blacks engage in pagan rites without fear of the severity of justice."[106]

Regardless of these reports, from men of high and low status alike, of whites in Angola engaging in such unorthodox transgressions, the Portuguese Inquisition did not appear to be terribly concerned, if their lack of action against these individuals is any indication. While the above denouncements (and, likely, more) were being made, none of these ever went to trial (or at least any trial whose documentation survived the

[102] ANTT, TSO/IL "Denunciacões de Congo e Angola," 100f.
[103] Pouches which contained religious and magical objects. I will go into further depth on them at a later point.
[104] ANTT, TSO/IL, Denunciações de Congo e Angola, 9f.
[105] The document in question was "sem data," however it was in a bundle of political documents which were all dated from various points in the seventeenth century.
[106] Biblioteca da Ajuda, 50-V-37, 245f.

centuries.) This could be for several reasons. The most probable was that Inquisition trials were an extremely costly venture. Multiple Catholic clergy, often of the Jesuit or Carmelite orders, were brought from Lisbon to Angola to conduct the investigations and trials. Multiple witnesses had to be located, often in disparate parts of Angola, or at times, in far-flung reaches of the Portuguese empire, and had to be interviewed extensively to determine the general character of the accused, ascertain his or her genealogy, and to gather evidence supporting the accusations at hand. During this time, the accused would have to be maintained in the Inquisition galleys, sometimes for years, until the trial was ready to proceed. Hence, from a strictly fiscal point of view, it would have been prudent to prosecute cases against wealthier individuals, who had assets in the form of slaves, real property, livestock, and other things of value which could be seized, and who could effectively subsidize their own trials and imprisonment. In his broad overview of the Iberian Inquisitions, Toby Green observes that "The Inquisition often ran at a loss, which acted as a drain on royal resources...This is why the Spanish were so keen to establish tribunals in America but ignored the Philippines, and why the Portuguese looked first to Goa and ignored Brazil."[107] Additionally, the prosecution of a wealthier, more socially prominent individual would have an exponential effect in terms of social control. Lower-status individuals who were engaging in similar transgressions might be terrorized by the visible example of a powerful individual's vulnerability to the Inquisition.

And while I have mentioned that in seventeenth-century Angola, there were abundant opportunities for profiteering, there may simply have not been enough

[107] Toby Green, *Inquisition: the Reign of Fear*, (London: Macmillan, 2007), 160.

individuals with sufficient concentration of wealth or political largesse to arouse the wrath of the Portuguese Inquisition. However, Portuguese settlers were making inroads in trading and local politics that would soon transform that reality. There was a marked lack of Portuguese women in Angola, and European (usually Portuguese but sometimes Dutch) traders and military personnel frequently married indigenous Angolan women and started mixed families, who then intermarried amongst one another and soon formed a contingent of Luso-African trading elite, described by Joseph Miller as "dark-skinned colonials of Angolan birth with a veneer of Portuguese Catholicism, dress, and language overlaid on local non-Catholic religious beliefs, a preference for speaking Kimbundu within the home, and other habits derived from their African antecedents." [108]

We should also bear in mind that the tendency of European men to enter into marriage with, or form other types of sexual relationships with Angolan women would almost certainly inculcate indigenous religious beliefs, symbols, and ideologies, on a conscious or an unconscious level. In his investigation of the rise of Luso-African communities in colonial West Africa, George E. Brooks writes that "In some instances, marriages were consecrated by Christian clergy, but African customs and practices regarding mutual obligations, responsibilities and expectations always constituted the core of these relationships, and women and their relations possessed numerous sanctions to ensure their partners' adherence—not the least of which was their vital role in commerce."[109] As the nature of the relationships between Portuguese men and African women in Angola appears to differ very little from the structure observed by Brooks in

[108] Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade 1730-1830,* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 246.
[109] George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in western Africa: commerce, social status, gender, and religious observance from the sixeenth to the eighteenth century,* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 126.

West Africa, it is probable that the maintenance of local religious and cultural customs was as, or even more, dominant in these marriages. For all the supposed Catholicism and Iberian culture the man in these marriages may have brought to the table, the influence of culture and religion of the woman would inevitably eclipse it, leading to what Miller described as the mere "veneer" of Catholicism of their Luso-African descendants.

Judging by the secular correspondence written to the Portuguese overseas council at the turn of the eighteenth century, the influence of indigenous Angolan customs over Portuguese of every class was ascendant. A 1702 report discusses a Manuel Oliveira de Figredo, then captain-major of Cassange, who "had been (there) for many years, living like the blacks, *gentilicamente.*"[110] An invective written in the same year about Bernardino de Tavora, the widely despised then-Governor of Angola, proclaims "he has secluded himself in his home, due to his crazy belief that people want to kill him with witchcraft."[111]A 1718 letter from an Italian Capuchin missionary claimed that he had witnessed ritual cannibalism[112] in Ambuila and that he had heard testimony from a local resident who stated, "I went to the place of sorcery, and ate human flesh, in violation of the sixth commandment." The Capuchin missionary further stated that he had stepped up his public administration of the Catholic sacraments "because of the public scandalousness of all the people, black and white."[113]

Around the second decade of the eighteenth century, a marked uptick in Inquisitional investigations and prosecutions of the so-called "magical crimes" is

[110]AHU, Angola Caixa 16, Doc 34. *Gentilicamente* denotes "in the manner of a heathen."
[111] AHU, Angola, Cx. 16, Doc. 40
[112] John Thornton, drawing upon Cavazzi, maintains that ritual cannibalism was rampant among the Imbangala. See "Religious and Ceremonial Life in the Kongo and Mbundu areas," 82.
[113] AHU, Angola, Cx. 20, Doc. 73

noticeable. In 1715, Vicente de Morais, a nineteen-year old *preto forro*[114] in the military fort of Moximba, Angola found himself a subject of prosecution. Morais was a soldier at the fort, presumably following in the footsteps of his father, an artillery captain. He had been denounced to the Inquisition for the offense of operating as a local *mandingueiro,* or maker and distributor of mandinga pouches, alternately called *patuas* or bolsas[115]. The small pouches, often crafted from animal skin and designed with the purpose of containing small sacred objects, were prized in Angola and in other parts of the Portuguese Empire for their protective and magical qualities[116]. The pouches were typically worn around the neck by an individual with the intent of keeping the pouch close to the chest and, perhaps more importantly, hidden from public view. Blacks and whites alike ascribed a variety of intended purposes for bolsas: among other things, they could be used for protection from bullets and spear points, for attracting the attention of a desired romantic partner, and for luck in business matters. In the case of Morais and his clientele, who were mostly white and in the local military, the primary motive was to protect the body from penetration by bullets.[117]

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[114] Portuguese term roughly denoting "free black man."

[115] Although these pouches can be referred to as *patuas, bolsas, or bolsas de Mandinga,* I will refer to them hereafter as simply "bolsas." The Mandinga reference originates in a popular conception in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World that the inventors of these pouches were the Mandinga people, a West African group.

[116] There is an extensive and growing literature on mandinga pouches/bolsas and their widespread use in the Portuguese Empire. See Laura de Mello e Souza, *The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross: witchcraft, slavery and popular religion in colonial Brazil,* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: the Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) , Daniela Buono Calainho, *Métropole das Mandingas: religiosidade negra e inquisição portuguesa no antigo regime* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2008), Didier Lahon, *Esclavage et Confréries Noires au Portugal durant l'Ancien Regime (1441-1830),* (Unpublished PhD thesis, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2001) and Vanicleia Silva Santos, *As bolsas de mandinga no espaço Atlântico: Século XVIII* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2008).

[117] Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (hereafter ANTT), Tríbunal do Santo Officio/Inquisição de Lisboa (hereafter TSO/IL) Processo 5477, 75f.

As has already been discussed, the need for bodily protection was real and constant in early eighteenth-century Angola, particularly in the *sertões,* of which Moximba was a part. Warfare and conflict defined much of life in Portuguese Angola, for blacks, whites and mixed race people alike. While military service in Angola was often involuntary, it often provided excellent opportunities for upward social mobility as well as the accumulation of fortune. Service in the colonial army placed an individual in an excellent position to trade goods with indigenous Angolan groups and to engage in the slave trade, which went hand in hand with warfare in Angola. Mariana Candido notes that military officials and soldiers were often paid for their services erratically with trade goods such as beads, and as such were forced into local trades.[118]

What was it that made the bolsas so coveted by Angolan soldiers, of every race? What was the source of the bolsas' preternatural powers? Indigenous Angolans, Euro-descendants, and Luso-Africans alike appeared to have believed that the bolsas derived their power from the contents contained within. The bolsas that Morais was accused of crafting contained a distinctly "creolized" mixture of contents. The Inquisition process lists parrot claws, *veronicas*[119], and Christian prayers written on pieces of paper which were folded and tucked inside the pouches. All of these constituent parts of Morais' bolsas have possible origins in West Central Africa, West Africa, and Iberian Europe. The parts of varied animals, which could be claws, teeth, bones, pieces of hide, or preserved internal organs, were widely used in West Africa and West Central Africa, and could have possibly been intended as an offering to a deity or a protective spirit who

[118] Mariana Candido, "Merchants and the Business of the Slave Trade at Benguela, 1750-1850," *African Economic History*, No. 35 (2007), 10.
[119] Small medals, often made from gold or silver, bearing the image of a saint.

favored offerings from the animal in question. The intent of placing animal parts inside bolsas may have also been totemic, placed in the pouch with the intention of conferring desirable qualities of that animal on the wearer of the bolsa.[120] Considering that this bolsa was produced by an Angolan in Angola, it is more than likely the inspiration for the inclusion of the parrot claw was African, but the use of animal parts in magical pouches was also practiced by Europeans[121]. For example, Maria la Cana and Francisco Chusque, residents of Toledo, Spain, were denounced to the Spanish Inquisition in the early eighteenth century for, among other "superstitious" acts, having made *bolsillas* that contained the eyes of a cat.[122] Writing about this practice in early modern Portugal, Francisco Bethencourt mentions, "the use of magical protections of various types (amulets, relics) was intended precisely to create a magical cordon around a person in order to ward off the evil eye, or to rid the person of witchcraft or of diabolical intervention."[123] The same logic seems to have been at work in the case of Morais and his

[120]On the issue of "survivals" of pre-Christian religious practices in Portugal, see José Pedro Paiva, *Bruxaria e superstição num pais sem caça as bruxas, 1600-1774,* (Lisboa: Editoral Noticias, 1997), Francisco Bethencourt, *O imaginário da mágia: feiticeiras, adivinhos, e curandeiras em Portugal no século XVI* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2004), António Vitor Ribeiro, *O Auto dos místicos: alumbrados, profecias, aparições e inquisidores (Séculos XVI-XVIII),* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Universidade de Coimbra, 2009) and Timothy Walker, *Doctors, Folk Medicine, and the Inquisition: the repression of magical healing in Portugal during the Enlightenment,* (Boston: Brill, 2005). Excellent treatment of this topic in other parts of Europe and Great Britain can be found in William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: a new view of the Counter-reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* (New York: Scribner, 1971) and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: traditional religion in England, c.1400-c.1580,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

[121] Bolsas were an all-pervasive phenomenon in the Atlantic World. Jane Landers notes that a man named Gullah Jack, an Angola man who led a slave uprising in South Carolina, used bolsas. See *Black Society in Spanish Florida,* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); they were also found in Saint Domingue, Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: the story of the Haitian Revolution,* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), and in Guatemala, Martha Few, *Women who live evil lives: gender, religion, and the politics of power in colonial Guatemala,* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.).

[122] Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición, Alegaciones Fiscales, Legajo 3722, Expediente 126, 1r-v.

[123] Bethencourt, *O Imaginário da magia,* 52.

clients, only that it was adapted for a society in which warfare and combat, and the attendant threats of bullets and spearpoints, were endemic.

The folded pieces of paper inside Morais' bolsas were inscribed with *oraçoens proibidas,* or prohibited prayers that, while seemingly Christian in content and symbols of invocation, were nonetheless prohibited by the Catholic Church, and by extension, the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Often, prayers to popular yet uncanonized saints were the targets of these official prohibitions. For instance, in 1624, the head of the Portuguese Inquisition, the Bishop Fernão Martins Mascarenhas issued an edict against prayers given to Ioanna da Cruz, a deceased nun popularly credited with performing miracles. Violation of this edict could result in excommunication from the church.[124]

One of the prayers included in the bolsas presented by the Inquisition as evidence against de Morais was a prayer to Saint Augustine of Hippo, who had been canonized since 1303, and is regarded as one of the "fathers" of the Catholic Church. However, what the church regarded as excessive devotion to Saint Augustine is a recurring theme in the Iberian Atlantic Inquisitions, perhaps owing to the fact that Augustine was born in Africa, and thus had more resonance among blacks than other saints had. In Mexico City, the Spanish Inquisition tried a *mulato* candymaker named Isidoro de Peralta in 1699 for the offense of forming a new religion. This nascent sect was devoted to the worship of Saint Augustine. Members of the sect included *mulatos* like Isidoro, blacks and "Spanish" men, and they were described by one of the testifying witnesses as being of "all different classes." The ceremonies were very similar in form to a Catholic mass, one

[124] BNP, Microfilmes F3111, p.6.

major difference being that Isidoro donned a black scapular that bore a red fabric heart in the center. He recited prayers to his flock in "very poor Latin."[125]

And the prayer written to Saint Augustine found inside Morais' bolsas was problematic as well, but not simply for the fact that it bore a prohibited prayer. Pieces of paper with prayers are a common denominator among bolsas found throughout Angola, in West Africa, and in Brazil. The current consensus is that the written prayers are remnants of an Afro-Islamic practice of writing Koranic verses, probably started by marabouts, Muslim religious teachers and leaders in West Africa, who were most likely of Mandinga or Fulbé origin. The marabouts were highly educated, and while they were traditionally Muslim in many aspects, they retained many aspects of traditional West African animistic cosmologies, and thus attributed magical powers to written Koranic verses on pieces of paper.[126] As João José Reis established,[127] the Nagô people of West Africa who were taken en masse to Brazil in the early nineteenth century also used these Koranic verses inserted in pouches, for magical purposes, and also as a means of concealed communication that helped them plan a major slave uprising in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil in 1835. Francisco Bethencourt also notes that pieces of paper with written prayers were commonplace in sorcery trials that took place in Portugal, even when the sorcerer in question was illiterate.[128]

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[125] "Trial of Isidoro de Peralta, mulatto, for founding a cult of San Agustín," Mexican Inquisition Papers, Manuscripts Collection, Huntington Library, MSS 35168.
[126] Personal communication with Philip J. Havik, June 17, 2011.
[127] João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Bahia, 1835.*
[128] Francisco Bethencourt, "Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition," in Bengt Ankarloo and Henningsen, Gustav, eds., *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries,"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 413.

Obviously, the prayers found in Morais' possession were very Christian in form, but the practice of carrying prayers around in a pouch for magical ends was very likely the cultural descendant of syncretic West African-Islamic practices, which could have arrived in Angola by any number of means. At any rate, the bolsas described in Morais' Inquisitional process are fairly typical, as we can see from examples from Brazil.[129] What is particularly striking about the contents of the pouches is the sheer diversity of origins of the cultural artifacts found inside of them. It would seem that the bolsas functioned as an excellent catalyst, a point of "interpenetration" between religious practices that can be traced to West Central Africa, West Africa, pre-Christian Iberia, and the Islamic Empire. And, judging from Vicente de Morais' confession, he had an extraordinarily diverse clientele. What is more intriguing is that he claimed to have learned the art of crafting bolsas from a Portuguese soldier, António Dias, who introduced him to the concept and practice.

The use of bolsas, in Angola and in the larger Iberian Atlantic World, was far more than the fetishization of objects, or the use of "lucky charms." Composed of multiple elements from multiple cultural and religious origins, they provide some of the "hardest," most literal evidence we have that, in the Iberian Atlantic World, geographically, linguistically and culturally disparate African groups influenced one another, that they influenced the beliefs and practices of the European settlers, and that the Europeans lent their own popular religious practices[130] to the mix.

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[129] To be discussed in another chapter.

[130] The boundaries between practices which constitute "religion," "magic," and "superstition" have yet to be satisfactorily explained by social scientists of various disciplines who have broached the topic. Non-Judeo-Christian European practices shall be referred to in this dissertation as "popular religion." It is my stance that the practices which were persecuted as "witchcraft" and "superstition" by the Inquisition

In 1722, a *preto* (black) military captain, Antonio de Freitas Galvão, was posthumously denounced to the Inquisition for publicly engaging in a wide array of indigenous Angolan religious practices. Several witnesses testified that Freitas, who originally hailed from Luanda but served in the capacity of captain in Benguela, hosted large *festas* (parties) at his home in Benguela at which public sacrifices of calves would be made, a live goat was openly worshipped, and participants engaged in ritual dancing and music.[131]Additionally, Freitas was accused of maintaining local healers and feiticeiros in his home, as he was advanced in age and suffering from a malady, and also because he wanted to communicate with his deceased wife. One of the testifying witnesses mentioned that, being native to the area, Freitas was "very accustomed to using heathen practices,"[132]and it is unclear whether his "native" status was considered to be a mitigating factor or condemnatory circumstantial evidence. What is most interesting about the *denuncia* against Freitas, however, is that one witness mentioned that there were "many white men" at Freitas' festas, and another stated that "in his [Freitas'] house there was a huge *festa* with diabolical instruments like those used by the *gentio,*[133] to which many black people and whites contributed."[134]

The ritual practices described by the witnesses in Freitas' trial all had roots in local indigenous ritual tradition. The worship of a live goat was mentioned in a 1720 tract written by the General Council of the Holy Office of the Inquisition entitled "Pagan Rites of Angola." The chroniclers observed that this practice was known in local

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beginning in the sixteenth century and which are often belittled as "magic" or "folk practice" by contemporary researchers are most likely remnants of pre-Christian European religious practices.
[131] ANTT, IL, Cadernos do Promotor, Livro 92, pp.253v-278f.
[132] Ibid, 274f.
[133] Un-Christianized Angolans
[134] Ibid, 274f.

parlance as "*caçuto,*" was typically performed at night, and was usually accompanied by ritual drumming.[135] The use of ritual specialists to contact or to act as mouthpieces for the spirits of deceased people was a commonplace practice in West Central African tradition as well. Wyatt MacGaffey has written extensively on the importance of maintaining positive relations with the spirits of ancestors and deceased relatives in West Central African religion. James Sweet has noted the prevalence of this practice in colonial Angola, and its maintenance by West Central African slaves and their descendants in Brazil.[136]

A particularly intriguing Inquisition trial appears in the record in 1727[137], just five years after that of Freitas. Mariana Fernandes, a *parda* woman who is described as a native-born and resident Luandan, was accused of regularly holding "scandalous and public" ceremonies on a piece of land she owned on the island of Cazanga, off the coast of Luanda. Several witnesses mentioned that these ceremonies entailed dancing, the playing of ritual musical instruments, and the adoration of a palm tree which grew on Fernandes' land. Witnesses ascribed various motives on the part of Mariana for these ceremonies. Some said she performed these ceremonies to make herself more attractive to men, others said she wanted to cure people of illnesses, while others said she did the ceremonies in order to consult with the Devil.

Several witnesses made mention of noticeable ritual scarification Mariana bore on her arms, legs, and back, which one witness stated were called "*bumbas*" in the local dialect. From all indications, it appears that Mariana was herself a religious specialist,

[135] In Kananoja, "Central African Identities and Religiosity in Minas Gerais," 136.
[136] James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: culture, kinship, and religion in the African-Portuguese world, 1441-1770*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
[137] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc. 5888.

and that she had help from others. Witnesses stated Mariana owned two female slaves, named Angela and Cadumbi, "in whose bodies the Devil comes to speak." Witnesses also made reference to a black man whom Mariana employed for the purposes of "cures," and to a black woman named Izabel, who lived in the house of a Captain Antonio de Costa Vianna, and "in whose body the Devil also spoke." It was also mentioned in the course of this trial that both black and white people participated in these ceremonies.

Several aspects of Mariana's trial bear mentioning. First, there are several parallels that can be drawn between her case and that of Captain Antonio Freitas. Mariana, like Freitas, held very public and seemingly regularly scheduled religious ceremonies, which were attended by local African-descended and European-descended people alike. She, like Freitas, also had several local ritual specialists seemingly in her employ. The gift of healing and the ability to speak with spirits from beyond seem to have been considered two separate spheres of specialization. Lastly, Mariana appears to have been a wealthy woman—she owned a piece of land on an island that, in eighteenth-century Luanda, was considered a sort of "resort area" for the local elites, and she also owned at least two slaves. This fact thus adds credence to the argument that the Portuguese Inquisition tended to target wealthy individuals in the colonies. This strongly suggests that there were many other people engaging in the same sorts of activity, but who the local Inquisition officials deemed it was not worth the trouble and expense to actively prosecute.

The mid-eighteenth century saw a spate of accusations, which were defined variously as *feiticaria* (loosely translated as "witchcraft"), idolatry, *bruxaria* ("black magic") and superstition, which targeted military men, most of them white, beginning in 1723 and ending in 1794. As we will see, the accusers are often also military officials. At times, they are local *sobas*. Some accusers appear in more than one case. There are some individuals who appear as the accuser in one report, and as the accused in another. Although the accusations were assigned varying labels by the Inquisition officials, there are elements that are striking to all: spirit possession, the worship of local idols, ritual dancing, and the use of bolsas.

Inquisition records can be an unreliable source. Witnesses may be delusional, repeating gossip, regurgitating narratives provided to them by another party, or simply lying. However, the consistency of the accusations I will examine suggests that these accusations were more than sheer confabulation. The material objects, ritual actions, and relationships between accused and accuser that come up repeatedly in the following Inquisition cases demonstrate that, by the mid-eighteenth century, whites in Angola were culturally and spiritually Africanized. Other scholars have remarked upon the profound Africanization of the Portuguese settlers in Angola. For instance, Linda Heywood mentions that, in Angola, "The cultural interpenetration was so pronounced in the eighteenth century that every secular and religious authority who came to the colony from the metropole noted it, some condemning the culture as one of 'profound decadence."[138]

[138] Linda M. Heywood, "Portuguese into African: the Eighteenth-Century Central African Background to Atlantic Creole Cultures," in Heywood, Linda M., ed. *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 93.

It would appear that military men, both black and white, in eighteenth century Angola were in great need of religious protections such as bolsas, to defend themselves from--if we are to take certain aspects of the following cases at face value--magical attacks from their peers or possible accusations of witchcraft which could destroy one's reputation and inflict financial injury. Accusations of witchcraft could also mean perpetual confinement in harsh conditions that could lead to death.

In 1732, Francisco Gomes Pereira, captain major of the Golungo presidio in Luanda was denounced by several men, including the Captain António Lourenço da Costa, Manoel Correa Leitão, the *soba* João Peçado Quianbata, and the *quilamba*[139] Dom João Domingos for "superstition."[140] The denouncers alleged, in a letter, that Gomes was in possession of two idols that he worshipped and who responded to Gomes' adoration by "placing impossible things within his reach." Further, Gomes was said to converse with the devil with the aid of Maria, his slave, who is described in the denunciation as a *"xinguiladora,"* or an individual whom the spirits of the deceased use as a mouthpiece. The denouncers further stated Gomes employed black sorcerers to perform divination for him, using the method known as "panella de Loanza," which was more than likely a divinatory activity originating in Luanda which involved gazing into an earthenware pot called a *panella* that was filled with water. This method comes up frequently in persecutions for witchcraft, divination, and superstition in Portuguese Inquisition records from Angola and from Brazil. The denouncers additionally accused Gomes of witchcraft directed toward another captain major, Manoel da Silva. 18 years later, in 1750, Da Silva would be mentioned in another Inquisitional investigation for witchcraft, but in the

[139] Leader of an Angolan military detachment.
[140] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc 13615

capacity of co-perpetrator in the trial of his concubine, Anna Maria Antunes de Almeida, which is discussed later in this chapter.

One of the more curious cases of politically motivated witchcraft involves Francisco Rodrigues de Azevedo, a white resident in the presidio of Cambambe. The Portuguese Inquisition tried Azevedo in 1753 for public idolatry and the use of the magical arts, for allegedly having attempted murder through the use of *feiticeiros*.[141] According to the testimony of several witnesses, most of them soldiers, the primary target of Azevedo's ire was his half-brother, Juliam da Nobrega, captain major of the district of Cambambe. Azevedo purportedly enlisted the services of feiticeiros from the lands of Kisama, outside the bounds of Portuguese Angola, to carry out the ceremonies intended to result in Nobrega's death. Azevedo was said to have gone to significant expense to obtain these services, and to have brought the sorcerers in to Cambambe by canoe.

The Kisama people were particularly feared by both the Portuguese in Angola and by indigenous Angolan groups. Correspondence from the early eighteenth century describes them as having committed "great thefts,"[142] and describes the "great fear"[143] they inspired in their rivals. The Kisama most likely did inspire both fear and contempt in the Portuguese. The lands they inhabited were not only outside the bounds of Portuguese imperial control, but they were rich in salt mines. Salt was a highly valued commodity in Angola. According to Joseph Miller, "where better marine salts, and especially the hard salt blocks of Kisama, could withstand the cost and wear and tear of transportation, exchanges between strangers bearing them became more frequent. In the extreme case of

[141] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc 8581
[142] Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (hereafter AHU), Angola, Caixa 16, Doc. 23
[143] AHU, Angola, Caixa 20, Doc. 28.

the Kisama salt, such blocks acquired features of a currency that strangers could use to mediate generalized exchange systems."[144] Further, as Kisama was directly outside the boundaries of Portuguese Angola, it was a choice destination for fugitive slaves looking for freedom, and, from the early days of the colony, it was well-known as a *quilombo,* or colony of runaway slaves.[145]

Juliam da Nobrega was not Azevedo's only intended victim. Azevedo was also said to have unsuccessfully attempted to bewitch a man named Manuel Rodrigues Silva. Further, Azevedo had designs to eliminate his wife, with whom he was said to have a virtually non-existent relationship, instead preferring the company of two of his female slaves. Azevedo was found guilty and, among other penalties, lost eleven of his slaves, who were confiscated by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

Azevedo's Inquisitional process demonstrates numerous forces at work in the interchange of religious beliefs between indigenous Angolans and whites as well as the formation of a "creole" culture. First, it is significant that Azevedo was involved in a rivalry with his half-brother over the position of captain-major. By the early eighteenth-century, particularly in the Angolan backlands, where Cambambe was situated, the office of captain-major and other influential military positions tended to be concentrated in the hands of a few families. Joseph Miller observes that "In the military districts of the interior, where government authority (the capitaes-mores) was often in the hands of families allied with, and married into, the African trading gentry dominant in the

[144] Miller, 57.
[145] Ibid., 386.

adjoining regions, a colonial Mbundu culture prevailed overwhelmingly."[146] Francisco de Azevedo and Juliam da Nobrega more than likely hailed from such a family. Although they had different surnames, Azevedo's process refers to Nobrega as being his "irmão paterno," or half-brother by the same father. It is also notable that Azevedo seems to have been a wealthy man, as he owned eleven slaves, all of whom were confiscated by the Inquisition. Azevedo may have been specifically targeted because he had sufficient assets to fund his own trial, and also because he was likely a highly visible individual. And, whether it is true or not that Azevedo did in fact employ feiticeiros from Kisama to murder his half-brother in the hopes of having a chance at his vacated post, the fact that such an allegation was taken seriously by authorities reflects the steep competition and rivalry for military posts, especially that of captain-major, in the highland districts of Angola.

Political rivalries, financial disputes and concubines were all essential elements in the trial of João Pereira da Cunha for idolatry in 1750[147]. Indeed, Cunha had led a remarkable and tumultuous life. Born in northern Portugal to what was apparently a privileged family—his Inquisition process mentions that Cunha's father held the office of Familiar of the Inquisition—he was exiled from Portugal in his early twenties following a homicide conviction. He seems to have first gone to Brazil for a short period and records indicate that he first arrived in Angola in 1715, at the age of 25.[148] When his Inquisition trial for idolatry began, Cunha had recently assumed the position of captain major in the

[146] Joseph C. Miller, "Central Africa during the Era of the Slave Trade, c. 1490's -1850's," in Linda M. Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 53.
[147] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc 9691
[148] Kananoja, 452.

Presidio of Ambaca, after having unsuccessfully attempted to attain that post more than a decade prior, in 1738[149].

Multiple witnesses, of varied positions in Angolan society, the majority of them with posts in the military, gave fantastic and detailed testimony regarding the religious adventures of Cunha. He was said to have on his *quintal*, or estate, several idols representing the local deities Muta[150], Quibuco, Macongo, and a live bearded goat christened Ganga Zumba, whom he openly worshipped. If we are to take the witnesses' testimony at face value, although Cunha exhibited what was apparently a sense of a personal relationship with the idols, and was labeled a "grand sorcerer and witch," by a detractor, he deferred to the expertise and talent of local religious specialists in matters of supplication, sacrifice, and invocation to meet personal ends. Cunha supposedly spoke to one of the idols with the assistance of one of his female slaves. He was said to regularly host black feiticeiros at his house, and to have received the magical assistance of his slave and concubine, Catarina Juliana. Catarina was also apprehended by the Inquisition for the charge of *feiticaria*, along with several other slaves owned by Cunha.

In a rebuttal letter, Cunha refuted the allegations of idolatry and feiticaria. He was emphatic that the accusations were the vindictive machinations of several of his political enemies. Among the individuals Cunha cited as the most probable manufacturer of the allegations was Fernando Martins de Amaral, whom Cunha, while acting in his role of captain-major, had convicted of homicide. Cunha also invoked his unpopularity

[149] AHU, Angola, Cx. 30, Doc. 96, 7v.
[150] Kananoja, citing Jan Vansina, states that "Muta Kalombo was venerated in Ambaca as a personal spirit that guaranteed luck in hunting and warfare." in "Central African Identities," 140.

with members of the local Catholic clergy, who were apparently miffed when he denied a priest, Father Gonçalo de Gouveia, travel assistance and protection.

Indeed, Cunha appears to have drawn an inordinate amount of ill will and enmity in the course of his ascension through the Angolan military hierarchy and in the creation of his personal fortune. Several witnesses in the Inquisitional trial made reference to their belief that Cunha was the beneficiary of supernatural aid, that it was a major factor in his political and financial success, and that he had supposedly benefited from the tutelage of Catalina Juliana in the practice of the indigenous magical arts.

What was it about Cunha that drew such ire from his peers and subordinates and motivated the Portuguese Inquisition to invest the largesse and manpower into such an extensive and time consuming investigation and trial? As we have already seen with Vicente de Morais' clientele and Francisco de Azevedo, whites and military officials in Angola being accused or observed of engaging in indigenous African rites was not an altogether rare occurrence, nor was it a recent phenomenon.

In the years leading up to his arrest by the Portuguese Inquisition, João Pereira da Cunha was a significant and controversial figure in the local military-slave trading complex. Cunha's legal troubles in the late 1740's were not limited to those inflicted upon him by the Inquisition tribunal. In 1748, he was arrested, along with the Captain-Major of the Presidio of Pedras, Bartholomeu Duarte de Siqueira, and the Captain-Major of Caconda, Francisco Roque Soutto, for "having done business while commanding troops in the campaign against Queen Gingha"[151] Duarte de Siqueira was the central

[151] AHU, Angola, Caixa 36, Doc 111

figure in an investigation into illicit trade conducted by the three captain-majors which began in 1747, sparked by a 1745 accusation by the captain major of Moxima.[152] Apparently, Francisco Roque Soutto, while acting in capacity of trader, had engaged in illegal trading in guns and powder, and trespassed previously agreed-upon boundaries and was arrested by an official in the area of Matamba. This provoked a war between the Portuguese and Matamba which lasted 1739-1744.[153] Bartholomeu Duarte de Siqueira commanded troops in this campaign, and his performance in the war seems to have been far less than satisfactory. He was criticized for, among other things, his negligence which led to the escape of the Queen of Matamba, and his officers' inhumane treatment of soldiers and allies.[154]

Bartholomeu Duarte de Siqueira had previously come under fire from local military authorities—in 1738, while serving in the post of sergeant-major in Benguela, he had been found guilty of smuggling, barred from service for a period of five years, and the colonial government seized his assets.[155] It cannot be discerned from the documentation exactly what Siqueira had been smuggling, but given the location in which he was caught, it is likely that he was smuggling slaves.[156] After this conviction, it is apparent that Siqueira chose to move into the interior, possibly because there was less imperial oversight of the activities of merchants.

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[152] AHU, Angola, Caixa 36, Doc 6
[153] David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: the Mbundu and their Neighbours under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 142-3.
[154] Ibid, 144-5.
[155] Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Transforming Atlantic slaving: Trade, Warfare, and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650-1800,* (Unpublished PhD Diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 2003), p. 198.
[156] For excellent examinations of the slave trade and society in Benguela, see Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Transforming Atlantic slaving*, and Mariana P. Cândido, *Enslaving Frontiers: slavery, trade, and identity in Benguela, 1780-1850,* (Unpublished PhD diss., York University, 2006).

In his testimony in Siqueira's deposition, Caetano Rodrigues de Fruto, stated that "Better presidios than Ambaca and Pedras have said that these [presidios] have way too much luck, and because of this they have much better business than the others."[157]Several witnesses testified that the men, primarily the captain-majors of Ambaca and Pedras, had engaged in illicit trade in slaves while simultaneously conducting warfare. For obvious reasons of conflict, the trading of slaves and goods in the midst of a military campaign was strictly forbidden under Portuguese imperial law. However, as Manoel Teyxeira de Mendonça asserted, "all the other captain-majors of the other Presidios frequently engage in the same business."[158]

Indeed, conducting business in conjunction with their duties of governance was not terribly deviant behavior for Angola's captain-majors, particularly those who held domain over the presidios of the Angolan backlands, which included Ambaca, Pedras and Caconda. Angolan captain-majors and other military officers engaged in the trade of slaves, weapons and other goods, benefiting from not only their politically advantageous position, but also from the numerous relationships they developed over the courses of military campaigns and careers. Miller notes that "The *capitães-mores* typically used their control over the labor markets of the interior to finance their own preeminence as slave traders. They straightforwardly commandeered the choicest trade goods as bribes from Luanda merchants desperate for their collaboration."[159] In 1703, the Catholic clergyman Melchior da Conceição had written disparagingly of the relationships captain-majors exercised with local sobas, portraying the trading partnerships as largely one-

[157] AHU, Angola, Cx. 6, Doc.
[158] AHU Angola Caixa 36, Doc 6
[159] Miller, *Way of Death,* 267.

sided and exploitative, claiming that "the poorer of the sobas give [the captain-majors] all that they have in their lands, including chickens and goats."[160] Conceição further admonished the king that, "for the good of this kingdom, and for the salvation of souls, the whites here, as well as the blacks, are all in need of grand reform."[161]

Although the relationships between white and Luso-African captain-majors and local chieftains may have indeed been adversarial and exploitative in many cases, these connections facilitated the rapid ascent of careers and the accumulation of wealth for ambitious men, often from checkered pasts, such as João Pereira da Cunha. The comments made by several witnesses in his Inquisition trial made reference to his rapid success, and many surmised that he had used the services of local feiticeiros to enhance the velocity of his upward trajectory.[162] Roquinaldo Ferreira observes that the use of witchcraft accusations to deal with jealousy or inequalities in Angolan society was a common practice. [163]

In 1750, Joao Pereira da Cunha and Bartholomeu Duarte de Siqueira wrote a series of letters from their prison, pleading for mercy.[164] The pleas were apparently effective in Siqueira's case: he was released from prison and forgiven of all charges in 1753, and returned to his post by a royal decree, which cited his membership in "one of the more prominent families of the backlands of Angola" and listed his numerous

[160] Biblioteca da Ajuda, 54-XIII-15, 102
[161] Ibid
[162] ANTT Proc. 9691. For a more detailed account of the statements made in Cunha's trial, see Kalle Kananoja, "Healers, Idolaters, and Good Christians: A Case Study of Creolization and Popular Religion in Mid-Eighteenth Century Angola," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2010), pp. 443-467.
[163] Ferreira, 79.
[164]AHU, Angola Caixa 37, Docs 16, 24, and 63.

military posts and the wars in which he had served.[165]Joao Pereira da Cunha does not appear to have received any sort of a recusal, however. At the time of Duarte Siqueira's restoration to his former post, Cunha had been deceased for almost two years, having succumbed to a fatal infection in the Inquisitional galleys of Lisbon.[166]

Cunha's concubine, Catarina Juliana, was not spared from her Inquisition trial by her lover's death nor by any pleas on her behalf by Portuguese officials in her homeland of Angola. Catarina's trial began in 1756, five years after Cunha's death and six years after her initial imprisonment. In the course of the trial, she confessed to many of the charges leveled against her, stating health problems were her major motivating factor in committing her transgressions; however, she adamantly denied that Cunha ever participated in indigenous Angolan rites, or that he was even aware of her participation in them.

In 1761, several of the witnesses from João Pereira da Cunha's trial were called to Lisbon and re-questioned. When pressed, some confessed that they had never seen any of the rituals they alleged occurred in Cunha's household, and one stated that he had, but it was Cunha's slaves, and not Cunha himself, who had been the participants. José da Mattos Moreira, the comissario of the Inquisition in Luanda, found Cunha innocent. He stated his opinion that Cunha was the victim of a hoax perpetrated by his political enemies, among them Antonio da Fonseca Coutinho and Manoel Correia Leite, who, as you will recall, also accused the captain-major Francisco Gomes Pereira of superstition in 1732. Moreira also mentioned that Cunha's promotion to captain major aroused much

[165]AHU, Angola Caixa 38, Doc 10.
[166] ANTT,TSO/IL, Proc. 6948.

hostility among his peers and that this was not the first time false accusations had been leveled against Cunha—in the 1730's he was accused of illegally trading weapons with blacks in the backlands, a charge of which he was cleared. Further, Moreira described Cunha as having possessed a rather disagreeable disposition, and stated that he was not well-liked in Ambaca. Notably, Cunha had a conflict-filled relationship with local Catholic clergy, and publicly called them incompetent.[167] One striking aspect of Moreira's letter, however, is his seeming lack of awareness of Cunha's apprehension, along with Francisco Roque de Soutto and Bartholomeu Duarte de Siqueira a few years prior for apparent war crimes. At any rate, João Pereira da Cunha was formally exonerated, albeit posthumously in a public auto-da-fe celebrated in Lisbon in the Claustro de São Domingos on October 27, 1765.[168]

It is difficult to judge whether Cunha was completely innocent of the idolatry charges. Although Kananoja concludes that while Cunha was most likely receiving palliative care from local healers, he probably did not engage in active worship of local idols.[169] However, Cunha probably participated in these rituals to some degree, but not quite to the extent described so colorfully by his accusers. Cunha's trial process is striking in the exquisite detail the witnesses provided against him. Whereas the majority of the processes and denuncias I examined tend to be rather vague in their details, i.e. "I saw some feiticeiros, and they had some herbs," or "There was dancing and drum music, and there was also a live goat present," the witnesses in Cunha's trial name specific deities, and give sharp detail about the exact ritual actions, which is very unusual for

[167] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc. 9691, 138-141.
[168] Academia das Ciencias, Serie Azul 201, p242f.
[169] Kananoja, "Healers, Idolaters, and Good Christians," 465.

Inquisition testimonies. However, if Cunha had not been participating in indigenous Angolan rites, that would also be very unusual for a man of his position in the backlands presidio of Ambaca. When Cunha arrived in Angola, he had several strikes against him that should have impeded his rapid ascent up the local social ladder. He was Portuguese, and he was a degredado convicted of an especially violent crime. And, although I could find no documentation about his years in Brazil immediately following exile from his native Portugal, or any details about his homicide trial in northern Portugal as a young man, his fairly short sojourn in Brazil suggests that the local authorities there found reason to pass him along to Angola. Another strike against him was that instead of marrying into a Luso-African trading clan, he opted instead to take two local low-status women as concubines. This would have likely raised eyebrows among white, mixed, and black Angolans alike.

All in all, the trajectory of Cunha's life, and the descriptions of his character and general demeanor strongly suggest a man who was not especially compelled to do that which was deemed "correct," and morally "proper." Cunha was a man who did what worked. And, in mid-eighteenth century backland Angola, participating in local religious traditions is what worked. Clearly, one could receive treatment for illnesses, cement alliances and relationships with local sobas and other indigenous leaders, and intimidate one's enemies.

Now, my argument above may strike some readers as hopelessly counterfactual. However, even if one is hesitant to infer that Cunha was more involved in local religious traditions than he himself admitted and his concubine Catalina claimed, the very blueprint of the conspiracy against Cunha itself is further evidence of broader patterns of

cultural, social, and religious "Angolicization" of the Portuguese settlers and their descendants in Angola. First, it is interesting that Joao Pereira da Cunha's enemies chose idolatry as an appropriate offense with which to frame him. After all, if one is seeking to destroy a rival through the use of false accusations, it seems that it would be imperative to accuse that person of a plausible offense. Why did his enemies choose idolatry and witchcraft? Why not sodomy, or pederasty? Why not accuse Cunha of blasphemy or heresy, something that could be equally plausible, given Cunha's reputation for publicly disdaining ordained officials of the Catholic Church? Why not plant prohibited books among his personal effects?

Apparently, those conspiring against Cunha had previously failed in a more concrete and less fantastical charge, that of illegal trading, which as we have already seen, was endemic among the captain-majors and other military officials, and which, given the charges brought against him and Batholomeu Duarte da Siqueira in the years just leading up to Pereira's arrest by the Inquisition, as well as his meteoric rise through the ranks of Angolan society and rapid accumulation of wealth, he more than likely was involved in. When the charges in the 1730's and in the 1740's[170] for unlawful commerce in the backlands failed to bear fruit, his enemies decided to turn to the Inquisition.

And the local tribunal of the Inquisition was perfectly willing to believe the possibility that a white man, even a man holding high rank in the local military, would engage in the religious rites native to Angola and would worship local deities. After all, the local ecclesiastical officials had heard plenty of accusations to that effect against

[170] Unfortunately, I was not able to locate documentation about the ultimate conclusion of the secular criminal proceeding s against Cunha. It seems that the Inquisition apprehended Cunha before a conviction (or recusal) was delivered in those proceedings.

numerous other white and military men. We have already discussed Vicente de Morais, the soldier who moonlighted as a bolsa maker, and his mostly white and military clientele, and we have examined the case of Francisco Rodrigues de Azevedo, who hired African magical hit-men from the garrulous territory of Kisama. Additionally, Antonio de Fonseca Coutinho, one of the conspirators against Joao Pereira da Cunha named by Moreira, was a tenente-general in Luanda who became the target of a feiticaria denunciation in 1733[171] Specifically, Coutinho was described as being an active participant in rites presided over by two of his slaves, described as feiticeiros. Incidentally, in 1736, Coutinho was the target of a separate criminal investigation in which he was suspected of directing two of his male slaves to commit murder. In this investigation witnesses described Coutinho as having particularly congenial relationships with his slaves, and as being especially close with two of his female slaves, referred to as his concubines.[172]

Indeed, as has been intimated earlier in the discussion of the trial of Catarina Juliana, the domestic companion of João Pereira da Cunha, Angolan and Luso-Angolan women who married or were romantically associated with a Portuguese or white Angolan man were often viewed as the corrupting agent, or facilitator, in cases where the man was suspected of engaging in local religious and magical practices. The 1750 denunciation of Ana Maria Antunes de Almeida[173], the Luso-African concubine of the captain-major Manoel da Sylva Vieira (who in 1732, was the alleged victim of the witchcraft of

[171] ANTT TSO/IL Proc 13616.
[172] AHU, Angola, Caixa 32, Doc 8
[173] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc. 13834

Francisco Gomes Pereira), provides a window into the racial and gender politics in Angolan society which played themselves out in the theatre of the Portuguese Inquisition.

Almeida and Sylva were denounced to authorities for "invoking the Devil through heathen rites in order to cure sickness."[174] They were accused of utilizing the services of "black sorcerers" to invoke several idols, referred to as Macongo, Quitari, Quibuco, and Zumbi.[175] These appear to have been large gatherings that the "sorcerers" presided over. The denunciation goes onto mention that several whites participated in the rites,[176] which consisted of ritual drumming and "the clapping of hands as a sign of veneration."[177]One denouncer further accused Manuel da Sylva of having killed his brother via the use of sorcery so that he could succeed him as captain-major of the district of Golungo. One clergyman testified in Almeidas' defense that the Inquisition should take into consideration that, in her case, the rites were a part of her heritage, and that she had learned them from her Angolan mother and maternal grandmother.[178]

The mid-eighteenth century in Angola appears to have been the stage of a veritable "witch-craze" amongst a mostly white and Luso-African group of military officers and foot soldiers. It would be easy to write these accusations and counter-accusations off as cynical strategies to game the system in order to eliminate one's competition from the arena entirely, or at the very least to inflict irreparable damage to an individual's reputation and fiscal health. However, it is very difficult to believe that

[174] Ibid., 4v *Zumbi* was a word used to denote an ancestral spirit who lingered in the world of the living, causing illness. As for the other idols mentioned, I have found no reference anywhere as to their significance.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 6f
[177] Ibid., 16f.
[178] Ibid., 16v.

every single one of these men were so conniving and unscrupulous as to manufacture elaborate stories and conspiracies in the interest of self-gain. Such a strategy would also have the potential to seriously backfire on a perpetrator. But, it is equally difficult to believe that every single one of these men brazenly participated in "public and notorious" indigenous Angolan rights, replete with dancing, drumming, spirit possession and animal sacrifice. No doubt there were outliers on either side of this spectrum, but one plausible explanation comes from the Angolan, and more generally, West Central African perception of "witchcraft."

The Angolan definition of a witch was, in many ways, very close to European definitions. A witch could be someone who had a special relationship with unseen forces and used that prowess to effect changes in the natural and human environment, for good or for evil. However, there was another dimension to the notion of witchcraft as circumscribed by West Central Africans. In the words of John Thornton, "witchcraft centered around notions of selfishness and thus had a political and social as well as a personal dimension."[179] Thornton also emphasizes that "Merchants of any race or nationality were especially vulnerable to the charge of being witches because the necessarily individualistic behavior of merchants in the face of a folk ethic of sharing and community service could easily be seen as greed, the root of witchcraft."[180]

In the case of João Pereira da Cunha, as well as the other white military officials who were accused of *feiticaria*, it is easy to see how they would fit the Angolan rubric of witchcraft. Success in the military was typically predicated by success in trading and the

[179] John Thornton, "Cannibals, Witches, and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly,* Vol. 60, No. 2 (April 2003), 277.
[180] Ibid., 282.

accumulation of wealth, things which the accused men all appeared to have had in common. I have shown that, at least since the early seventeenth century, whites in Angola had close interactions with blacks and readily participated in Angolan religious and cultural activities. It is thus not a huge speculative leap to state that many whites, particularly those whose families had been in Angola for several generations, defined "witchcraft" in similar terms as the Angolans. One might say that the accusers cynically deployed traditional Angolan notions in order to topple rivals; however, Inquisition officials were typically Portuguese by birth, and cases that went to trial, such as that of Cunha, nearly always took place in Lisbon. It is unlikely that a Portuguese Catholic would consider economic success, greed and ambition as symptomatic of a witch. However, culturally Africanized Portuguese Catholics, who seem to have made up the majority of the denouncers and accusers, might have viewed avarice and witchcraft as two sides of the same coin.

It is also significant that at the same time "witchcraft" prosecutions in Angola peaked, a similar phenomenon was occurring contemporaneously in the metropole. Various scholars of the Portuguese Inquisition, most notably Timothy D. Walker, José Pedro Paiva, and Francisco Bethencourt have noted that trials for the so-called "magical crimes," meaning feiticaria, bruxaria, curas, and superstições, reached their apex in mid-eighteenth century Portugal. Walker observes that most of the magical crimes cases in Portugal took place only after 1680, and reached their apogee in the years between 1715 and 1760. Walker attributes this to a larger push toward rational thought in Europe, as well as to the rise of the medical profession in Portugal.[181]Paiva noted a peak between

[181] Timothy D. Walker, *Doctors, Folk Medicine and the Inquisition,* pp.6-7.

1715 and 1760 as well, and also found that 58% of the magical crimes cases in Portugal between the years 1600-1774 were for forms of magical healing.[182]Francisco Bethencourt also took note of this increase, and attributed it to changes in Catholic theology, as well as the growing influence of the medical profession in eighteenth-century Portugal.[183]This fact is significant because a major aspect of Angolan, and indeed most forms of West Central and West African religion, incorporate healing practices into their liturgy.

The white captain majors and other military officials in Angola interacted with blacks on multiple levels; they fought against and alongside them, they traded in goods and in slaves with them, socialized with them, formed long-term romantic and sexual relationships with Angolan women, and as we have seen, participated in the religious rites of the land. In fact, participation in Angolan religious rites and other cultural traditions would probably provide a competitive edge for a white man in Angola. One had to go through local *sobas* and other leaders in order to trade goods, gain access to land and water passageways, to receive local military reconnaissance, and to gain access to slaves. A shared cosmology, or at least participation in rites and familiarity with religious and cultural symbols would most likely have inspired trust and kindled good relationships with at least a few of the indigenous Angolan leaders. The better a white man in Angola was at acculturating to local norms, customs, and ways of understanding the world, the more likely it was he would succeed socially, politically, and economically in a most competitive terrain.

[182] José Pedro Paiva, in Walker, 28.
[183] Bethencourt, "Portugal: a Scrupulous Inquisition", 417.

CHAPTER 3

BRAZIL

In the 1922 novel *O Feiticeiro*[184], the Brazilian author Xavier Marques portrayed the social drama of the Botos, a middle-class Bahian family who found themselves at the crossroads of scandal as a result of their involvement with a local African religious practitioner. The Botos had enlisted the services of the feiticeiro for his magical intervention in personal matters, and nearly lost their standing in the community when this came to light. While *O Feiticeiro* and the Boto family were fictional, the novel illustrated a basic reality of Brazilian social, cultural and religious interactions. "White" and "black" religion did not exist in perfectly demarcated spheres in northeastern Brazil, and this was particularly true in Bahia—white individuals regularly sought out the services of African religious specialists for dilemmas pertaining to physical and mental health, the divination of missing objects, slaves, or future events. Some whites regularly participated in religious ceremonies of West Central African and West African origin which involved dancing, drumming, call and response, spirit possession and the presentation of offerings to the *orixas,* which might entail food of various kinds, tobacco, liquor, and/or recently slaughtered animals.[185] Afro-Brazilian sects such as Candomblé, among many others, have become the subject of a good deal of academic and public scrutiny in recent decades. A recent strain of scholarship on this subject treats these

[184] Lit., "The Sorceror." Marques, Xavier, *O feiticeiro*, (São Paulo: Edições GRD, 1975).
[185] Luis Nicolau Parés and Roger Sansi, eds. *Sorcery in the Black Atlantic*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). For Angola, see Mariana P. Candido, *An African-slaving port and the Atlantic world: Benguela and its Hinterland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

religions largely as ahistorical sects that evolved exclusively in the Afro-Brazilian community and are thus representative of Herskovitsian cultural "survivals", African cultural resistance, and social agency.[186] It is not my intent to contest these assertions. However, I will demonstrate that not only Afro-Brazilians, but Luso-Brazilians, "whites," if you will, took active part in African religious and magical practices and ceremonies and were profoundly influenced by these beliefs.

From the earliest days of the colony, the masters' way of thinking was changed by African religious ideas just as much as Roman Catholicism transformed the spiritual outlook of the slaves[187]. Dain Borges has written, in relation to the theme of Marques' work, "The affair reveals what they would like to conceal: that a knot of patronage binds all Bahians together in immobilizing complicity; that the nature of social power prevents the control and isolation of the African elements."[188] This "knot of patronage" began to entangle itself in a process of multidirectional religious and cultural exchanges that began much earlier than the early twentieth century, and they were not exclusive to Bahia.

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186 Rachel E. Harding, *A refuge in thunder: Candomblé and alternative spaces of blackness*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), and J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic religion: tradition, transnationalism, and matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), among others.

187 This is not to suggest that, in this case, the religious exchanges only began to occur in Brazil. As I have already demonstrated, exchanges occurred in colonial Angola, from where many of the African slaves hailed, and where some of the Portuguese-descended colonists, esp. those with a military post, had spent time. Additionally, Portugal had a substantial African population from the mid-fifteenth century onwards. On the topic of African settlement and cultural influence in early modern Portugal, see Daniela Buono Calainho, *Métropole das Mandingas: religiosidade negra e inquisição portuguesa no antigo regime* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2008), Didier Lahon, Esclavage et Confréries Noires au Portugal durant l'Ancien *Regime (1441-1830)*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2001), Vanicleia Silva Santos, *As bolsas de mandinga no espaço Atlântico: Século XVIII* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2008), A.C. de C.M. Saunders, *A social history of black slaves and freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African healing, and the intellectual history of the Atlantic World*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 2011), and José Ramos Tinhorão, *Festa de Negro em Devoção de Branco: Do Carnaval na procissão ao teatro no círio*, (São Paulo, SP: Editora UNESP, 2012).

188 Dain Borges, "The Recognition of Afro-Brazilian Symbols and Ideas, 1890-1940," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Winter 1995), p. 69.

Inquisitional, ecclesiastical, and political records from the mid-sixteenth century and onwards indicate that whites in all regions of Brazil participated in African-derived rituals much earlier than has been assumed.

As was the case for early modern Angola, Europeans and Africans exchanged spiritual and religious concepts with one another extensively. This multidirectional exchange across racial and class lines is as apparent in Brazil as it is for Angola. However, the social dynamics of transmission were far different and reflective of the unique challenges and aspects posed by the social, political, and biological terrain of Brazil. In Brazil, Africans clearly did not have the political, economic, and demographic advantages that they held over the Portuguese colonizers in West Central Africa. Africans and their descendants in Brazil did not have access to vast markets of slaves, knowledge of the terrain that could prove useful to colonizing armies and to slave traders, nor did they have control of commodities such as salt or silver. In Brazil, Europeans held most of the keys to the development of the emerging colonial society, and they were under no onus to engage in African-derived religious rituals or acquire familiarity with African cosmology, deities, and symbols in order to form political and diplomatic alliances.

However, the new terrain presented multiple challenges for European colonizers, in terms of differing climates, flora and fauna, and sundry tropical illnesses. AJR Russell-Wood, in his monumental study of the Santa Casa da Misericordia in Bahia, found that illnesses such as malaria and yellow fever were relatively common among people of all racial and class backgrounds, and that malnutrition was a constant danger

for everyone.[189] This treacherous disease environment was not limited to Bahia and the northeastern provinces of Brazil. Mary Karasch, in her detailed social history of early nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, found that colonial Brazil was a minefield of pestilence, including malaria, typhus, tuberculosis, and a skin condition known as *sarna.*[190] Early modern Western medicine had few tools to deal with these plagues, and even what little succor European-trained doctors could offer was in short supply in Brazil, and particularly in frontier regions such as Bahia, Pernambuco, Maranhão, and Minas Gerais. Slaves who arrived in these regions with knowledge of plant-based and other forms of healing from Africa, or Afro-descendants who had learned these practices, could, however, offer some comfort, real or perceived, for these ailments. The plant-based orientation of African healing also perhaps made blacks in the colony more receptive to the wisdom of indigenous Brazilians about the healing properties of plants native to the terrain. Geographer Robert Voeks speculates that Africans also adopted methods of plant healing from Tupinamba Indians via the communications of Jesuit priests.[191]

Thus, Africans and their descendants had healing practices to offer in the religious and cultural marketplace of seventeenth and eighteenth century Brazil. Healing practice and religion did not occupy separate spheres in the West African and West Central African cultures from which the majority of Brazilian slaves were born or from where

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[189] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists: the Santa Casa da Misericordia of Bahia, 1550-1755*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 263-289. More recently, Pablo Gomez has found that the disease environment on seventeenth-century New Granada facilitated cultural exchanges between Africans and the larger population. See Pablo F. Gómez, *The experiential Caribbean: Creating knowledge and healing in the early modern Atlantic*. UNC Press Books, 2017.

[190] Mary C. Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro 1808-1850*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 146-184.

[191] Robert Voeks, "African Medicine and Magic in the Americas," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (Jan., 1993), 72.

they could trace their ancestry.[192] Nor did healing and the supernatural occupy separate spheres in the minds of the early modern Portuguese, who formed the largest contingent of European settlers in Brazil, either. Timothy Walker, drawing on the work of José Pedro Paiva, observes that, in early modern Portugal, practitioners of herbal and magical healing "were not marginalized, but rather fully inculcated in early modern Portuguese community life."[193] The tacit acceptance of the validity of magical healing seems to have been most prevalent in rural areas of Portugal, and amongst the lower classes, from which many of the Portuguese colonists hailed. Thus, when faced with a debilitating illness, it is not surprising that Luso-Brazilians would have few compunctions about utilizing the services of African healers, or, as I shall show from several examples, "marketing" slaves with the ability to provide magical healing services with an expectation that Portuguese-descended individuals would be receptive to, and willing to pay or barter for, such services.[194]

The allure of African religion to Brazilian whites was not limited to its fulfillment of a desperate need for succor. African ceremonies, deities, "fetishes," symbols and talismans offered not only salubriousness, but also the possibility of protection from physical harm, increased attractiveness to members of the opposite sex, sexual potency

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[192] Cf. Luis Nicolau Parés, *A formação do Candomblé: história e ritual da nação jeje na Bahia*, (Campinas, Brazil: Editora Unicamp, 2007).
[193] Timothy D. Walker, *Doctors, Folk Medicine, and the Inquisition: The Repression of Magical Healing during the Enlightenment*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 39-40.
[194] Cf. Luis Nicolau Parés and Roger Sansi, eds. *Sorcery in the Black Atlantic*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). For Angola, see Mariana P. Candido, *An African-slaving port and the Atlantic world: Benguela and its Hinterland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For Guatemala, see Martha Few, *Women who live evil lives: gender, religion and the politics of power in colonial Guatemala*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002). For Mexico, see Joan Cameron Bristol, *Christians, blasphemers, and witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the seventeenth century*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007).

and fertility. An added bonus would have been the possibility of appealing to the divine for favors that, in Christianity, would have been considered at best selfish and crass, and at worst heretical. African-derived religious practices offered supernatural avenues to increased financial success, upward social mobility or revenge on one's transgressors. For the more magically diligent (or paranoid) among the Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian community, African religious practitioners could even offer preemptive or defensive measures against magical aggression perpetrated upon them by others.

Earlier, I set forth the idea of a "religious marketplace" which enabled the transfer of seemingly incompatible religious ideologies across racial boundaries and penetrated what were seemingly ironclad barriers of power. It was in early modern Brazil that this "marketplace" was at its most visible. R. Andrew Chesnut has argued for the existence of a religious marketplace throughout all of Latin America that emerged only in the latter decades of the twentieth century.[195] From the numerous examples I will present, however, it is clear that such a marketplace existed in Brazil since the seventeenth century, and quite possibly earlier.[196] We have seen the existence of a religious marketplace in early modern Angola, although there, the terms of exchange and commodities were very different. Portuguese and West Central Africans often took to one another's religious practices because it led to the accumulation of political capital for both sides, as well as access to goods in the form of slaves, textiles, salt, silver, and other human and durable goods. In the Brazilian market, however, the terms of exchange were far different.

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195 R. Andrew Chesnut, *Competitive Spirits: Latin America's New Religious Economy*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

196 My own research begins only in the early seventeenth century, but I think it is safe to say that religious ideas and practices were being exchanged from the first days of colonization.

In colonial Brazil, the motivations for African and African-descended religious practitioners to "sell" their belief systems were, ostensibly, to gain social capital, possibly in the form of removal from difficult labor on plantations or in mines, status among other slaves and in the free black community, and in the ability to intimidate whites with their perceived powers. Much has been written about the manner in which African "sorcery" struck fear into the hearts of whites in slave societies.[197] Further, the plausible material motives for blacks to share their healing gifts and religions with the very people who enslaved them were myriad. In many of the Inquisitional cases I will discuss, slave owners often hired out slaves for healing, divination and other ritual services. While I have found no explicit admission in any of the archival material of sorcerors-for-hire receiving a portion of the fee for their services, this was most likely the case. It seems prudent that a slave-owner who had any belief in the supernatural gifts of their slave would certainly reward their slave in order to preempt the possibility of magical retaliation from the slave. Alternatively, it would also be imperative to provide a positive incentive for a slave with the quality often referred to as *fama de feiticaria*[198] to continue to perform impressive displays that would create loyal customers and draw new clientele. Such a positive incentive would likely take the form of money, improved living conditions, new clothes, a tastier and more substantial diet, and the promise of eventual manumission for themselves and/or their children.

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[197] The notion of African religious practices intimidating whites, particularly owners and overseers, has been commented upon in several works concerning Atlantic slave societies. Cf. Laurent Dubois *Avengers of the New World,* J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion,* and Joseph Murphy, *Santeria: an African Religion in America*. To claim that African religion unilaterally struck fear into the hearts of Euro-descended slavers and other colonists is at best, reductionist, and at worst, pandering to the divisive strands of historiography which have prevented a more nuanced understanding of social interaction and cultural exchange in slave societies. As my research clearly shows, not all Euro-descendants trembled at the thought of "black magic." Clearly, some saw in it an opportunity for profit, increasing their own power, and broadening their spiritual horizons. One man's terror is another man's adventure.

[198] Literally, "known for sorcery."

Another pragmatic basis for the use of African healing and magical practitioners lie in the practice of masters renting out the services of their slaves for profit. The practice of dispatching slaves to earn additional income for their masters was a common practice in colonial Brazil. Colloquially referred to as *negros de ganho,*[199] these slaves engaged in a variety of tasks, such as selling various wares, working as porters, or in the case of women, cleaning houses, doing laundry, and sometimes engaging in prostitution.[200] João Reis asserts that in Salvador, by the nineteenth century, the system of ganho was the primary framework that circumscribed master-slave relations.[201] Rachel E. Harding notes that in Salvador, *negros de ganho* were typically "able (oftentimes even required) to find [living] space in some other location and accept full responsibility for housing, feeding, and clothing themselves from their portion of earnings."[202] Thusly, there was an abundance of material motive on the part of African-descended Brazilians to "market" their religious practices to willing customers.

James Wadsworth maintains that "In Brazil, African and Indian forms of religious expression intermingled with Portuguese popular Catholicism, all of which had strong spiritualistic traditions that sought to control, or at least influence, the supernatural."[203]

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[199] Lit. "blacks who worked for hire"
[200] Sometimes they also worked as stevedores. Cf. S.B. Schwartz, 1985. *Sugar plantations in the formation of Brazilian society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (Vol. 52). Cambridge University Press.
[201] Joao Jose Reis, Trans. Arthur Brakel, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 161. Reis has written extensively on Afro-descendants and religion in Bahia. See João José Reis, *O alufá Rufino: tráfico, escravidão, e liberdade no Atlântico Negro (c. 1822-c.1853),* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010) and *Domingos Sodré, um sacerdote africano: escravidão, liberdade, e candomblé na Bahia do século XIX* (Sao Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008).
[202] Rachel E. Harding, *A Refuge in Thunder: Candomble and Alternative Spaces of Blackness* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 17.
[203] James E. Wadsworth, "Jurema and Batuque: Indians, Africans and the Inquisition in Colonial Northeastern Brazil," *History of Religions,* Vol. 46, No. 2 (Nov 2006), p.

And while, Wadsworth and other historians[204] have focused on the integration of European popular and orthodox religious practices into Afro-Brazilians' religious and magical repertoires, European-descended peoples in colonial Brazil were just as apt to incorporate symbols, practices and rituals of African and indigenous provenance into their spiritual toolkits. The prevalence of this phenomenon in conflict-ridden areas such as Maranhao, Pernambuco, and Bahia, as well as the predominance of the military titles of the white men accused in Inquisition denunciations strongly suggests that violence and conflict were major catalysts for the transfer of religious beliefs and practices.

Circumscribing the Africanization of religious practices in terms of a marketplace is not necessarily stating that whites' motivations for adopting such practices were purely instrumental, or that Afro-descendants' motivations were rooted solely in self-interest. It is easy to see how, from the Early Modern worldview, of all races alike, African-rooted cosmologies and deities would have made sense. One of the most striking aspects of the African Diasporic religions, whether they hailed from the Bight of Biafra or the Angolan sertões, is the lack of dualism and reduction of the world and cosmos into binary opposites such as good/evil, heaven/hell, saint/sinner. The African religions exhibit a sublime appreciation for the varied shades of gray that exist in the natural world, moral order, and the social order. The strange, exotic, and chaotic environment that the New World presented to Europeans was one in which an absolutist moral paradigm would have clashed with the realities of day-to-day life.[205]

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[204] Most notably, Laura de Mello e Souza and James Sweet

[205] Cf. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan conquistadors: iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), Fernando Cervantes, *The devil in the New World: the impact of diabolism on New Spain, and* Laura de Mello e Souza, *Inferno Atlantico: demonologia e coloniza*ção, séculos XVI-XVII (São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras, 1993).

Adhering to a strictly Christian doctrine was impracticable in the many dilemmas the colonial project presented to Europeans, such as war, aggressive social climbing, et cetera; the elastic subtlety would have surely African religions would have made more sense. Further, African and African Diasporic religions typically do not strongly concern themselves with eschatology or questions pertaining to the afterlife, as has been noted by a number of anthropologists[206] and historians of the subject. The constant threat of death in the pestilential and violent atmosphere that was the Early Modern Atlantic World would have certainly focused an individuals' attention more sharply on the immediate exigencies of day-to-day living. Further, as the numerous examples in my own research, as well as those given in recent works by James Sweet, Pablo Gómez and Laura de Mello e Souza, the harsh, unpredictable environments of the New World focused most individuals' attention more sharply on survival and success.

The African Diasporic religions are concerned with just that, making the circumstances of quotidian life more bearable and joyful, through rituals geared toward physical healing, love, fertility and protection. Whereas in the religions of salvation—Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism—the earthly world exists to serve the noumenal—either by providing a testing ground for souls, an existential challenge to be merely endured, rather than enjoyed, in the African and African Diasporic religions, we can observe quite the opposite. The heavens exist to serve the earth.

It is this mundane orientation of the African Diasporic religions that perhaps makes them so difficult to track in the historical record. As discussed before, the primary

[206] Cf. Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and society in central Africa: the BaKongo of lower Zaire,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) and Robert Farris Thompson, *Face of the gods: art and altars of Africa and the African Americas,* (Munich: Prestel, 1993).

means by which African religious survivals in the Iberian colonies, and non-African participation in these religions comes down to us is through persecutory records such as Inquisitorial processes. More often than not, individuals who stood accused of these practices had powerful motive to deny their involvement in these religions—after all, the Inquisition had the authority to imprison them for indefinite period of time in insalubrious conditions, seize their wealth, and sentence them to death. Clearly, to cooperate in one's own destruction runs counter to the ideals set forth by African religious practices. Thus, we would have no record of individuals, black, white, or any other color for that matter, relegating themselves to the Inquisition galleys all the while declaring their devotion to Xango or to Gangazumba. Nor do we have any lengthy apologias that have survived the centuries. The closest thing to an outright confession I have come across is an individual claiming that they only turned to African healing practices out of desperation and pain, or we sometimes have individuals (such as the Angolan *mandingueiro* Vicente de Morais, for example) who admit to the practices of which they were accused, but adamantly deny that they had any sort of diabolical pact.[207]

Further, the eradication of African religious practices that were clearly establishing themselves among the larger population in Brazil did not appear to be as great a priority to the arm of the Portuguese Inquisition of Lisbon that operated in Brazil. This should not be interpreted to mean that the spread of these practices did not exist. James Wadsworth has observed that in spite of the obvious amount of cultural and

[207] It is not uncommon to find confessions to "superstition" or to "witchcraft" in these confessions; however, they often do not come until several months or years of questioning, and often repeat verbatim the exact things they stood accused of. It is safe to say that, in these instances, the "confession" was likely a response to physical torture. Cf. James E. Wadsworth, "In the Name of the Inquisition: The Portuguese Inquisition and Delegated Authority in Colonial Pernambuco, Brazil," *The Americas,* Vol. 61, No.1 (July 2004), 27.

genetic mixture that was occurring in Brazil, the Portuguese Inquisition never paid as much attention to these phenomena in the Americas as they did in their colonies in Africa and South Asia.[208]

This chapter will examine several cases of European-descended individuals in northeastern Brazil, namely in the province of Bahia, who were accused of and investigated for, engaging in African-derived religious practices. It is noteworthy that in many of the cases I will examine, the individuals were members of the military or they used African-derived practices with martial ends in mind. These cases highlight the social dynamics that facilitated the transfer of religious symbols and practices across seemingly disparate cultural and socio-economic groups. I argue that the social proximity between members of different racial groups engendered by warfare, and the psychological stress of being in an environment prone to insurrections, rebellions, and foreign invasions, which created psychological and religious needs that the Catholic Church could not meet, were two of the major social avenues by which African religious practices and ideologies were transmitted to whites in early modern northeastern Brazil. This is not to suggest, however, that the whites who adopted these African practices rejected Roman Catholicism altogether, however. As Stuart Schwartz has recently made clear, early modern Iberians were extremely culturally and religiously fluid, and despite the legends which surround the supposedly vicious Inquisitions of Portugal and Spain, they were far more tolerant of non-Christian religious practices than previous works have suggested.[209] Further, the pragmatic nature of African religious practices, which offer,

[208] Ibid.
[209]Stuart B. Schwartz, *All can be saved: Religious tolerance and salvation in the Iberian Atlantic world*, Yale University Press, 2014.

among other things, protection from enemy weapons, vengeance on one's enemies, and the healing of wounds, was surely very attractive for non-Africans.

The spread of African religious and cultural practices in the early modern period was not limited to northeastern Brazil. Multiple recent works have noted the prevalence of this phenomenon in the larger Atlantic World. James Sweet has recently told the story of Domingos Alvares, a healer from West Africa who traveled a broad swath of the Portuguese Atlantic World, including Lisbon and Brazil, servicing a racially diverse clientele in every city in which he landed. Jane Landers found a man by the name of Gullah Jack who provided similar services in eighteenth century Florida. Most recently, Pablo Gómez argues that African ideas had a tremendous impact on larger notions about the body, health, and medicine in seventeenth-century Cartagena de Indias.

James Wadsworth maintains that "In Brazil, African and Indian forms of religious expression intermingled with Portuguese popular Catholicism, all of which had strong spiritualistic traditions that sought to control, or at least influence, the supernatural."[210] And while, Wadsworth and others have focused on the integration of European popular and orthodox religious practices into Afro-Brazilians' religious and magical repertoires, European-descended peoples in colonial Brazil were just as apt to incorporate symbols, practices and rituals of African and indigenous provenance into their spiritual toolkits. The prevalence of this phenomenon in conflict-ridden areas such as Bahia, as well as the predominance of the military titles of the white men accused in Inquisition denunciations

[210] James E. Wadsworth, "Jurema and Batuque: Indians, Africans and the Inquisition in Colonial Northeastern Brazil," *History of Religions,* Vol. 46, No. 2 (Nov 2006), p. 83.

strongly suggests that violence and conflict were major catalysts for the transfer of religious beliefs and practices.

As previously mentioned, the participation of Brazilian whites in African religious practices is not a new focus of scholarship. Early anthropologists, most notably Nina Raimundo Rodrigues and Arthur Ramos, noted the participation of whites in Bahian Candombles in the late nineteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The theme has also been touched upon in scholarship from the 1990's which acknowledges white participation in Afro-Brazilian religion, but strongly suggests that the white participants in question did so only out of an unspoken oppressive agenda.[211] J. Lorand Matory, in his anthropological study of Candomble, using Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" theoretical framework, speaks of a "related Brazilian scholarly trend so emphasizes the constraints imposed by a white-dominated system that it credits contemporary local Euro-American elites with the power to 'invent tradition' in black Brazil."[212]

The Portuguese Inquisition took a special interest in northeastern Brazil from a very early point in the colonial project. This may very well have been due to the large numbers of African slaves and indigenous slavery, which may have prompted fears about cross-religious "contamination." Indeed, the Portuguese Inquisition investigated and tried multiple individuals in Bahia in the late sixteenth century for participating in the "Santidade" cult, which was an amalgamation of Roman Catholicism, indigenous Brazilian belief, and possibly, pre-Christian mysticism transplanted from Portugal. However, the Inquisition was more concerned with what they believed to be a large

[211] Cf. Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms given, freedoms won: Afro-Brazilians in post-abolition, São Paulo and Salvador*, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 189.
[212] J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 13-14.

influx of New Christian settlers who they suspected of returning to their ancestral traditions and attempting to spread the Jewish faith. Anita Novinsky makes mention of Manoel Temudo, a *vigario da se* in Bahia, who reported to the Crown that he believed that over three quarters of the inhabitants in the capitania were New Christians who had abandoned Catholicism, "occupying the best lands and freely judaizing."[213]

Thusly attracted by the combination of the specter of rampant "judaizing" in the colony, and no doubt, the fact that the potential "judaizers" held the best lands and were quickly accumulating wealth, the Portuguese Inquisition, made two significant "visitations" early in the region's history, one in 1591 and in 1618, and established a prominent presence in the region. The Holy Office strongly encouraged local residents to denounce their neighbors for religious crimes such as "judaizing," heresy, sodomy, bigamy and witchcraft. Indeed, the majority of the denouncements seem to have been made against New Christians, heretics, and individuals committing the sexual crimes of sodomy and bigamy. However, several denouncements from the later part of the seventeenth and the larger part of the eighteenth century provide evidence of the transfer of African religious beliefs to the Portuguese-descended individuals, both New and Old Christian in Bahia.

A sample of trial processes and denunciations from Prosecutor's notebooks from the Portuguese Inquisition, from the province of Bahia, in northeastern Brazil, and covering the period of 1685-1790, provides evidence of this transfer of religious beliefs. Three intertwined Inquisition cases, in particular, illustrate the "knot of patronage"

[213] Anita Novinsky, *Inquisição: Prisioneiros do Brasil-S*éculos XVI-XIX (São Paulo: Editora Expressão e Cultura, 2002), 22.

described by Borges which facilitated the transmission of African beliefs, ritual actions, and symbols to Brazilian whites. In 1685, an enslaved woman, Graçia officially denounced another slave, Simão.[214] Graçia's specific accusation was that Simão had been using *maleficios* (spells with ill intentions) which involved the use of animal sacrifice to magically inflict physical injury on other individuals, and to commit murder.[215] How did Graçia know about Simão's maleficios? Graçia, the slave of a Sargeant-Major named Marcos de Betancor,[216] had been hired by another slave-owner, Andre de Medina to utilize her well-known talent for divination.[217] Medina had recently lost some of his slaves, and had a few others who were afflicted with grave illnesses for which he could determine no natural cause. Medina enlisted the aid of Graçia. With the aid of a ceremony referred to in the process as a *panella*[218], during which another witness testified that he heard Graçia "say words in her language, which could have perhaps been Congo, but was definitely not in the general language of the people of Guiné,"[219] she determined that witchcraft was the cause of the missing and sick slaves, and that Simão, who is referred to as a native of Angola,[220]was the witch. Simão, the slave of Pedro Coelho Oleiro, denied all the allegations upon being questioned.

Graçia's accusations brought the wrath of the Inquisition not only upon Simão, but on Simão's supposed target, the slave-owner Andre de Medina who had hired Graçia, and Oleiro, for whom the ownership of slaves with the ability to perform witchcraft

[214] Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (hereafter ANTT), Tribunal do Santo Officio/Inquisição de Lisboa (hereafter TSO/IL), Processo 8464.
[215] Ibid., 10f.
[216] ANTT, TSO/IL, Cadernos do Promotor (hereafter CP)131f.
[217] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc. 8464, 10f.
[218] West Central African method of divination by which the diviner continuously gazed into a pot filled with water.
[219] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc. 8464, 14v.
[220] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc . 8464, 21f.

seemed to be something of a specialty, as we will see. The investigators were especially alarmed by the fact that "this gives us notice that there are many white people who obtain cures with similar sorcerers with few scruples, and act as if they are doing something which is legal."[221] At the time the investigation began into these two slave-owners' activities, Medina had already been deceased for one year. The investigators appeared to overlook, or place a very low priority on investigating Medina's culpability in hiring Graçia to perform divinatory services for him.[222]

As for Pedro Coelho Oleiro, the investigators had located witnesses, in addition to Graçia, to testify that he had been running a sort of brokerage for African slaves who had what was referred to as *fama de feitiçaria,* or a well-known ability to perform divination, spells, or to conduct rituals. Oleiro owned a plantation in Tijucá, a town in the municipality of Jaguaripe. Besides Simão, the accused sorceror, Oleiro owned a *casal*, or married couple, by the names of André and Lucrecia, who "cure various illnesses with ceremonies that appear to be evidence of a pact with the devil; the two *curadores* dance around the sick people, put dust on them, fall to the floor as if they were dead, get up, and continue to dance."[223] Further, the *diligencia,* or description of charges, also attested that Oleiro's wife Maria, a free black woman, also provided ceremonial services. Maria was said to have also administered cures to sick individuals, often performing the same dance

[221] ANTT, TSO/IL, CP, 130f
[222] Many of these same practices can also be found in colonial Colombia and Mexico. For Colombia, see Pablo F. Gomez,*The experiential Caribbean: Creating knowledge and healing in the early modern Atlantic*, UNC Press Books, 2017; for Mexico, see Herman Bennett, "Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 4 (2004): 730-731.
[223] ANTT, TSO/IL, CP 130f

described above to the sound of *tabaques* (ritual drums), speaking with a "spirit" with the purpose of diagnosing the client's illness, and also using "natural herbs" to heal.[224]

According to witnesses, Oleiro was consciously, publicly, and notoriously operating a sort of business in which he purchased slaves who had the quality of *fama de feitiçaria,* and either rented out their services or held ceremonies on his own land for which he charged individuals to attend. Miguel da Graça, a Carmelite priest, testified that "some slaves" had told him that shortly after Oleiro purchased André and Lucrecia, they asked Oleiro why he chose that particular couple to buy, and that he had responded to them that he purchased them with the intent of earning profits from their ability to heal.[225] Another witness, Gonçalo Cabral de Mello, testified that Oleiro had told him directly that he purchased André and Lucrecia specifically because he was aware of their reputation as respected healers.[226] Many other witnesses gave similar testimony with regard to the dancing, dust and healing rituals. The diligencia was closed on May 28, 1687[227]. There is no locatable trial process for Pedro Coelho Oleiro, indicating that the case was not brought to trial.

If these accusations were credible, and Oleiro was operating a profitable business that provided local individuals with African ceremonial services in exchange for a fee, then it is certain that the majority of Oleiro's clientele were white. In the late seventeenth century, there was a small population of free people of color, but their numbers would not have been dense enough to provide a substantial clientele for Oleiro's operation. Moreover, such free blacks in Bahia at this time would not have had sufficient levels of

[224] Ibid., 135v
[225] Ibid., 137v
[226] Ibid., 141v
[227] Ibid., 145f.

disposable income in order to be able to afford to avail themselves of the services that Oleiro's slaves offered. As such, the majority of Oleiro's clientele were almost certainly Luso-Brazilians, or "whites."

Another investigation into different slave named Graçia, who lived on the Ilha de Maré, did go to trial. In 1697, the Santo Officio formally charged her with "being a feitiçeira, doing *calundus* and having divined many things in the house of Manuel Britto, of which Gaspar Pero, Jorge Pires, Pedro Dias, Pedro Ferreira, and Serafim Flores were aware and could have participated in the results of which are scandalous for good Christians, and also injurious of their souls."[228] Like her namesake in the diligencia of Pedro Coelho Oleiro, Graçia was also described as possessing "fama de feitiçaria."[229]She was said to have "played *tabaques* and danced in order to divine the whereabouts of a canoe, which had disappeared from the port of Britto." Another witness mentioned "on the *engenho*[230] of Domingos da Sylva Morro there are six feiticeiros."[231]

To be sure, slave-owners, were these allegations accurate, were not always entirely cognizant of the number of sorcerers, the type of sorcery being practiced, or that there was any non-Catholic religious practice going on at all amongst the slaves on their property. However, these repetitive allegations are indicative that slaves practiced their religious rituals at least semi-openly, thus opening the door for the exposure of whites to their religious practices. Several non-Inquisitional observations from the period confirm this. In a now rather frequently cited verse written in the seventeenth century, Bahian poet Gregório de Matos derided what he seems to have viewed as the brazenness of the

[228] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc. 12658, p. 3f.
[229] Ibid., 8v.
[230] Sugar plantation
[231] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc 12658, 12v.

slaves, and the tacit cooperation of their masters: "in the black settlements that we have/with great masters/in which they are taught at night/the ceremonies and the fetishes."[232] Nuno Marques Pereira, a Catholic missionary writing in 1728, had disparaging remarks about the public nature of the calundus, stating: "In this event only I have the zeal, the love of God, and love of neighbor, to see, hear, and tell you how this almost total ruin of witchcraft is introduced, and the calundus in which the slaves and immoral people in this state of Brazil [participate]; besides many others, and great sins and abuses of the superstitions so dissimulated by those who have the obligation to punish; to give motive, because the demon, master of lies, magic and science has been introduced, with the loss of so many souls redeemed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."[233]

A related cluster of denunciations from Bahia in 1753 attests to the endurance of the "Africanization" of religious belief and practice among whites in the region. Antonio Ribeiro Preto, a white man, and Miguel de Souza Brandão, a *pardo*, denounced José Payva Pinto for feitiçaria. The two men attested that they witnessed Pinto go to a "place called *cabulla*," where calundus were known to take place. Apparently, these two men were in very close range of the ceremony, although they do not admit to being actual participants, because they further denounced Pinto's wife of "saying blasphemies" (they do not specify exactly what) during the course of the ceremony.[234]

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[232] Gregório de Matos, Ed. James Amado, *Obra Poética, tomo 1,* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 1990), 42"que de quilombos que tenho/com mestres superlativos/nos quais se ensinam de noite/os calundus e feitiços (trans. by Joanna Elrick).
[233] Nuno Marques Pereira, *Compendio Narrativo do Peregrino da América (1725),* (Rio de Janeiro: Academia Brasileira de Letras, 1939), p. 24.
[234] ANTT, TSO/IL, CP 113, p186f

A second denuncia, which follows Pinto's directly, describes José Raymundo de Barros accusation of an elderly schoolteacher, Francisca Rodrigues, of also going to the "place called cabulla," with the intent of participating in calundus. Barros also stated that whenever Francisca headed out to the cabulla, she would be accompanied by a preta forra, or free black woman. More surprisingly, however, Barros went on to further mention that he was also aware that local Catholic priests attended these calundus, for the purpose of receiving healing rituals which used saintly relics.[235]

Several things from both the denuncias bear mentioning. First, the fact that these calundus seemed to take place regularly, at a specific location, attests to the continuing public nature of the ceremonies. Secondly, the accusers, one of whom was white, seem to know quite a bit more than a casual observer would. It would make sense that the cabulla was somewhere off the beaten path, probably in an uninhabited, possibly wooded area. Supposing that the accusers are giving an accurate, truthful denunciation, the minute details they are able to provide about the calundus—the "blasphemies" uttered by Sra. Pinto, the presence of Catholic priests and the use of certain objects—strongly suggest that they were actually present at the calundus. In the alternate scenario, one in which the accusers were not being truthful, they nonetheless appear to be holding true to a certain "cultural script" that had already established itself in the Bahian psyche. The possibility of a calundu being held in a remote area, at a predetermined time, was not outside the realm of possibility. Nor was the idea of whites, even those who were members of the clergy, fantastical, apparently. James H. Sweet also found several examples of what would appear to be an acceptance of certain African religious practices,

[235] ANTT, TSO/IL, CP 113, p187f

particularly those which involved healing and exorcism, among members of the Catholic clergy.[236] Luiz Mott located the 1713 trial process of a Dominican priest, Frei Gabriel, in Salvador. Frei Gabriel, a native of Minho, in northern Portugal, was said to have been especially fond of the use of bolsas in his feitiços.[237]

Indeed one particular aspect of African religion which seemed to have proven popular with Luso-Brazilians was the use of bolsas.[238] As I have shown in my analysis of African cultural and religious transfer to Europeans and European-descended peoples in colonial Angola, bolsas were a common possession among white Brazilians in colonial Brazil, if Inquisition processes and denunciations are an accurate indicator. White Brazilians regularly appear in the Portuguese Inquisitional records for either being in possession of the pouches or attempting to purchase them. However, in 1725 an eighteen year old man in Bahia, Antonio Rodrigues da Silva, was brought to trial for the offense of operating as a *mandingueiro,* or maker and distributor of these pouches. Da Silva, a native of Lisbon who was employed as a gunner on a warship,[239]and is listed as a *cristão-novo,* or New Christian, had been caught with a bolsa which contained "papers with prayers, a veronica[240], a pedra d'ara[241], a piece of rope, and a *sanguinho* (preserved animal remain).*[242]* Another witness stated that a bolsa had contained an image of Nossa Senhora de Piedade. The circumstances of Silva's trial immediately bring to mind that of

[236] James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: culture, kinship, and religion in the African-Portuguese world, 1441-1770,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 221.
[237] Luiz Mott, Bahia: Inquisição & Sociedade, 29-39.
[238] Although these pouches can be referred to as *patuas, bolsas, or bolsas de Mandinga,* I will refer to them hereafter as simply "bolsas." The Mandinga reference originates in a popular conception in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World that the inventors of these pouches were the Mandinga people, a West African group.
[239] ANTT, TSO/IL, Proc. 11426, 1f.
[240] A "veronica" is a medallion bearing the image of a Catholic saint.
[241] A "pedra d'ara" is a piece of marble (usually), chipped off of a Catholic church altar.
[242] Ibid., 9f.

Vicente de Morais, who, as you will recall, was tried by the Inquisition in Luanda for having operated as a mandingueiro in 1715. Morais was also employed on a warship, and his bolsas had very similar contents. In a larger examination of Portuguese Inquisition cases for bolsas, the accuseds very often are soldiers and military officers who served the Portuguese Crown in a seafaring capacity.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the prevalence of the use of bolsas by blacks and whites alike in colonial Angola as well as their possible cultural provenance. Inquisitorial denunciations of the use of bolsas, which are also variously referred to as "patuas" or "bolsas de Mandinga" appear to have been even more prevalent in colonial Brazil. Denunciations for the possession or construction of bolsas, by individuals of all races, in colonial Brazil are scattered throughout the Cadernos do Promotor, a vast collection of denunciations covering the entirety of the Portuguese Empire. Few of these denunciations seem to have ever made it to a formal Inquisitional trial, however, the denunciations are worth describing, as they reveal a definite pattern of cultural transfer. Moreover, the contents and the ascribed powers of the bolsas reveal patterns between Angola and Brazil.

In 1717, a "Don" Manoel Correa Leal, described as an "offical de Tamoeyro" was denounced to the local officials of the Inquisition in Recife for possessing a Mandinga pouch. The denouncer claimed that Leal had told him that it was made for him by one of his slaves, and that the Mandinga contained two pieces of iron. The denouncer further stated that Tamoeyro asked his slave to make the pouch because he had to fight with two

men.[243] In Pernambuco in 1716, a deceased man, Jozeph Godoy, was denounced by someone who claimed that Godoy owned a "patua" with pieces of iron and lead in them.[244] The same denouncer went on to accuse several other men, including Jorge Cardozo Leal, Alferes Pedro Lopes, the Captain Manoel Dias, and Manoel Ferreira, a soldier, of being active mandingueiros.[245]

A few years later, in 1744, Magdalena Pacheco in Pernambuco, Brazil was investigated by the Inquisition for among multiple "offenses," performing "ceremonies in the manner of a Catholic priest," her main deviation from accepted orthodoxy being that instead of a consecrated host, she offered "beiju de tapioca," a bland confection made from the flour of the manioc root, to her congregation[246]. This was but one of many offenses Magdalena committed. The same investigation mentioned that Pacheco, who is referred to at one point in the document as a white woman and at another, a *preta* (roughly, "woman of color") also danced *calundus*, or African-derived ceremonial dances often accompanied by drumming, "which were attended by several black men and women." Magdalena supposedly told people that the calundus would transport them to heaven. Present at these calundus were several "witches" who would perform "divination" for white and black clientele. One witness claimed that Magdalena would sometimes lasciviously rub the image of a crucified Christ over her body, although he did not specify whether this occurred at the "Catholic masses" or at the calundus.

Other aspects of these denunciations are striking and bear further comment. First is the presence of iron and lead in these pouches, particularly those that were constructed

[243] ANTT, TSO/IL, CP 87, 331f.
[244] ANTT, TSO/IL, CP 84, 155f.
[245] Ibid., 164f-165f.
[246] ANTT, TSO/IL, Cadernos do Promotor

or worn for the express purpose of bodily protection. In contemporary manifestations of African Diasporic religion, most notably Candomble and Santeria, iron is strongly associated with the West African deity Ogun, who is a deity of war. According to the logic of African Diasporic religions, Ogun would be the deity whose favor one would wish to curry in anticipation of a physical (or perhaps a legal or financial) fight, or if one were gearing up to head into battle. Additionally, the use of charms to invoke Ogun's protection in warfare is extremely pronounced in Yorubaland, where, as Bade Ajuwan observes, this belief "remains strong today in situations of confrontation despite the introduction of modern weaponry and its efficacy."[247]

It is also significant that the manufacture of these pouches seems to have been reserved for a select few. The pouches were typically simple bags constructed from fabric, silk or animal hide, and they contained objects such as the aforementioned pieces of iron and lead, as well as pieces of communion wafer, plants, or animal parts. Thus, the fabrication of a mandinga pouch did not require a great deal of technical or artistic skill, nor access to an underground market. In short, almost anyone could have made them, but the documentation demonstrates that this is not what occurred. Individuals accused of using bolsas were usually described as having obtained them from other individuals, or of making them for other people. Thus, the construction of the pouches appears to have been a specialized task, reserved for a certain few. Although it is impossible to ascertain what the special quality or skill pouch makers possessed—few of these denunciations ever went to a full trial, and even when they did, the persons accused typically denied the charges or disclosed very little about their motivations or technique in crafting the

[247] Bade Ajuwan, in Sandra Barnes, ed. *Ogun,* 185.

pouches—it is certain that the making of pouches was the province of ritual specialists. Perhaps it was the case that the pouch makers were considered to have a particularly close relationship with the deity or spirit whose protection the pouch was intended to invoke, or that there was a ritual procedure which had to be passed from one ritual specialist to another. At any rate, the use of mandinga pouches by whites in colonial Brazil is evidence of the adoption of religious beliefs and practices, as tempting as it may be to write off these pouches as the hallmarks of early modern superstitiousness or the use of lucky charms.[248]

One of the more complete records that details a full African Diasporic religious ceremony offers an interesting narrative from this time, and presents insight into the mentality of the Portuguese Inquisition officials of this time period. "Chega Diabo, Chega Diabo," João, a slave of the Captain Marcos de Boavida supposedly chanted, among other "Many words of his language that could not be understood except these ones in Portuguese."[249] These Portuguese words, which signify "come devil, come devil," were among many accusations against Joao in his 1729 Inquisition trial, which took place in Maranhao, for sorcery and fraud. Joao's alleged transgressions were not limited to diabolic incantations, according to the individuals who stood in accusation against him. Witnesses accused Joao of tricking "simple people, ordinarily blacks and Indians," with his promises of cures and magical solutions to other dilemmas. Several witnesses stated they believed Joao's intention was to profit from the superstitions of unsophisticated

[248] Also, the use of "nation sacks," which are similar to *bolsas,* was a popular practice in the United States South. Cf. Rucker, W., 2001. Conjure, magic, and power: The influence of Afro-Atlantic religious practices on slave resistance and rebellion. *Journal of Black Studies*, *32*(1), pp.84-103.

[249] Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (hereafter ANTT), Inquisi**cao de** Lisboa, Documentos Diversos, Caixa 1612, Processo 15559, 3f.

people. Joao's alleged fraud was not limited to individuals of color. A witness observed that "some soldiers, young white men, carry pieces of paper with prayers written on them," made by Joao, "to be used for wicked ends, such as getting women."

Joao's denouncement, taken from the records of the Portuguese Inquisition, suggests a charismatic rogue who used local popular religion, and public perceptions of blacks as natural sorcerors, in order to profit. More strikingly, Joao's denunciation contains elements common to many records of accusations of witchcraft, sorcery, and superstition in early modern Brazil, particularly in the northeastern provinces of Maranhao, Pernambuco, and Bahia. Invocations of the "devil," speaking in unintelligible words, and asking otherworldly powers to cure illnesses were part of a common cultural script that seemed to be familiar to Brazilians of all ethnic backgrounds.[250] Joao's denunciation also reflects the larger demographics of cases for witchcraft, sorcery and superstition. Afro-Brazilian "sorcerers" often had a very racially mixed clientele. As might be expected, most of their clients were described as being of visibly African descent, but European-descended people also regularly appear in these accusations and trial records as clients. Sometimes whites are accused of being the "witch." It was not uncommon for the whites accused of these crimes to be members of the local military, either in the capacity of foot soldier or as an officer. Indeed, it may be the case that these men simply had higher visibility vis-a-vis other members of the population and were more subject to searches of their persons and property, and thus were more prone to being caught with objects and practices deemed as outlawed magical practices by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Even if that is the case, that would strongly suggest more

[250] Stefania Capone. *La quête de l'Afrique dans le candomblé: pouvoir et tradition au Brésil*. KARTHALA Editions, 1999.

widespread acceptance and adoption of African religious practices by whites in the general population, who simply did not get caught. The frequency with which whites in northeastern Brazil who were investigated for engaging in African religious practices also happened to be members of the military suggests a pervasive pattern of cultural and religious transfer between two different racial and cultural groups.

CONCLUSION

The client-patron relationship between white elites and African religious specialists, exemplified in Marques' twentieth century work, had its roots in the early years of the colony. West African and West Central African religious practices offered solutions to quotidian dilemmas—illnesses, missing objects or slaves, bodily protection—that the Roman Catholic church was unable to provide. Thus, the masters found much of value in the religions of the slaves. The fact that African religions, in the vast majority of cases, do not proselytize, yet managed to attract white clientele, combined with the commentaries of Nuno Marques Pereira and Gregório de Matos regarding what they perceived to be the overly brazen nature of calundus and "witchcraft" strongly suggests that African religions were practiced much more openly in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries than we tend to take for granted. From the documentation, it is unclear what benefit the African religious practitioner reaped, but we might speculate that they were able to keep part of the proceeds when they were hired out, received improved living and working conditions, and may have achieved increased status among other slaves. What is apparent, however, is that whites engaged in African religious practices and were familiarized with ritual practices and symbols from beginning in the seventeenth century, at the least.

CHAPTER 4

CUBA

In 1687, in the eastern Cuban mining settlement of El Cobre, a creole slave in his eighties named Juan Moreno approached provincial ecclesiastical authorities with an astounding claim. Moreno set forth that approximately 70 years prior, he accompanied two Indian brothers, Juan and Rodrigo de Hoyos, on a fishing boat excursion into the Bay of Nipe to gather salt. A few hours into their trip, one of the men noticed an effigy-like object floating in the water. They rowed in closer, and discovered that the object was an unmistakably Marian image, a dark-skinned young woman holding a baby in her left arm. An inscription on the effigy announced "YO SOY LA VIRGEN DE LA CARIDAD (I am the Virgin of Charity).[251]

The Virgin of Caridad is emblematic of an extensive and immediate multi-directional exchange of religious belief and symbolism that occurred in Cuba, from a very early point in the colonization of the island, and the importation of African slaves. Additionally, she is often equated with the *Santerîa* goddess, Ochun. Further, she was (and is still) also considered to be the patroness of the island. Juan Moreno was a royal slave, meaning that he was assigned to public works, and he thus perhaps held a special position among others slaves, and this placed him in a stronger position to influence social customs and religious practices.[252]

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[251] The Virgin of Charity is discussed extensively in María Elena Díaz, *The Virgin, the king, and the royal slaves of El Cobre: negotiating freedom in colonial Cuba, 1670-1780*. Stanford University Press, 2002 and Olga Portuondo Zúñiga,. *La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre: símbolo de cubanía*. Agualarga Editores SL, 2002.

[252] More information on royal slaves can be found in Evelyn Powell Jennings, "War as the" Forcing House of Change": State Slavery in Late-Eighteenth-Century Cuba," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2005): 411-440, and Jane Landers, *Transforming bondsmen into vassals: arming slaves in colonial Spanish America*. na, 2006.

This chapter is an examination of the process of religious transculturation in Cuba, encompassing the mid-eighteenth to late-nineteenth centuries. A confluence of pragmatic toleration on the part of local Catholic Church officials occurred with regard to African religious practices, the social proximity of blacks and whites in neighborhoods such as Regla and Guanabacoa. Also, the introduction of religious symbolism and ideology via popular cultural activities such as gambling resulted in the familiarization of lower-class whites in Havana with African religious practices, in particular those of the Carabalí from West Africa. Also, ecclesiastical authorities in Cuba were more tolerant of African religious practices than their counterparts in the Portuguese Empire. Ecclesiastics such as the Bishop Pedro Agustin de Morell and Joseph Hechavarria were born and raised in the Caribbean, and were probably acclimated to African culture and customs, and thus were more tolerant of it.[253]

Juan Moreno's apparition account, to the bulk of observers, is highly derivative in form and content as far as Marian encounters go, save for the fact that Moreno, the primary recipient of the vision, was black. In early colonial Spanish America, Marian apparitions were widespread and surprisingly frequent. The individuals who received these apparitions were usually full-blooded Indians, as Jorge Ibarra relates: "...the local virgin apparitions in the Spanish possessions in the Americas were made by Indians, not by *criollos*[254] or *mestizos*[255], representatives of the nationalities in formation. The American virgins of Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, Brasil, Colombia, 'all found by

[253] Pedro Agustín Morell de Santa Cruz, *La visita eclesiástica,* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985), 51.
[254] American-born individual of European descent.
[255] Individual of mixed, typically indigenous American and European, ancestry.

Indians'"[256] The fact that an African-descended man, Juan Moreno, was the major recipient of a virgin apparition which would later become a national symbol and in Cuba is significant of the strong influence Africans and African descendants had on broader religious creolization in Cuban society.

Another major Marian devotion in Cuba, on the other side if the island, was the Virgin of Regla. The Virgin of Regla can trace her roots, like many other Marian devotions in Hispanic America, directly to Spain. The Spanish Virgin of Regla, named for the port town in which her image dwelt, was a tawny-skinned Virgin and was revered for her ability to protect sailors from the dangers of the sea. In Havana, a hermitage was established in her honor in 1687, in the area that would become known as Regla, and devotion to this aspect of the Virgin Mary grew after a devastating hurricane hit the Bay of Havana in 1692. In 1714, the Virgin of Regla was publicly declared to be the Patron and Protector of the Bay of Havana.[257]As new African slaves arrived in Havana, they found a dark-skinned goddess known for maritime protective powers to be a good nucleus around which to center devotions to their own familiar goddesses, namely Yemayá, the maternal water goddess from the West African pantheons. It is largely accepted that the Virgin of Regla was syncretized with the West African Yemayá, but other researchers contend that there are also strong elements of Central African religiosity present in the popular devotion to Regla. Lydia Cabrera notes that "without a doubt, the Virgin of Regla was one of the strongest symbols of both Santeria and Bantu

[256] Jorge Ibarra, in Olga Portuondo Zuñiga, *La virgen de la Caridad del Cobre: Simbolo de Cubana* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1995), 7.
[257] Lohanía J. Aruca Alonso, "La Bahía de la Habana y el Santuario de la Virgen de Regla. Apuntes para una historia profunda," en Agustín Guimerá y Fernando Monge, Coords., *La Habana, Puerto Colonial, Siglos XVIII-XIX*, (Madrid: Fundación Portuaria, 2000), pp. 273-4.

witchcraft."[258] Additionally, there was a "cabildo de Congos" in Regla, established in 1890 and lasting until the mid-1920's, which was dedicated to the Virgin of Regla, and collected money from its members for the purpose of maintaining the image and its ermita.[259]From all accounts, it seems that devotion to the Virgin of Regla was one that was multi-ethnic (in an African Diasporic sense) and multi-racial. It also seems to have been very important to her devotees that she retain her identity as a "dark Virgin." The Bishop Morell de Santa Cruz noted in his mid-eighteenth century *visitación* to Cuba with regard to the statue of the Virgin of Regla that "her coloring is very dark: Dn. Pedro de Aranda y Avellaneda brought it from Madrid and placed it in Regla el día 8 de Septiembre del de 94: it was intended on several occasions to retouch the statue with white paint and this was never permitted."[260]

Thus, the Virgin of Caridad de la Cobre de la Caridad falls within a long-standing tradition of Marian traditions that served as a bridge between slave and master, *peninsulare* and *criollo*, and black and white. She is also emblematic of the function of Marian traditions in Latin America, all of which appear to have had their origins in colonial Latin American nations as symbolic representations and collective celebrations of the racial admixture that was taking place in their societies. One of the more notable of these Marian traditions was that of the Virgen da Aparecida in Brazil.

Juan Moreno's sighting of the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre was not the only indication of religious exchanges across racial lines in seventeenth-century Cuba. In

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[258] Lydia Cabrera, *Yemaya y Ochun: Kariocha, Iyalorichas y Olorichas,* (New York: Ediciones CR, 1980), 17.
[259] Juan González Díaz, *El Cabildo Congo de Nueva Paz,* (La Habana: Editorial Unicornio, 2002), pp. 7-10.
[260] Pedro Agustín Morell de Santa Cruz, *La visita eclesiástica,* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985), 38.

1631, the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition in Cartagena de Indias received several *denuncias,* or denouncements.[261] The denouncements were of an individual, usually a neighbor, who had been engaging in religious crimes. While the Tribunal in Cartagena de Indias, in what is present-day Colombia, covered a broad swath of the Spanish Empire in the Americas, encompassing Central America, the reino of New Granada and the whole of the Spanish Caribbean, it heard complaints and tried cases from Cuba.[262] However, the Spanish Inquisition in the Americas concentrated the bulk of its efforts in New Spain and Peru, most likely because of the larger populations in those areas, namely the large populations of wealthy individuals and indigenous Americans.

In this 1631 list of denuncias appear several cases from Havana, and many of them are for the so-called "magical crimes" of witchcraft, superstition, and *sortilegios*, or fortunetelling. The details in these testimonies are a window into the seemingly "public and notorious" nature of many of these practices in seventeenth-century Havana, the

[261] As the documentation in which this appeared was a collection of reproductions from the Archivo Historico Nacional (AHN) in Madrid, Spain, housed in the Cuban Heritage Collection at the University of Miami, I am unable to state with any certainty exactly how many Inquisition denouncements were made for religious crimes for Cuba nor what percentage they comprised of all total accusations.
[262] On the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition in Cartagena de Indias, cf. Pablo F. Gómez, *The experiential Caribbean: Creating knowledge and healing in the early modern Atlantic*. UNC Press Books, 2017and Renee Soulodre-LaFrance, *Región e imperio: el Tolima Grande y las reformas borbónicas en el siglo XVIII*, (Bogotá, DC: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2004). On the topic of the Inquisition in Spanish America more generally, see Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, eds., *Cultural encounters: the impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). There is also a substantial historiography on the impact of the Spanish Inquisition in New Spain. Cf. Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in colonial Mexico: absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole consciousness,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 51-78; Laura A. Lewis, *Hall of mirrors: power, witchcraft, and caste in colonial Mexico,* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Nicole von Germeten, *Black blood brothers: confraternities and social mobility for Afro-Mexicans,* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), and Joan Cameron Bristol, *Christians, blasphemers, and witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the seventeenth century,* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007).
[262] AHN, Inquisición, Libro 1022, Exp. Unknown, Cuban Heritage Collection, Cuba and Florida Inquisition p

ethnic origins of accused Africans, and the ritual acts that were considered witchcraft by the Spanish Inquisition officials in that time period.

A Francisco Angola, the slave of a Dr. Cardenas, who was a resident of Havana appears in these documents. The denouncer specifically accused Francisco of witchcraft, and the complaining witness stated that he "gave many things with which to kill many people."[263] Another complaint from Havana concerned the mulata Ana de Mena, a native of Puerto Rico. Ana was accused of a multiplicity of magical crimes, including holding ceremonies in which she would recite prayers to San Ciprian and to Saint John, and dance with a broom.[264] Ana was further accused of engaging in fortunetelling, the witness stating that "she gives her mouth to demons,"[265]by which one might speculate that she was engaging in divination via spirit possession. The witness also mentioned that they thought that Ana had an "explicit pact with the devil."[266]

The earliest records of African religious practice in Cuba come down to us through the records of the Spanish Inquisition. However, unlike the numerous examples from both colonial Angola and Brazil I was able to locate, the denunciations from 1631 appear to be the only manifestation of complaints of African "witchcraft" and "sorcery" to the Spanish Inquisition from Cuba. The possible reasons for this are manifold, and

[263] Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter AHN), Inquisición, Libro 1022, Exp. Unknown, Cuban Heritage Collection, Cuba and Florida Inquisition papers, 1631.
[264] San Ciprian, or Saint Ciprian, was a Roman Catholic Bishop of Carthage in the 3rd Century AD. Ciprian appears frequently in Inquisition witchcraft cases that involved African practices. This is possible because he was born in North Africa.
[265] AHN, Inquisición, Libro 1022, Exp. Unknown, Cuban Heritage Collection, Cuba and Florida Inquisition papers, 1631, Ibid.
[266] Ibid.

also begin to illustrate some of the basic social, cultural, and institutional dynamics behind the adoption of African religious practices in colonial Cuba.[267]

The Spanish Inquisition did not have the strength, interest, or far-reaching influence in Cuba that it had in other parts of the Spanish Empire, such as the viceroyalties of New Spain or Peru.[268] To illustrate, Toby Green describes the case of the Carvajal y la Cueva family in Mexico, who were pursued by the Spanish Inquisition for several for generations for suspicions that they had reverted to the Judaic practices of their ancestors. When two Carvajal y Cueva brothers found themselves under the scrutiny of the Inquisition in Mexico City in the late sixteenth century, they made plans to abscond to Cuba, precisely because it had such a weak Inquisitorial presence.[269] Further, the arm of the Spanish Catholic Church concerned with magical crimes did not seem to have had nearly the concern with "witchcraft," "superstition," and "diabolical rites" as did the Portuguese Inquisition. Nancy Farriss, in her groundbreaking study of the Spanish proselytization of the Maya in colonial Mexico, observes that the Spanish Inquisition was far more concerned with the investigation and pursuit of deviance related to religious heterodoxy or to Lutheranism.[270] Fernando Cervantes, in his examination of the Spanish preoccupation with "diabolism" in New Spain, observes that the Inquisition did not share the popular enthusiasm for this bogeyman, likely owing to the more general

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[267] cf. José Luciano Franco, *Las minas de Santiago del Prado y la rebelión de los cobreros, 1530-1800*. Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975.
[268] On the presence of the Spanish Inquisition in colonial Peru, cf. Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and its enemies: colonial Andean religion and extirpation, 1640-1750*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: vision and imagination in early colonial Peru*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); and Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, sun, and witches: gender ideologies and class in Inca and colonial Peru*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987) and *Modern Inquisitions: Peru and the colonial origins of the civilized world*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
[269] Toby Green, *Inquisition: the Reign of Fear*, (London: Macmillan, 2007), 157.
[270] Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 297.

decline in the belief in witchcraft in seventeenth-century Europe and notes that individuals who made accusations of devil worship had to go to extraordinary lengths to garner Inquisition officials' attention for these sort of crimes.[271] Another noted scholar of the Spanish Inquisition in Mexico, Solange Alberro, states simply that "the great diabolical witchcraft did not present itself in the Americas."[272]

Whereas the devil had a markedly anemic presence in Spanish Inquisition records from seventeenth-century Cuba, the presence of an Angolan in these early witchcraft denuncias from Cuba is unsurprising. Several new sources, including the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade database indicate that Africans from West Central Africa, including the regions of Angola and Kongo, comprised a large portion of the "charter generation" of Africans who arrived in Cuba. Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux makes note of the presence of Kongo religious clubs being established in Havana as early as the mid-sixteenth century.[273] David Wheat, in his richly detailed examination of the Portuguese Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, found that during the period spanning 1570-1640, slave voyages originating in Angola comprised upwards of eighty percent of slave ships arriving in Veracruz and a smaller, yet significant portion of slave shipments arriving into Cartagena de las Indias.[274] Patrick Carroll has also noted that large percentages of the

[271] Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: the Impact of Diabolism in New Spain,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 126-7.
[272] Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y Sociedad en México, 1571-1700*, (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), 183.
[273] Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, *Los Cabildos de Nación en Cuba* (Habana: Casa de Africa, 1987), 1.
[274] David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640*. UNC Press Books, 2016.

African-descended population in colonial Mexico could trace their origins back to Angola.[275]

One common thread which seems to run through all of the Iberian Atlantic slave societies in which substantial evidence of the multi-directional exchange of religious beliefs and practices seems to have taken place is a high level of tolerance on the part of local ecclesiastical officials with regard to African religious practices. This widespread attitude likely developed in Spain, as Stuart Schwartz has recently observed in his recent monograph of religious tolerance in early modern Iberia.[276] As we have seen with the case of Angola, the vast majority of complaints about Portuguese adopting indigenous Sub-Saharan African religious practices originated in the backlands, which due to their distance from the capital areas of Luanda and Benguela and their inherent danger, seemed to have been very unattractive to members of the Catholic clergy. A similar dynamic is observable in colonial Brazil—a large portion of the cases of whites engaging in African religious practices examined for this study were from frontier zones such as the backlands of Bahia, Pernambuco, Maranhão, and Minas Gerais.

While Cuba, being the island domain that it is, had no equivalent of a "backland," and cannot be classified as a frontier zone, it can be said for certain that it definitely a crossroads in the Spanish Empire. Cuba was a major trading port during the early modern era. The relative scarcity of Catholic clergy and overall ecclesiastical oversight seems to have resulted in an atmosphere that was extremely amenable to heterodoxy and

[275] Patrick Carroll. "Black-native relations and the historical record in colonial Mexico." *Beyond black and red: African-native relations in colonial Latin America* (2005): 245-268; Patrick J. Carroll, *Blacks in colonial Veracruz: Race, ethnicity, and regional development*, University of Texas Press, 2010.
[276] Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

deviation form normative Roman Catholic practices on the island, and a flurry of documentation from late-seventeenth century Cuba attests to a growing alarm about the laxity of proper Catholic praxis in Cuba. Due to their growing concern about what they perceived as increasing impiety and decadence in Cuba, the church authorities commissioned two major ecclesiastical visits in the late eighteenth century by high-ranking Bishops.

The first visit, by the Bishop Agustin Morell de Santa Cruz, in 1754, is very well documented. Bishop Morell de Santa Cruz took copious notes in his tour of Cuba and published a scholarly account of the early development of the Catholic Church in Cuba, *Historia de la isla y catedral de Cuba*, as well as the details of his ecclesiastical visit. The Bishop's observations provide an excellent source of insight into the religious life of the island, among people of all races and classes in the late eighteenth century. Morell de Santa Cruz was pleased by the prolific and exhibitive piety he observed, stating "the frequency of sacraments, penitence, and communion is general."[277] Morell was additionally impressed by the public, communal nature of worship, noting that he often observed Havana citizens taking to the streets in praise, singing and playing musical instruments.[278] Jane Landers and others have additionally written about Morell's observations of singing and drumming among African cabildos in Cuba, and notes that Morell urged tolerance.[279]

[277] Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Audiencia de Santo Domingo (hereafter AGI-SD), Legajo 534, 1754, 67v. See also Bishop Pedro Agustin Morell de Santa Cruz, *La visita eclesiástica*, (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985).
[278] Ibid.
[279] Jane Landers, *Slaves, subjects, and subversives: Blacks in colonial Latin America*, UNM Press, 2006, 88.

Morell's pleasure with the piety of Habaneros aside, he did take note of some cultural and religious phenomena which he found to be rather disturbing and hovering on the margins of heterodoxy and superstition. He notes with alarm that there seemed to be an infestation of demonic possession in Cuba, and describes witnessing "evil spirits and creatures that have resulted in the exorcisms of eight creatures and more than twenty people, whom I have no doubt were possessed. These confused people have discovered a spirit that has been declared in spells." Morell goes on to speculate that "these conquered spirits are preserved under the obedience of exorcism and incantations."[280]

Although Morell goes very little into the behavioral aspects of these "demonic possessions," it does beg the question of what he witnessed was in fact African-derived rituals. As I have already discussed, one of the major aspects of African religions, be they of West African or West Central African derivation, is the phenomena of "spirit possession," either by the deiform *orishas, nkisi, or lwa,* or by the spirits of deceased antecedents. In the case of the records of "demonic possession" from the Portuguese Empire, the witnesses describe similar behaviors to what the Bishop Morell observes in Cuba, but they usually tie them to African practices, and place the blame on African or African-descended *feiticeiros* for the possession.[281]

As we have seen in the case of seventeenth and eighteenth century Angola, the Portuguese had an extensive history in Sub-Saharan Africa because of their relatively early colonization of the Kongo in the late fifteenth century and their intense social,

[280] Ibid., 114r-115r.
[281] Cf, James Hoke Sweet, *Recreating Africa: culture, kinship, and religion in the African-Portuguese world, 1441-1770*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2003; Timothy D. Walker, "The medicines trade in the Portuguese Atlantic world: acquisition and dissemination of healing knowledge from Brazil (c. 1580–1800)." *Social history of medicine* 26, no. 3 (2013): 403-431.

cultural, political, economic, and as I have demonstrated, religious involvement with Africans. It is very possible that the relative dearth of documentation pertaining to African religious practices in colonial Cuba may be due to a general lack of knowledge as to what African religious practices actually entailed.

The relative lack of interaction with Blacks in an overseas colony or in the slave trade did not preclude experience with Africans in the Iberian Peninsula, however, and from available records, it would appear that Spaniards were just as prone to experimenting with, and adopting African religious practices as their Lusitanian neighbors to the west. A 1619 letter from an Inquisition council member illustrates the cultural menace posed blacks living in close proximity to Spaniards and Spanish-descended people in the Americas, citing "the freedom and looseness of moral that has spread in the Spanish domain throughout the world" and "the danger of Spanish children who grow up playing with black children and who nurse from black women, and receive nearly as little proper teaching as the blacks."[282]

Judging by accusations which were beginning to materialize in Spain, in the form of denunciations to local *fiscales* of the Spanish Inquisition, this particular Council member's fears were not complete histrionics, nor were they limited to vague "cultural forms" or "Protestant" ideas. In 1696, an individual approached the local fiscal in Valencia to denounce a local man, José Manuel, whom he described as being of "nacion africana," of superstition. Jose's specific offense was selling stones on which he had written "what appeared to be Arabic script" to his neighbors.[283] In the then-Spanish

[282] Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter AHN), Inquisición, Libro 1019, 1619, 321v.
[283] AHN, Inquisicion, Alegaciones Fiscales, Legajo 3734, Expediente 313, 1696, 1r.

colony of Sardinia, the local Inquisition tribunal tried a Franciscan monk, Father Salvador Merlo, for witchcraft in 1699. Merlo was said to have retained the services of a young "black boy" to divine the whereabouts of a hidden treasure. The boy, using an iron cross and holy water, had visions of the Virgin Mary and Father Merlo's house was said to have miraculously filled with butterflies and flies. The black boy successfully determined the whereabouts of the treasure, but stated that it was being guarded by "demons and goblins." To ward off the protective specters, Father Merlo promised to give a portion of the treasure to the Virgin in her form as Nuestra Señora de las Gracias.[284]

In 1770, the then-presiding Bishop in Cuba, Joseph Echevarria, wrote an open letter calling for fellow Catholic clergymen throughout the island to "take charge of this diocesal government in which God has no merit. In our hands we could at least drive our view that has made this sacred object, as the most outstanding and to snatch our pastoral zeal."[285] Echevarria further urged his fellow clergymen on the island that "just as the first Pastors of the Church we must unite, and strengthen the Councils who attack the Holiness of the Faith...and maintain the Faithful of the Diocese, the innocence of morals, and the health of Rule."[286]

In his zeal to enforce the "health" of the observation of orthodox Catholic rule, Echevarria initiated an ecclesiastical visit, largely focusing on the eastern half of the island, in 1770, citing the need to "correct customs, and all of the things relative to the

[284] AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 1628, Exp. 16, 1699, 2v-31v.
[285] Joseph de Hechavarria Yelguezua, "A los Curas Beneficiados de las Parroquiales de esta Ciudad, Confesores Seculares, Ordenados *in Sacris,* y demas Ordenantes de Estudios mayores de ella," (1770), in John Carter Brown Library Manuscripts, 3f.
[286]Ibid.

Divine Cult," and to reestablish the "purity of Catholic customs" in the area.[287] Echevarria was a far harsher investigator than was his predecessor, the Bishop Morell de Santa Cruz. He was especially displeased with the transgressions from Catholic orthodoxy and proper conduct he witnessed among the priesthood. In one missive, Echevarria complained that it is an "indecent thing that the clerics do not carry themselves with the dignity which is expected of them."[288] Among the many "indecent things" Echevarria witnessed in the course of his visitation to Havana were "clerics wearing indecent colors, such as black, brown, and purple."[289] Echevarria's annoyance with Havana Catholic priests was not limited to sartorial transgressions. He further admonished that Catholic priests "should not leave at night to make music, sing or dance in the night...they should not go into the houses of laypeople to light candles to the bodies of the dead at night."[290] Additionally, Echevarria exhorted that Catholic clergy "should not play instruments or hunt animals or birds."[291] While Echevarria did not draw any conclusions about the exact nature of the heterodoxy implicit in the behaviors he witnessed among Havana clergy, they are certainly suggestive of African religious influences. This is especially compelling when we also consider Echevarria's harsh judgment of the numerous black social organizations that existed in eighteenth-century Havana, stating that the "*bozales* in Havana pool their incomes and establish hierarchical orders in their cabildos" and referring to them as "childish games."[292]

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[287] Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Santo Domingo, Legajo 2254, Expediente 7,1770, 2r.
[288]AGI, Santo Domingo, Legajo 2254, Expediente 5, 1770, 1r.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Ibid.
[292] There is an abundant historiography on the role of the cabildos in nineteenth-century Havana society. See David H. Brown, *Santeria Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), ch. 2; María Teresa Veléz, *Drumming for the Gods : The*

The exact wording the Bishop Echevarria used in referring to the black cabildos was *juegos pueriles.* This is of particular interest because the term *juego* comes up time and again in records from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in reference to the African-derived sects known as *abakuá s* or *ñáñigos,* as well as in political and law enforcement correspondence which refer to gambling activities which interestingly, took place in the extramural areas of Regla and Guanabacoa, where, as I will discuss shortly, were where the abakuá s and *ñáñigos* proliferated most. The word *juego* has various connotations in the Spanish language: including game, a gambling game, or a set (such as a set of silverware or dishes, or in the context I am investigating, a set of men). Indeed, it may very well be possible that this common semantic thread is purely coincidental, however, the fact that the word juego comes up so frequently in the same neighborhoods (Regla and Guanabacoa, and occasionally the Isla de Pinos), involves the same general demographic (men of the lower classes and occasionally soldiers), and at times is used to describe activities that bear a great resemblance to African-derived religious ceremonies, the prevalence of this word is too great to ignore.

JUEGOS: FROM GAMBLING TO GANGS TO RELIGIOUS SECTS

Life and Times of Felipe García Villamil, Santero, Palero, and Abakuá (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), pp. 7-9; George Brandon, *Santeria From Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 74-75; Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Chs., 3 and 4; Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), p. 125. An especially thought-provoking take on the role of cabildos in the formation of free black identity in Cuba can be found in Jane G. Landers, "Cimarron and Citizen: African Ethnicity, Corporate Identity, and the Evolution of Free Black Towns in the Spanish Circum-Caribbean," in Jane G. Landers and Barry Robinson, eds. *Slaves, subjects, and subversives: blacks in colonial Latin America,* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), pp. 111-46. See also Henry B. Lovejoy, *Old Oyo Influences on the Transformation of Lucumí Identity in Colonial Cuba*. University of California, Los Angeles, 2012 and Manuel Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848*, LSU Press, 2008.

In 1772, the Conde de Ripalda wrote a terse letter to the then Governor of Cuba, the Marques de la Torre, describing the frequency and popularity of gambling activities such as card playing and cockfighting, and strongly urged that the colonial government take greater steps to regulate these activities. The Conde de Ripalda observed that "all those that would have permission to maintain tables are licensed to conduct juegos," and went on to discuss how "soldiers, slaves, and suspicious people" attend these houses, and stated that "charges will be made against the owners of these gaming houses because of knowledge of those who attend."[293]

The Conde de Ripalda's complaints about these gaming houses, which from all observations, were extremely popular in eighteenth-century Cuba, and particularly so in Havana, appear to have initiated a frenzied crackdown and attempts at more widespread governmental surveillance. The reasons for this were manifold. Clearly, the administration of the Marques de la Torre was looking for ways to increase tax revenue, and saw the gambling houses as a verdant field of income. Judging from some of the remarks the Conde de Ripalda made, the manner in which gambling houses brought together individuals from a broad swath of Cuban society—elites, "soldiers," and "slaves" ignited some of the sudden concern over the proliferation of gambling houses.

[293] AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Leg 1174, "El asentista de Gallos, y Naipes de Sto Spiritus, y el de Santa Clara, han hecho recurso sobre prohibirseles tenerlas mesas de juego permitidas por su contrata, y como quiera que sobre los articulos de ella han propuesto, y dado fianzas para satisfacer a la Real Hacienda la cantidad en que los han rematado, prebengo a VS que arreglado a sus estabelecimientos, les expida sus licencias con aquellas restricciones combeninetes, al buen Gobierno para que no se usen Juegos prohividos, y de este modo se evitaran los articulos; que puedan mover para faltar a la satisfaccion de los intereses de SM," 1772, 135r.

Also, there was a crackdown on Black funerals at this time due to noise complaints, and Havana city officials moved these ceremonies outside of the city walls.[294]

Yet another letter to the Marques de la Torre from the Conde de Ripalda complained of "lottery games" which regularly took place during the annual celebrations honoring Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria. The Conde described these as "games of chance," with "considerable stakes," and mentioned that they entailed the use of "buzios." The Conde stated that these games typically took place "in the streets," "last until after nine in the evening," and were especially prevalent in the barrio of Guanabacoa.[295] He additionally mentioned that oftentimes, players in these games often lost their crops and lands, and that the game was injurious to a work ethic.

The most striking aspect of Ripalda's letter is his mention of the use of "buzios," or cowry shells, in these games of chance. Buzios are presently used in contemporary forms of divination in the Santeria and Palo Mayombe religions. This system, loosely referred to as "Ifa," of divination has been examined thoroughly by the anthropologists Pierre Verger and William Bascom. Ifa divination plays a major role in West African religion, as a means of communicating with the divine, and is a task reserved for a special class of religious specialists, who are considered to be the spiritual children of Ifa, the god of divination in the Yoruba pantheon.[296]

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[294] Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the struggle against Atlantic slavery*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2009: 88.
[295] AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 1166, 28 enero 1772, 371r.
[296] See William Bascom, *Ifa Divination: Communication Between Men and Gods in West Africa,* (Bloomington, IN, and London: Indiana University Press, 1969) and Pierre Verger, *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le Golfe de Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos, du XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Lahaye, Mouton, 1968). With regards to this activity in Brazil, see Amy Chazkel, *Laws of chance: Brazil's clandestine lottery and the making of urban public life*. Duke University Press, 2011.

As the Ifa divination practice was originally conceived in West Africa prior to European colonization, the shells of palm nuts were used as the divining medium. Cowry shells, which are indigenous to the Maldive Islands off the coast of the Indian sub-continent, appear to have been integrated as the favored tool of divination around the sixteenth century, after Portuguese traders introduced the shells to sub-Saharan Africa. The use of buzio shells in divination was common also in Brazil. William Bascom observes that contemporary practitioners in West Africa use different divination tools interchangeably, depending on the inquiry of the client:

> These same objects may be used to represent these five kinds of symbolism is different. A vertebra or other piece of bone represents death, because when a man dies, only his skeleton remains. The tip of a snail shell represents sickness because in it, the shell is broken open, one finds filth and dirt, which are associated with illness. Two cowries, tied together, again not only represent money but once served as money; some Ifę diviners substitute trouble (oran), also symbolized by cowries, for want of money. A china potshard represents loss, because when a plate or bowl is broken, it is irretrievably lost.[297]

The Conde registered no particular shock at the use of buzios in the Candelaria celebrations he witnessed, and likely because this practice may well have been so common in neighborhoods such as Guanabacoa, where people of all races lived alongside one another, and exchanged religious and cultural practices. In an unpublished article, the anthropologist Lydia Cabrera examined the ties between "lottery games," gambling, mysticism and African symbolism in late twentieth century Cuban society. Cabrera observed that an organized lottery, which used symbols of African religion as its medium "functioned in each neighborhood, clandestine, theoretically persecuted, the old *Chifu*,

[297] Bascom, *Ifa Divination*, 55.

which was at one time the exclusive business of *chinos,* is another incurable cancer of the popular economy."[298]

While the secular Bourbon era government in eighteenth-century Cuba was not all that keen to persecute religious crimes (if they viewed these gambling transgressions as "religious crimes" at all), the Spanish Inquisition was slightly reinvigorated by the late eighteenth century in Cuba, and appeared to be looking especially for religious crimes of an African nature. In 1780, a "Don Antonio Flores" reported that he had arrested a "mulatto" by the name of Sebastian Vazquez, because he had witnessed Sebastian using buzios, and upon searching his home, found "palm oil," which is commonly used in African religious practices and "pieces of chickens." Unfortunately, Don Antonio does not give any information about the context in which he witnessed the use of the buzios by Sebastian, nor give the source of his authority to forcibly enter Sebastian's home and arrest him. Don Antonio, in this letter, was petitioning the Spanish Inquisition to incarcerate Sebastian for these offenses, but does not give any judgment as to what exactly Sebastian was up to—there are no references to "witchcraft," "diabolical rites," or "superstition," Antonio simply makes descriptions of actions and objects. [299]

"BLANCOS DE LA MAS DEPRAVADA VIDA MORAL": THE INTEGRATION OF THE NANIGOS IN LATE-NINETEENTH CENTURY HAVANA

In the early nineteenth century, the demographics of African and African-descended peoples on the island of Cuba began to change dramatically. The acceleration of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in this period, as well as political upheavals within West

[298] Lydia Cabrera, "Loteria, Juego de Bicho," unpublished article, located in Lydia Cabrera Collection, Box 37, Folder 18, undated, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami.
[299] AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 1269, "Participo a Vxa como ayer a las sinco dela tarde ocho del Corrte reziui un pliego de el Santo Tribunal de la Inquisicion cuyo thenon a la Letra es el Sigte," 9 abril 1780, 63r.

Africa, resulted in a massive importation of Yoruba slaves to the island.[300] Not only did this change the ethnic composition of the Black population in nineteenth century Cuba, but it also had strong reverberations within all aspects of Afro-Cuban culture. One of the most public ways in which this Yoruba cultural influence manifested itself was through the religion of La Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje.

In the year 1857, in the Cuban town of Regla, just outside of Havana, a legendary sale took place. The vendor, a mulatto man with connections to both the slaveholding elite and to the slave community, named Andres Petit, allegedly sold the ritual secrets of his then-exclusively black religion, La Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje, to a group of local white men with high status and good local political connections. The motives for the sale, as well as the price Petit received in exchange for the secrets are not agreed upon by researchers of the topic. Lydia Cabrera, reporting on the information given to her by one of her informants interviewed for her ethnographic work, *El Monte*, states that Petit sold the secrets to the white men, whom the informant describes as "Titled people, si senora, of the aristocracy of those days, sons of counts and Marquises," for 500 pesos, and that his sale was motivated by a desire to keep the religion alive by promulgating it amongst prestigious members of the Havana elite.[301] Philip A. Howard, on the other hand, reports that Petit sold the religion for thirty ounces of gold, which he then used to purchase the freedom of several enslaved adherents.[302] More recently, Ivor

[300] Cf. Laird W. Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia. *The Cuban slave market, 1790-1880*. Cambridge University Press, 1995;José Luciano Franco, *Comercio clandestino de esclavos*, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985; & Henry B. Lovejoy, *Old Oyo Influences on the Transformation of Lucumí Identity in Colonial Cuba*, University of California, Los Angeles, 2012.
[301] Lydia Cabrera, *El Monte: Igbo Finda, Ewe Orisha, Vititinfinda,* (La Habana: Ediciones CR, 1954), pp. 196-7.
[302] Philip A. Howard, *Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in the Nineteenth Century*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 51.

Miller has argued that whites joined Petit's sect because it would foster vertical social connections in Havana society, which would aid in the independence struggle against Spain, and help to foster a larger sense of creole identity, and that white "participation was an expression of creole consciousness, part of a wider movement pushing for separation from Spain."[303]Whatever the motives and price for the exchange, it is certain that the new white "owners" of La Regla Kimbisa proved to be very enthusiastic and committed adherents; the religion, to this day, has retained its Afro-Cuban liturgical and ritual elements, and is led and followed almost completely by whites.[304] La Regla Kimbisa de Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje became, in essence, to use the words Roger Bastide used to describe Umbanda in southeastern Brazil, a "black religion with a white face."[305] However, the story of Petit and his sale of magic secrets, when compared to documentary evidence concerning white participation in African-derived religious sects from the late nineteenth-century, suggests that the story is more of a foundational myth than anything else, and that white participation in the African derived sects, also known as ñáñigos or abakuás, was the product of social proximity and economic networks among lower-class whites in Havana.[306]

Although scholars have speculated extensively on the motives of Petit in selling the "instructions" for his religion, very little has been said about the possible motives of the white buyers. Howard states, simply, that they "hoped to gain in exchange magic

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[303] I.L. Miller, 2010. *Voice of the leopard: African secret societies and Cuba*. Univ. Press of Mississippi:103

[304] George Brandon, *Santería from Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 83-4.

[305] Roger Bastide, Trans. Helen Sebba, *The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960),

[306] Cf. Enrique Sosa, *Los ñáñigos*. Casa de las Américas, 1982; Rómulo Lachatañeré, "El sistema religioso de los lucumís y otras influencias africanas en Cuba." *Estudios afrocubanos* 3 (1939): 29-84.

secrets that would enable them to participate in Abakuá religious ceremonies."[307] Miller contends that the motives could not possibly have been economic, as the white neophytes were already wealthy.[308] But, why did these creole elites want the "magic secrets," and why were they interested in participating in African-derived ceremonies? Their interest is especially baffling considering some of the basic dynamics of both African Diasporic religions and of mid-nineteenth century Cuban society. Plantation slavery in Cuba grew exponentially in Cuba during the nineteenth century, largely as an aftereffect of the 1791 Haitian Revolution[309]. Slavery was still so entrenched in Cuban society that it would be the next to last of the slave societies to abolish slavery, in 1886. By every indication, racial divides in Cuba were strengthening in both urban and rural areas in the nineteenth century. So, why would these white men, some of whom may very well have been of partial African ancestry themselves, be so eager to adopt a religion which required intimate affiliation with the *orishas,* who are typically considered to be the deified spirits of deceased Africans, and in essence, voluntarily taking on a fictive black identity? While a fascination with the occult and a desire for access to avenues of mystical power may have partly accounted for some of the white participants' interest in Petit's religion, more substantial answers to these questions can be found by examining the West African and West Central African roots of Kimbisa's liturgy, and by contrasting the hallowed initiation of whites into Kimbisa, the details of which have largely come to us from the ethnographic works of Lydia Cabrera and Fernando Ortiz, with the decidedly lurid and

[307] Howard, ibid.
[308] Miller, *Voice of the Leopard,* 107.
[309] For an analysis of how the massive influx of slaves into Cuba following the Haitian Revolution andthe resultant "sugar boom" in Cuba affected local culture, see William C. Van Norman. "The Process of Cultural Change Among Cuban Bozales during the Nineteenth Century," *The Americas,* Vol. 62, No. 2 (Oct 2005), 177-207. Also see Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the struggle against Atlantic slavery* Univ of North Carolina Press, 2009 and Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: race, nation, and revolution, 1868-1898*, Univ of North Carolina Press, 1999.

negative imagery with which Cuban government officials described white ñáñigo members in the 1880's.

The ñáñigos were members of all-male secret societies that predominated in the areas of Havana, and in nearby Regla and Guanabacoa. The ñáñigos most likely first sprang up in Havana in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[310] While it is widely agreed that the ñáñigos are related to similar male secret societies in the Cross-River territory of Old Calabar, in what is present-day Nigeria, called the *ekpe*, it is still unclear whether the ñáñigos are the children of the Carabalí ekpe or first cousins. Ekpe membership required an initiation ceremony and adherence to a strict code of behavior. As to whether these sects constitute a "religion," "magic," a secret society, or a sort of mafia is widely debated. Fernando Ortiz, in his 1950 essay on the subject, *La tragedia de los ñáñigos,* states that the groups are not religions, but more akin to fraternal organizations such as "Masonry, the Knights of Columbus, the Elks, or the Ku Klux Klan."[311] More recent scholarship on these groups, viewing them through a transatlantic lens, places them more firmly in the category of informal trading and credit organizations. Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson, writing on this topic, have stated that, in West Africa, "by the 1790's, Ekpe was a protection racket," which encompassed debt enforcement and the dispensing of justice, usually by way of physical violence, to members who failed or refused to pay debts to fellow members with whom they had

[310] Palmié, *Africas in the Americas,* 200. See also Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition,* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).
[311] Fernando Ortiz, *La tragedia de los ñáñigos,* (La Habana, Cuba: Publicigraf, 1993), 10. See also by Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros curros,* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1986), and *La santería y la brujeria de los blancos,* (La Habana: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2000).

conducted business.[312] Palmié, on the other hand, suggests that ekpe in the Cross River region and Cuban ñáñigo/abakuá arose simultaneously and should be classified more as an Atlantic, rather than a purely West African or a Cuban cultural phenomenon. He notes the commercial nature of these groups and asserts that "By the turn of the nineteenth century it clearly served the goal of organizing a rising commercial elite of ethnically highly heterogeneous origin."[313]

While the supposed initial membership of La Regla Kimbisa in the 1860's, and white participation in other ñáñigos appears, if we are to take the oral traditions at face value, to have been confined to the elite echelons, by the 1880's, the documentation about similar sects in Cuban governmental correspondence tells a very different story. In an 1882 letter, one official had extensive complaints about the ñáñigo sects, and particularly the whites who joined them, stating, "Crime has taken alarming proportions, especially with regards to kidnapping, robberies and murder, the majority of which have been committed by the sect called the Ñáñigos that, while for most of its history has been limited to African blacks, in recent years, whites of the most depraved moral life have been entering the sect. The families of this city have been alarmed by the excesses of these criminals and there is little security during the night, in spite of the vigilance of the police ...."[314] Another missive states that "it is necessary to address the problem of a sect of African origin on this island with the name of Ñáñigos that has been preserved and into which have entered all colors and the most degraded of society, increasing its

[312] Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (1999), 348.
[313] Palmié, *Africas of the Americas*, 200.
[314] Archivo Histórico Nacional, Ultramar, Gobierno, Legajo 4801, Expediente 15, 1882, 4-5. Many thanks to Iacy Maia Mata for this reference.

numbers."[315] What is interesting is the stark contrast of the perceived class standing and honor of the whites who associated with the ñáñigo sects, who most definitely did not seem to be the "sons of marquises and dukes."

The ñáñigos were so problematic to Havana area law enforcement that, in 1882, the government published a brief history of the ñáñigos, the belief system, the locations of individual *juegos,* and the demographic of the sects. The pamphlet also contains an extensive index with translations of Spanish words into Carabalí, the ritual language of the ñáñigos sects.[316] The anonymous author of the pamphlet refused to call the ñáñigos a "religion," instead describing the sect as being "a mix of gross superstition derived from a retarded and rudimentary scale of civilization."[317] The author, who never states his occupation or any of his sources, states that the first ñáñigo sect began in Regla in the year 1836, and was comprised mostly of Cuban-born sons of Carabalí parentage. The author goes on to say that the initial founders, these second-generation Carabalí-Cubans, hated whites so much that they would not even admit mulattos into the sect. The author observes, however, that this new sect was not culturally insular; it appears that they began to incorporate ritual practices of West Central African origin, which he calls "Palo Macongo" and "Palo Meosongo," as well as Christian symbols such as crucifixes (which may very well have arrived on the backs of the West Central African symbologies) very early on.[318]

[315] AHN, Ultramar, Gobierno, Legajo 4801, Expediente 15, 1882, 7-8.
[316] "Los Ñáñigos: Su Historia, Sus Practicas, Su Lenguaje," AHN, Ultramar, Gobierno, Legajo 4801, Expediente 16, 1882.
[317] Ibid., 1.
[318] Ibid., 6-8.

The author, whose audience seems to have been Havana area law enforcement, states that ñáñigos were a public menace because initiated members were obliged to murder fellow members who had run afoul of the sect's apparently rigid codes of behavior. More troubling, these revenge murders often took place in public markets or on public feast days such as the Día del Reyes, during which time there would be many people in the streets, socializing and participating in processions.[319] Regardless of the spite the founding members of the initial ñáñigos sect, and evidence of their ruthlessness and extreme intolerance for non-conformity, the author of the tract reports that a group of white men started their own ñáñigo sect on the street of San Lazaro, in Havana, on Christmas Eve, 1863. The author states that the white men had essentially bought their way into the religion; however, no mention is made of Andres Petit nor any singular mediator or broker of the sale.[320]

Further, the portrayal of the ñáñigo sects as criminal organizations in the 1880's government documentation, when contrasted with the legend of Petit, highlights just how idealized the oral tradition surrounding the Kimbisa religion is. The white men are portrayed as members of the lesser nobility of the Old World, and the intentions of Petit are painted has having been altruistic. There is no mention of commercialism or profiteering on the part of Petit, but rather a selfless desire to free his enslaved adherents and to ensure the survival of his nascent sect. Indeed, a rigorous comparison of the 1857 "sale" and the 1880's complaints about the ñáñigos is impossible, as no "hard" documentary evidence has been uncovered regarding the 1857 sale of La Regla Kimbisa.

[319] Ibid., 11.
[320] Ibid., 15.

Complaints about the rapid growth of the ñáñigos sects in Havana and in Regla resulted in the "deportment" of identified ñáñigos members to the Isla de Pinos. An 1882 letter from Juan Mirabeles to the Overseas Minister, describes in stark detail the activities of the ñáñigos on the Isla de Pinos:

> On this island we lack public buildings and correctional facilities, such as those that exist in Havana, whose jail serves at times as a military fort and Civil Hospital. The large accumulation of people, and the condition of the building, are a threat to the public health; and these considerations oblige us to send vagabonds and people with "bad lifestyles" to the Isla de Pinos. Organized as an establishment to protect work, its conservation is a well-known necessity for all and for all political parties and the press...Such windows share this establishment, which only permits it to resolve the grave question of the ñáñigos, placed in insufferable conditions for the tranquility of this population if only that the bosses of these juegos don't leave....[321]

Mirabeles suggested that rather than banishing Havana area ñáñigos members to the Isla de Pinos, that the government instead exile them to the island of Fernando Po, a Spanish protectorate off the coast of West Africa. Mirabeles said the ñáñigos were a major threat to the public order and tranquility in the Isla de Pinos, citing their "barbaric juegos" and "bloody vengeances."[322] This phenomenon was also very common in the area of Matanzas. [323]

While it is very possible that the 1857 sale may indeed have never actually taken place, it is certain that Andres Petit was a real man. Cuban literary scholar María del Carmen Muzio, drawing upon baptismal and death records, has established that Petit was born on November 27, 1829 and baptized in the Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje church on

[321] AHN, Ultramar, Gobierno, Legajo 4801, Expediente 15, 1882, Innumerated page.
[322] Ibid., P (?)
[323] Reference Breto here

January 3, 1830.[324]Petit's mother is listed in the baptismal record as a slave, Juana Mina. Her surname indicates that she was of African birth, and of West African ethnicity.[325] The identity of Petit's father is not listed, something which is fairly typical in Cuban baptismal records for children of unmarried slave women, but his godparents are listed as "Enrique Benedit y Margarita Petit," whom Muzio surmises were friends of Petit's mother's owner, Leonor Petit.[326]Additionally, Petit was born into slave status, something that is documented on his baptismal record. The death record of Andres Petit, issued by the Guanabacoa church on May 15, 1878, lists Petit's status as "liberto,"[327]and no scholar has yet been able to establish by which means Petit obtained his emancipation.

As to the identity of Petit's father, scholars have been unable to determine that aspect of his life as well, but popular lore in Havana holds that his father was a white man of French ancestry by way of Saint Domingue.[328]While there is no documentary evidence to indicate that Petit was the product of a sexual union, consensual or forced, between his enslaved mother and a male member of the Petit family, this possibility is very strongly insinuated in the lore surrounding his life. When one takes into account other factors of Petit's upbringing—by all accounts, he was well educated as a child, could read both Latin and Greek, and joined the Tertiary Order of San Francisco as a young man.[329]—it becomes apparent that the Petit family seemed to hold him in especially high regard for a

[324] Muzio, 39.
[325] The "Mina" label is problematic, however. Scholars of African ethnicity are in disagreement as to whether "Mina" is a true ethnic designation, or if it simply indicates the port of disembarkation of "Elmina," on the Gold Coast of Africa. See Robin Law, "Ethnicities of Enslaved Africans in the Diaspora: On the Meanings of 'Mina' (Again)", *History in Africa,* Vol. 32 (2005), pp. 247-267, and *The Oyo Empire, c.1600-c.1836: a West African imperialism in the era of the Atlantic slave trade,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). Also cite Mariza's work on Minas here.
[326] Muzio, ibid.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Lydia Cabrera, *La Sociedad Secreta Abakuá, Narrada por Viejos Adeptos,* (Miami, FL: Ediciones C.R., 1970), 29.
[329] Ibid.

son of one of their slaves. If, indeed, Andres Petit was the son of a white man who was himself a slave owner or a member of a slaveholding family, it could also provide a possible explanation for Petit's emancipation.

The mid-nineteenth century was a period of great demographic change for Cuba. By the time our criminally-inclined white ñáñigos appear in the record, the white population of the island had grown dramatically in the previous three decades; Rebecca Scott, citing an 1861-1862 government census, observes that "whites—who had once been a minority were now a majority, their numbers having multiplied through immigration and natural growth from about 426,000 to 720,000."[330] And while, the aforementioned sale of abakuá to elite whites by Andres Petit might appear as surface evidence of an underlying acceptance of the Africanization of collective Cuban culture and identity, other documentation from the period shows an extreme concern on the part of other white elites about what they viewed as the "Africanization" of Cuba and their plans to counteract this by encouraging immigration of whites from nations such as Uruguay, Argentina, Venezuela, and Spain. An 1854 letter from Leopoldo de Cueto to the Marques de la Pezuela strongly encouraged such staged growth of the white population on the island, to combat what he referred to as the "Africanization" of Cuba. Cueto set forth his concern that this Africanization represented a national security threat, though not from criminal gangs on the island. Cueto believed that the Southern states would be extremely hostile to the idea of such a close "Africanized" neighbor, and would exert pressure on the United States government to invade Cuba.[331]

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[330] Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emacipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 6.
[331] AHN, Ultramar, Gobierno, Leg 4645, Expediente 1, 1854, 3f-4v and Expediente 26, 1854 1r-2v.

THE STRUCTURE OF LA REGLA KIMBISA

La Regla Kimbisa is commonly lumped together in the literature with other syncretic Cuban religions such as Santería, Palo Mayombe and Lucumí, and while it does have many aspects in common with these religions, its structure is very different. For one thing, it is much more syncretized than the above-mentioned religions. As stated before, Kimbisa incorporates elements from African traditions, Christianity and Freemasonry. According to ethnographic works by Lydia Cabrera, Kimbisa places a strong emphasis on healing rites and initiatory ceremonies.[332] Kimbisa ceremonies also incorporate animal sacrifices, but offerings do not seem to play as prominent a role as they do in other Cuban African Diasporic religions. Additionally, there are a great number of deities drawn from Congolese pantheistic/animistic traditions; indeed, most of the African religious elements within La Regla Kimbisa can be traced to Congolese religion. Lydia Cabrera notes that Kimbisa bears a "predominant mark of the Bantu."[333]At any rate, the presence of these Bantú-Congolese religious elements appears to be a major contributor to La Regla Kimbisa's relative "flexibility," both in incorporating outside religious traditions and symbols, as well as ethnic and cultural "outsiders," namely, the white criollo elites who purchased the Kimbisa secrets. John Thornton states that in Congolese religious traditions, "Theology was formed by a constant stream of revelations that was not under the control of a priesthood who enforced orthodoxy, but instead was interpreted individually within a community of

[332] Lydia Cabrera, *La Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje*, (Miami, FL: Ediciones Universal, 1986), 13.
[333] Ibid., 4.

belief."[334] The relative adaptability of Congolese religious systems and their incorporation into the Kimbisa belief complex thus resulted in a syncretic religion which was optimally amenable to the incorporation of "foreign" elements, including orishas from the West African Yoruba pantheon, and to Christianity.

Indeed, Christian beliefs and symbolism comprise a major part of the Kimbisa system. The adherence to certain elements of Christianity seems to run more deeply in Kimbisa than in other Afro-Cuban syncretic religions. This is evident in Kimbisa rituals; Lydia Cabrera observes that "la imagen de Cristo crucificado está presente en todos los ritos y 'trabajos' de la Institución [de Kimbisa]."[335]The Christian element persists in much more than external rites, however. Eoghan C. Ballard notes that there is a stronger emphasis on dogma and devotion in Kimbisa than on ritual and magical practice, another way the Kimbisa religion differs from many of its other Afro-Cuban religious counterparts.[336] Additionally, the Kimbisa religion has established moral codes for its members; typically, African Diasporic religions avoid moralizing and prescribing extensive behavioral codes for laypeople.[337] Further, Kimbisa has incorporated elements of European spiritism and other Western occult systems into its body of beliefs and practices. Cabrera, in her research for her short book on La Regla Kimbisa, interviewed high-level practitioners of the religion in mid-twentieth century Regla who described the religion as thus: "'Kimbisa,' a master father explained to us in Regla who told of many adepts in 1959, "was congo, lucumí, spiritist and Catholic. It combined everything!,'

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[334] John K. Thornton, "Religious and Ceremonial Life in the Kongo and Mbundu Areas, 1500-1700," in Linda M. Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 74.
[335] Cabrera, *La Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje*, 83.
[336] Eoghan C. Ballard, "La Regla Kimbisa del Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje," article published on website www.nganga.org; available from http://www.nganga.org/quimbisa.html; Internet; accessed 8 Dec 2008.
[337] Howard, 47.

and a *Oloricha*: 'Petit made a stew and mixed it all: worked with Palo, with Ocha, with Santo; mixed spiritism, witchcraft, the church, whatever he found, in order to conquer."[338] Christine Ayorinde further quotes an adage supposedly coined by Petit: "'the more religions a person has, the more sanctity."[339]While La Regla Kimbisa is, technically, an African Diasporic religion, it is highly Christianized and highly Europeanized, and while this could very well account for the white buyers' seeming level of comfort with the religion, it also suggests that the major structural elements of Kimbisa were largely put in place by practitioners who identified themselves as white, and further suggests that the story of the 1857 sale was also a construction. It is also no small matter that Kimbisa was, imaginably, one of the only Afro-Cuban religious movements willing to share its "secrets" with white Cubans. It is provocative to consider that the "sale" of Kimbisa may not have just been motivated by a desire to help his religion survive by endowing it with more prestigious social and political connections and purchase the freedom of some of his followers in the process, but it also lends itself to the impression of a highly sanitized story about the integration of whites into the ñáñigos, which conveniently also celebrates notions of *cubanidad.* As the sale of the 1857 story would have it, Andres Petit seems to have been consciously seeking to develop a truly "Cuban" religion, and he recognized that in order to accomplish this, he would have to include elements and people from all segments of Cuban society.

The participation of European-descended peoples in African-derived religions in nineteenth and twentieth-century Cuba has already been well-remarked upon. Lydia

[338] Cabrera, ibid., 3.
[339] Christine Ayorinde, *Afro-Cuban Religiosity, Revolution, and National Identity,* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2004), 23.

Cabrera, Fernando Ortiz, and most recently Ivor Miller have discussed this phenomenon. However, the predominant assumption is that this did not emerge until the mid-nineteenth-century, with Andres' Petits "sale," (whether viewed as an actual historical fact or as allegorical legend) the watershed moment for the "initiation," as it were, of white Cubans in significant numbers in the mid to late nineteenth century. Miller even goes so far to assert, " Something unprecedented and momentous transpired in Havana in the 1850's, when Bakokó Efó sponsored a lodge of white men., and goes on to theorize that "economic safety was not the only consideration, since the lodge of whites included the sons of Spanish elites. Their participation was an expression of creole consciousness, part of a wider movement pushing for separation from Spain and that Whites joined abakuá as an anticolonial force they were sympathetic to, because in becoming Abakuá they gained access to Havana communities in profound ways related to creole solidarity and aesthetic preferences."

The whites who joined the abakuás would have seen the sects as an "anticolonial force" with which to bargain perhaps because of the sects' strong association with "criminality" and "deviance."[340] The sheer terror and antagonism colonial authorities expressed against these groups was part of a larger collective fear of Afro-Cubans which had grown on the island in the wake of the 1791 for several reasons. First was that several exiled French Haitian families, (including that of Andres Petit's paternal family, intriguingly), took refuge in Cuba, likely telling fear-filled anecdotes to their new neighbors. Secondly, after Haiti ceased to be a major producer of sugar in the wake of the revolution, and Cuba stepped in to fill the vacuum in the market. The shift in social

[340] Ivor L. Miller,*Voice of the leopard: African secret societies and Cuba*. Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2010: 121.

relations which thus ensued from the massive influx of capital, and the hardening of racial and class lines was unprecedented and profound, as Franklin Knight relates: "Once the Cuban agricultural revolution took place, other equally fundamental changes were irrepressible. The entire society began to readjust itself to the new demands of the plantation and the colony."[341] To fulfill the need for labor on the sugar plantations, hundreds of thousands of African slaves, typically from West Africa, were imported, and many of them ended up on rural plantations, partly because planters felt "unacculturated" slaves would be better suited for the harsh conditions of plantation labor.[342]

The massive influx of *bozal,* or unacculturated, slaves into Cuba resulted not in a docile labor force, but instead a series of slave insurrections and revolts which began in 1795.[343] Matt Childs has detailed the 1812 Aponte Rebellion, which was part of a series of revolts which started in the city of Puerto Principe in 1812. Colonial officials came across a book of drawings by José Antonio Aponte, which they believed contained the framework of a broader slave conspiracy on the island. The trial which ensured, as well as the resultant use of torture, harsh physical punishments and executions of "conspirators" illustrates the intense fear the rebellions provoked in colonial officials.[344] Manuel Barcia Paz has written about multiple slave outbreaks that occurred in the cities of Havana and Matanzas in the years 1842-1843.[345] The best-known slave "conspiracy"

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[341] Franklin W. Knight, *Slave society in Cuba during the nineteenth century,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 6. Sherry Johnson shows that these transformations began to manifest themselves during the eighteenth century. See *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba,* (Gainesville, FL: The University Press of Florida, 2001).
[342] Knight, 48.
[343] Manuel Barcia Paz, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 33.
[344] Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery,* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
[345] Manuel Barcia Paz, *Seeds of Insurrection.* See also *The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825: Cuba and the Fight for Freedom in Matanzas,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012.)

is that of La Escalera. There is considerable doubt as to whether or not the La Escalera "conspiracy" of 1844 ever had any basis in fact, but it resulted in the execution, incarceration, and exile of thousands of Afro-Cubans. The colonial officials blamed the British consul, David Turnbull, for masterminding the conspiracy.[346]

So then, the sudden crackdown on ñáñigos and the perceived "criminality" of their black members as well as the whites who joined them arose from this atmosphere of rebellion, hardening class and color lines, and paranoia on the part of government officials in Cuba. This marginalization of the ñáñigo sects, and perhaps a perception of an ability and willingness to engage in conspiracies and outright revolts, contributed to what Ivor Miller has described, as I mentioned earlier, as an attempt on the part of whites who joined the sects to foster vertical social connections as a part of "creole consciousness." The whites who joined the ñáñigo sects perhaps perceived potential "brothers-in-arms" in a revolt against Spanish rule.[347]

Indeed, African-derived religions such as abakuá may well have provided a useful vehicle for the expression of nineteenth century creole consciousness, but I take issue with Miller's assertion that white interest in African religions began only in the late nineteenth century.

While the veracity of the Petit story is impossible to prove or disprove given the lack of documentation, it appears to have been highly unlikely that elite whites in 1860's Cuba would have entered an African-derived religious sect such as La Regla Kimbisa.

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[346] See Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is made with blood: the conspiracy of La Escalera and the conflict between empires over slavery in Cuba,* (Scranton, PA: Harper&Row, 1988). Also cite Jane's stuff.
[347] An interesting take on the insurgencies against the Spanish can be found in Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: race, nation, and revolution, 1868-1898,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

From the available documentation which supports the integration of the ñáñigos and abakuá sects in the nineteenth century (as well as eighteenth century documentation I have uncovered regarding white adoption of African religious practices in Cuba), the exchange appears to have occurred mainly along horizontal social lines; that is, the whites involved in these "transactions" were mostly of the lower class. A more accurate picture of the actual social and economic dynamics behind the transfer of African-derived religious rituals, symbols and cosmology to whites in Cuban and other Iberian Atlantic societies can only be achieved by interrogating the foundational legends which are reproduced time and again by historians and anthropologists, and by closely scrutinizing the extant documentation.

CONCLUSION

The story of the "Africanization" of the popular religious practices and beliefs of European-descended peoples in colonial Cuba, while not as obvious as it is in the historical record for the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Brazil, is just as strong? As I have shown, a confluence of several factors in Cuba, which were similar to those observable in Angola and Portugal, enabled the transfer of religious beliefs and practices between individuals of African and European descent.

The first was a remarkable lack of presence, at least on the island of Cuba, on the part of the Spanish Inquisition. This is not to say that the presence of the Catholic Church in general in Cuba was weak, but as we can see from the relative dearth of Inquisitional documentation related to Cuba, the Spanish Holy Office did not take much of interest in Cuba. This was likely due to a perception on the part of the Spanish

Inquisition that they had “bigger fish to fry,” or so to speak, as well as more assets to seize, in New Spain and in Peru, which had large indigenous populations to convert as well as huge deposits of metallic wealth. The situation in Cuba was the church had a relatively weak presence in the backlands of Angola, whereas the Portuguese Inquisition definitely bared its teeth in Angola in the eighteenth century. It is apparent that Catholic clergy in Cuba were most likely perfectly aware of African religious practices going on amongst them, but chose to overlook them as a matter of practicality.

Thus, the door would have been opened for the exposure of whites to African religious practices. Likely, many of the early Spanish settlers arrived in Cuba with some exposure to African culture and religion in Spain, as a result of the centuries-long presence of African slaves on the Iberian Peninsula. And just as was the case with Angola and Brazil, African religious practices served a multitude of practical uses, as well as aesthetic and spiritual appeal. While I did not come across much documentation to support that Cubans of European descent likely found the healing practices, divination rites, and the excitement of spiritual possession rituals to be appealing, there is no reason to think otherwise. As I have shown in this chapter, Spaniards used the services of African healers and diviners in Spain, so they more than likely would have in early modern Cuba. The marked toleration of Catholic ecclesiastics toward African religious practices, as well as the lack of a strong Inquisitorial presence on the island accounts for the lack of documentation, excepting denouncements from the early seventeenth century which do not appear to have ever proceeded to a full-blown trial.

And it is in Regla where the ñáñigos flourished, which attracted many white Cubans and which provoked the fear of local governmental and law enforcement

authorities. The hysteria surrounding the ñáñigo sects was likely due to an atmosphere of paranoia which sprang from multiple slave revolts, insurrections, and "conspiracies" that took place in Cuba throughout the nineteenth century. Whereas officials tasked with maintaining the order of things found much to fear in the ñáñigo sects, "white" creole Cubans saw the potential to form a larger resistance to colonial rule. As with Angola and Brazil, religious practices were exchanged multidirectionally, and this often had to do with social circumstances and with politics.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In the previous three chapters, I examined the phenomenon of the transfer of African-derived religious practices to European-descended peoples (who I shall refer to as "whites" throughout the remainder of the chapter for the sake of simplicity) in three Iberian Atlantic slave societies: Angola, Brazil, and Cuba. Religious change over time, particularly for a "taboo" religion such as an African-derived religion would have been in Early Modern colonial societies, is a challenge to track in the historical record. This problem becomes compounded when one considers that even when they are not expressly forbidden, African religions have no body of scripture, and do not tend to generate apologias or written testimonies from amongst their followers. African religions are transmitted from generation to generation via initiation, oral instruction, and ritual demonstration.

Thusly, the historian is transformed into a behaviorist in the archives, sifting through all possible evidence—the most obvious Inquisitional records, but also political correspondence and police records—to find passing mentions of behaviors witnessed by credible witnesses from centuries past. Then, it becomes necessary to establish that the behaviors mentioned did indeed take place, and were not the fanciful by-products of an overactive imagination or the sinister scheming of a conniving mind, as well as to establish that the behaviors described could indeed be accurately described as "religious behavior," and moreover, religious behavior which could be traced directly from indigenous sub-Saharan African religious practices.

The best way to track religious change over time, as it were, via subtle behavioral changes which manifest themselves in the musings, accusations, and observations of actors whose writings lasted the centuries, is to survey a broad geographical area and a lengthy period of time. One of the greatest challenges in writing this dissertation has been to telescope two hundred years of history or more into a relatively brief space, selecting for those background elements which are most pertinent to the respective argument and social circumstances of each chapter, while maintaining a sharp focus on the behavior of the actors involved on this grand stage.

It has also been a great challenge to assign motive to my white "converts" for their behaviors, which strike many of those who study colonialism and slave societies as extremely counter-intuitive, and as self-destructive. After all, the impression of the Iberian Atlantic societies has been that of zealously Catholic Christian societies, with the panopticon of the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisitions a constant threat, and the attendant possibility of an Inquisition trial for the varied charges of superstition, heresy, witchcraft, and other bogeymen, which could then lead to a grave loss of reputation, property, freedom, and as we have seen in a few of my Inquisition trials, one's life. One question with which I have constantly been confronted, in the circuitous journey of securing funding for my wide-ranging archival research and in presenting the preliminary results of my research at international academic conferences is "Why did these white/European-descended peoples engage in African religious practices?" It is this quandary I will address in this chapter, in which I tie together the disparate narratives of my three "case studies writ large" and search for common threads that can explain this behavior. The goal of this project has not simply been to establish that whites in Early Modern colonial

societies adopted African-derived religious practices, but also to identify the social mechanisms by which this exchange took place.

In the case of Portuguese Angola, which serves as the "foundational case" for my larger study, the motives for whites engaging in the religious practices native to that region were abundantly clear. Simply stated, it was extremely advantageous for white men (and a few women) to engage in practices that included consultation with local mediums, "sorcerors," and animal sacrifice. Engaging in local religious customs fomented upward social mobility for the whites, who as I have shown, often arrived in Angola at an extreme disadvantage—they were often convicted criminals, poor, or otherwise socially marginalized. Additionally, they lacked acquired and/or inherited immunities to the many diseases that thrived in the tropical region of Angola. Demographics were of no small consequence either. Whites were massively outnumbered in a region where their political power was less than complete and thus, to gain access to slaves, material goods, trading partners and other necessities—they had to engage in civil negotiation, and at times, relatively symmetrical warfare—and thus, cultural mimesis[348] in the Angolan context absolutely made sense. It is for this very reason that the greatest abundance of documentary evidence concerning whites engaging in sub-Saharan African religious practices, at least in my study of the topic, comes from Angola.

With the case of Brazil (which, in itself presented a multiplicity of subregions and religious "localities"), several distinct patterns emerged. It is especially significant that

[348] Cf. Michael T. Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: a particular history of the senses*, (New York: Routledge, 1993).

they arose in Brazil, because the social mechanisms by which the transfer of African religious practices to whites occurred stood out in much starker detail. Brazil did not have millennia-old established African kingdoms. Essentially, Portuguese settlers and their descendants were under no onus whatsoever to engage in any sort of religious, cultural or social mimesis of Africans in order to curry favor, to adapt, or to survive in Brazil. It is also notable that the Portuguese settlers who colonized Brazil were occasionally, but usually not, exiled criminals. The Portuguese who settled in Brazil did not simply have the same level of social marginalization and dire circumstances that the Portuguese in Angola typically had. It is also quite possible that the Portuguese who settled Brazil, as a whole, had less of an inherent tendency to engage in behaviors deemed "unacceptable" and "heterodox" than their corollaries across the South Atlantic, as they were usually not convicted criminals, and may not have had the same markedly antisocial tendencies. Yet, as I have shown in Chapter 3, whites did adopt the religious practices (and, quite possibly, the beliefs) of Africans and African-descended Brazilians.

However, when a comparison is made with Angola, several things become clear. First and foremost, the disease environment in Brazil, particularly in tropical zones such as Bahia and Maranhão was in many ways similar to that described in accounts from Angola. Diseases such as malaria and other tropical illnesses were not part of the routine training of "legitimate" healers and Western doctors in the Early Modern period. However, African healers had generations of experience with such diseases, and this cannot have escaped the notice of colonial authorities. Thusly, the disease environment in Brazil created a demand for African healers.

As has been well-established, both in the existing historiography and in my own analysis, healing and religion are thoroughly intertwined in West African and West Central African cultures. Medicinal plants are typically thought to be "owned" by certain deities and/or to have spirits that provide the healing properties, diagnoses are often arrived at through spirit possession provoked by carefully choreographed rituals which involved dancing and drumming. As I have shown in chapters 2 and 3, concerning Angola and Brazil, a large portion of the documentation that explicitly mentioned whites participating in African-derived religious ceremonies and/or patronizing African "sorcerors" did so for healing purposes. At least, "health reasons" were what accused parties gave as their primary motive when they did confess, or it was the motive ascribed to the primary actors, in accounts of rituals given by third-party witnesses. Often, when people did confess to entities, such as the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisitions, that had the authority and means to exact nasty punishments upon those they found "guilty," claiming that illness drove them to participate in the rituals might have mitigated the harshness of the punishment, or at least elicit a measure of sympathy from the investigators. Alternately, when the motive to utilize the services of an African healer was indeed simply a quest for a cure or for relief from some ailment, it is not too much of a speculative leap to imagine that if a "treatment" proved to be successful, would the client not then want to know exactly how the successful treatment worked? Wouldn't a "white" client feel grateful toward an *orisha/inquice* who had delivered desired results, and perhaps wish to supplicate that deity with the hopes of warding off another bout of illness or encounter with misfortune?

This possibility of the "proven worth" of African and African-derived religious practices as an avenue of the transmission of beliefs, symbols and ideologies as a predominant theme in this narrative is underscored by the proliferation of "mandinga pouches," or "bolsas" in Brazil and in Angola. Mandinga pouches had a very specific, and very practical purpose—and, as that purpose manifests itself in the historical record, one of them was to protect warriors from danger in the battlefield. Indeed, Mandinga pouches could be used for sundry purposes, but the prevalent use that appears in the documents is for that of foot soldiers and military officers to protect themselves from spear points and bullets while engaged in battle. The efficacy of this method was self-evangelizing. Men for whom the mandinga pouches worked would certainly propagandize this fact to their brothers in arms—who, as I have shown for both the cases of Angola and Brazil, could very well be of a different ethnicity/race—and men for whom the pouches did not perform their intended function, to put it morbidly, likely did not live to bear witness to this fact. Again, the fact that there were soldiers who attributed their survival to the supposed "powers" of the pouch begs the question of, wouldn't they want to know "how" the pouch performed its miracles? Surely more than a few salvaged warriors were filled with gratitude toward the deity attached to the bolsa who facilitated their survival and/or success in warfare. It is not too much of a stretch to speculate that more than a few would be inspired to devote themselves to the cult of whichever deity this may have been.

While there are several examples of such pouches in Spanish Florida, The Mandinga pouches appear to have been a phenomenon that most popular within the Luso-Atlantic world, and in spite of having precursors in Spain--do not appear in the

records for Cuba. Why might they have "taken off" with such rapid fire in the Portuguese Atlantic, but not the Spanish Atlantic? Some of the "bolsa" accusations and cases extracted from the files of the Portuguese Inquisition suggest that the sheer breadth of the Portuguese Empire, at its prime, and the fact that there were men, soldiers and sailors alike, who moved around varied parts of the empire, no doubt accumulating certain cultural practices and passing them along in the course of their global journeys, may have well had something to do with it. Bolsas de mandinga have been the focus of intense scrutiny in recent historiography, and it is clear that they are a truly "Portuguese Empire" phenomenon.[349] In 1689, for example, a Portuguese soldier, who as it was noted in his denunciation, "had made several journeys to India," was denounced to the Inquisition for possessing a bolsa which contained five stones, described as being the size of a garbanzo bean, inside. The denouncer speculated that Silva carried the pouch with him in order to protect himself from the "danger of weapons."[350]

If bolsas ever took hold in Cuba amongst the white population or any other, they are conspicuously absent from the documentation. The material manifestations of African religion that become most apparent in eighteenth and nineteenth century Cuba (and, to a small extent, the seventeenth), are the use of cowry shells, the adoption of ñáñigo/abakuá symbols, and the integration of African symbolism into localized Marian devotions such as the *Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre,* the *Virgen de la Candelaria,* and the *Virgen de Regla.* It is of no small consequence that the areas where we witness the

[349] Daniela Buono Calainho, Métropole das Mandingas: religiosidade negra e inquisição portuguesa no antigo regime (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2008), Didier Lahon, Esclavage et Confréries Noires au Portugal durant l'Ancien *Regime (1441-1830),* (Unpublished PhD thesis, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2001), Vanicleia Silva Santos, *As bolsas de mandinga no espaço Atlântico: Século XVIII* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2008)
[350] ANTT, TSO/IL, CP 66, 42f-56f

most conspicuous flourishings of the adoption of African symbols and practices are in areas such as Regla and Guanabacoa where European-descended inhabitants were typically of the lower classes, and lived alongside African-descended peoples (and in the case of Guanabacoa, alongside indigenous people). In the case of Cuba, the cross-cultural and religious interactions were mostly of an affiliative, rather than an instrumental nature, as we have seen in Angola and Brazil.

In this chapter, I will examine the patterns that are evident for all the disparate cases, and attempt to reach an over-arching explanation behind the seemingly counterintuitive adoption of African and African-derived religious practices, beliefs and symbols by individuals of European descent in the Iberian Atlantic slave societies of early modern Angola, Brazil, and Cuba. Without going into lengthy historiographies about the social processes which lay behind the promulgation and reproduction of religious beliefs in any given society, the safest assumptions behind the conversion of large populations tend to be comprised of a narrative that involves the large-scale adoption of the religions of the conquerors by those who have been conquered.[351] As I progressed in the research and writing of this dissertation, it became clear that three major factors lay behind the large-scale adoption of African religious practices by whites in these colonies. First and foremost, African and European ideas about spirituality, the cosmos, and the divine order of things were not as divergent as has been previously assumed.

[351] This is not to discount the large corpus of literature about religious syncretism which occurred particularly among indigenous populations in New Spain and other portions of the Spanish Empire in the Americas, nor John Thornton's work on similar processes in the Congo. Rodney Stark has also attempted a theory of the social mechanisms behind the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire and the rest of Europe. See Rodney Stark, *The rise of Christianity: how the obscure, marginal Jesus movement became the dominant religious force in the Western world in a few centuries,* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Secondly, African religious practices with their focus on solving the dilemmas of the "here and now," through rituals geared toward healing, finding lost objects and treasures, clearing the roads to financial success, victory in warfare would have been very appealing in the new, treacherous and opportunity filled worlds which the colonies in Angola and in the Americas presented to Europeans. Thirdly, religious practices served as a social adhesive where European-descended and African-descended peoples lived side by side and this is particularly clear in the cases of eighteenth-century Angola and in nineteenth-century Cuba.

In the case of Angola, relationships of trust with local chieftains and warriors who were not strongly beholden to the Portuguese made absolute sense for ambitious Portuguese military officers, soldiers and slaves traders who required, among other things, trading partners, access to material goods and to slaves, and knowledge and access of overland routes and waterways. In the instance of Cuba, African religious practices such as divination (which seems to have served double-duty as a form of divinatory practice), and affiliation with the nanigo/abakua sects cemented alliances in lower class *barrios* such as Regla and Guanabacoa and eventually would, as I discussed in Chapter 4 and as Ivor Miller has argued,[352] fostered vertical social alliances which reinforced a sense of "creole consciousness" among Cubans of all races and social classes, and perhaps played a minor role in insurrections against Spanish rule.

COMMONALITIES AND "INTERPENETRATION"

[352] Ivor Miller, *Voice of the Leopard: African secret societies and Cuba*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009).

In the Early Modern period, more pointedly in the period when the Portuguese and Spanish were beginning to colonize Africa and the Americas, and beginning to interact with Africans, either as their owners or as trading partners, the respective cosmologies and ideas about the supernatural and the order of nature were not as markedly different as a person in the twenty-first century might imagine. A number of historians of medieval and early modern Europe have remarked that the average European of that time had a mentality that was much closer to pre-Christian ideas of the divine, and that "orthodox" Christianity was limited, for the most part, to the literate elite and to Catholic clergy. For instance, the eminent French historian of religion, Jean DeLumeau, has remarked that "...the 'golden age' of medieval Christianity is a legend. The religion of the mass of people in the west has been confused with the religion of a clerical élite,"[353] and further that "(European folklore manuals reveal that)...our ancestors had not at all the same conception of the universe. They believed that every body, living or inanimate, was composed of matter and a spirit....In such a universe, ultimately nothing is natural, particularly not sickness and death."[354]

So then, Iberian Europeans in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, whether they were exiled criminals newly arrived in Angola, ambitious sugar planters who found themselves in a treacherous disease environment in Brazil, or sailors who wanted to connect with their neighbors in Cuba, would likely not have found indigenous African and African-derived religious beliefs to be terribly exotic. To name but just a few of the potential points of "interpenetration," to use the terminology of Roger Bastide, pre-

[353] Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: a new view of the Counter-Reformation,* (London: Burns & Oates, 1977), 160.
[354] Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire,* 163.

Christian European and West and West Central African religious practices both typically had an animistic view of the world—that is to say, everything was imbued with a living spirit. Additionally, and partially as a consequence of this animistic worldview, there was a strong emphasis on healing in both cultural spheres.

The spiritual healing aspect of African religions that seemed to be so appealing to European descendants, particularly those in the Portuguese Empire, was the most widespread and appears to have been the most persistent, judging by the documentation. Two investigations from the *Cadernos do Promotor* (Prosecutor's notebooks) from mid-eighteenth century Brazil highlight this phenomenon.

In 1750, Joanna Antonia, described as a "native of Ilha Terceira" and as a resident in the neighborhood of Desterro, in Salvador da Bahia, was accused of "living with *feiticeiras*, having entered into a pact with the devil, and engaging in other superstitious practices." The accusation goes on to describe the "other superstitious acts" as prognosticating the future, with the aid of a *bolsa* into which she had placed images of Saint Mark and Saint Ciprian. More intriguingly, the accusation claims that Joanna Antonia "took some white rosary beads that had not yet been consecrated [by a Catholic priest] and placed them on a veranda from which one can see the ocean."[355]

Besides the presence of the oh-so-ubiquitous bolsa/Mandinga pouch in this accusation, there are two other aspects of this accusation that are worthy of further analysis. Saint Ciprian is a figure who repeatedly appears in Inquisitional denouncements and trial processes for magic, superstition, and witchcraft. Saint Cyprian,

[355] ANTT, TSO/IL, Cadernos do Promotor, Livro 109, 233f.

né Thascius Caecilianius Cyrianus into an aristocratic family, was elected Bishop of Carthage in 248 CE. Cyprian's tenure as Bishop of Carthage was plagued by multiple controversies, such as his firm stance against Catholics in Roman Carthage who lapsed into "pagan" practices, particularly that of animal sacrifice.[356] It is very odd that Ciprian keeps appearing in syncretistic magical rituals, considering that West and West Central African religious rites often involve offerings of, among other things, animals to the *orishas/nkisis,* but it is possible that he was integrated into African religious practices transported to the Americas because he was an African bishop. Symbols of, and prayers to Saint Augustine, who was also a Bishop of Carthage, also appear frequently in Inquisitional prosecutions for African-derived religious practices. It is also possible that, because of Ciprian's fame for having taken a firm stance against animal sacrifice in the Roman Empire in third-century North Africa, that the use of images of and prayers to him served as a proxy for actual animal sacrifice.

Joanna Antonia's origins in the Açores are indicative of another trend in the records. "Whites" involved in late-eighteenth-century accusations for engaging in African religious practices often had their birth or ancestral origins in the Atlantic islands. An especially intriguing 1775 accusation from Sabará, involved a Monica Maria de Jesus, described as a native of Ilha Terceira, her brother, João Coelho de Aleiar, a man named Henrique Brandão, described simply as "a native of this kingdom,"[357] and Antonio Angola, who is described as being the "slave of Luis Barbosa Lugares." Monica was the prime accused in this *diligencia,* which does not appear to have ever proceeded to a full

[356] Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7. See also J. Patout Burns Jr., *Cyprian the Bishop,* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 2002).
[357] The document does not make it clear whether "this kingdom" refers to Brazil, or to the entirety of the Portuguese Empire.

trial. Monica was accused of engaging in multiple "public and notorious" rituals that entailed the use of "diabolical superstitions." The accusation noted that Monica "has several slaves in her house who perform blessings and have the fame of sorcery." One statement in the accusation stated that "Everyone knows that Monica has superstitious customs and beliefs, and that she uses sorcerors to help her brother-in-law, who is sick." Monica's "superstitious" practices were not limited to efforts to heal her family members. Monica was also accused of conspiring with one of her female friends, Maria de Ceitas, oddly described as "an honorable and married woman," to perpetrate and propagate "diabolical superstitions" among the community in Sabará, which is located in Minas Gerais. Monica and Maria were said to regularly hold "calundus" which took place in Maria's house.[358]

Before I venture into the significance of Monica's Atlantic island origins, there are a few other aspects of this accusation that are striking. First, the circumstances of Monica's accusation are remarkably similar to the accusation of Pedro Coelho Oleiro, the "feiticeiro broker" in Bahia in 1687.[359] Monica was clearly a wealthy woman, as evidenced by her ownership of "several" slaves, who used her wealth to intentionally acquire slaves with the quality of *fama de feitiçaria,* and use the slaves for healing services and ritual specialist services. However, Monica's there is no mention of Monica or her friend Maria charging fees for the sorcery services. Monica seemed to simply want to share the rituals with whomever wanted to attend, and help her sick brother-in law. (There is no mention in the accusation that any of Monica's slaves engaged in healing practices with anyone else).

[358] ANTT, TSO/IL, Cadernos do Promotor, Livro 129, 247f-263f.
[359] ANTT, TSO/IL, Cadernos do Promotor, Livro 131, 130f-135v.

Additionally, the presence of "Antonio Angola" as an accused party in this diligencia speaks to a long-persisting trend of European-descendants, particularly those in the Portuguese Empire, gravitating toward West Central African, rather than West African, religious practice. This trend in the documentation reinforces John Thornton's thesis that West Central African religious practices, being the product of continuous revelation, rather than a solidified dogma, were extremely adaptable and could accommodate "foreign" ideas, and, as my research has shown, "foreign" individuals. It is also likely that, with the voluntary and relatively early adoption of Portuguese Catholic Christianity on the part of many West Central African groups, (including the Kingdom of Kongo, and, in Angola, the subjects of Queen Nzinga) indigenous Kongolese and Angolan religious practices which came across the South Atlantic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had incorporated "Christian" symbols such as crucifixes and less tangible ideologies and were thus somewhat "familiar" to European-descendants. In other words, there were more points of Bastidean "interpenetration" or to use Elijah Gould's terminology, "cultural entanglements." Additionally, as George Brooks has observed, elements common to "pre-Christian" religious traditions in both Europe and Africa likely played a role: "Portuguese and Africans shared a similar heritage of 'pagan' beliefs that antedate the spread of Christianity to either Europe or West Africa, which shared heritage encouraged mutual accommodation, acceptance, and syncretism of religious beliefs and practices."[360] Jacques LeGoff has additionally observed that "For the men of the Middle Ages the sacred often revealed itself in [such] disconcerting interactions between the spiritual and the corporeal. Kings demonstrated their sacred nature by curing scrofula

[360] George E. Brooks, "The Observance of All Souls' Day in the Guinea-Bissau Region: A Christian Holy Day, and African Harvest Festival, and African New Year's Celebration: Or All of the above(?)," *History in Africa*, Vol. 11 (1984), 2.

with their touch. The cadavers of saints revealed their sanctity by giving off a fragrant odor. Both divine revelations and diabolical acts were revealed in dreams and visions."[361] From all observations in the primary material and in the historiography pertinent to this subject, it is clear that African and European ideas about the creation of nature and the universe, the afterlife, and the ways in which the divine manifested itself in the mundane world were not terribly divergent when the worlds of the Europeans and the Africans collided, whether the "collisions" were the European conquests of Africa, slaves imported to the Iberian Peninsula, or slaves imported to the Americas.

The presence of Azoreans engaging in African religious practices in eighteenth-century Portuguese Inquisitional documents speaks to the possibility of an Atlantic religious *lingua franca,* large parts of which likely existed before Europeans and Africans had any significant, large-scale contact with one another, and parts of which evolved over the course of the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. People from the Atlantic islands—in the case of Cuba, immigrants from the Canary Islands--figure prominently in documentation from nineteenth-century Cuba which points to the participation of European descendants in African religious practices.

As I discussed in Chapter 4 regarding Cuba, governmental officials made mention of "games" which involved the use of *buzios,* or cowry shells, which were (and still are) typically used in West African divination practices. The official noted that the "buzio games" coincided with the feast day of Our Lady of Candelaria, which is a Marian devotion that is specific to Tenerife in the Canary Islands. A 1799 Royal Decree

[361] Jacques Le Goff, Trans. Arthur Goldhammer, *The Medieval Imagination,* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 85.

describes the transfer of the image of Our Lady of Candelaria to Havana from Tenerife, due to a fire that took place at the hermitage where the image was housed in Tenerife. The decree made explicit that the image should be transferred specifically to Cuba because of the large number of Canary Islanders in the area, and "because in the kingdoms of Peru and New Spain there is no special devotion to her."[362] Further, the devotion to Our Lady of Candelaria has integrated itself into contemporary Afro-Cuban *(Santería)* religious practices, and she has been syncretized with Oya, the Yoruba goddess of wind and storms.

Marian devotions are often the locus of syncretism, religious creolization, or cultural entanglement, as mother-figure deities are ubiquitous in human religion. The anthropologist William A. Christian, in his study of local religious practice in sixteenth-century Spain, has noted that "Prior to the eleventh century, lay votive devotion was directed to saints almost exclusively through their relics, and in countries like Spain was concentrated on local martyr, hermit, or bishop saints....Previously Mary could not be a major factor in the veneration of relics because of popular belief in her Assumption. But as the Mother of God she was an ideal successor to pre-Christian mother goddesses in the landscape."[363]

ON INSTRUMENTALITY

[362] Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, Legajo 118, Numero 15, "EXPEDIENTE QUE SE REFIERE AL TRASLADO DE LA IMAGEN DE N.S. DE LA CANDELARIA A CUBA, CON MOTIVO DEL INCENDIO DEL CONVENTO Y SU IGLESIA EN TENERIFE OBISPADO DE CANARIAS (SAN CRISTOBAL DE LA LAGUNA)," 1799, 1r-1v.
[363]William A. Christian, Jr., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 21.

As this research has progressed, and I have presented preliminary drafts and conclusions regarding my project, I have often been accused of taking an overly instrumentalist approach to the study of religious belief. I counter that with the study of religious beliefs and practices that run counter to "normative" practice, one cannot help but come across as instrumentalist. After all, who in their right minds would freely confess to the Inquisition that they had been engaging in religious transgressions, and thus risk losing their lives and/or property?

Additionally, West African and West Central African do not possess any documentation that can be referred to for easy historical reference. Fortunately, however, West and West Central African ritual practices typically involve numerous objects, such as buzio shells, that were easily recognized and described by Inquisitional witnesses or other observers, or physical actions on the part of ritual participants, such as dancing in repetitive steps, speaking in voices, and other scripted behaviors. As Roger Bastide wisely observed, "It is not civilizations that are in contact but human beings. Consequently, when two civilizations meet, it is psychic mechanisms that account for what happens. In the final analysis, then, the causal factor must be sought in the desires of individuals—the desire to differ from others, the desire for prestige, for a better lot, the desire to be imitated, reassertion of the claims of the self, affirmation of the defense of the self—and reinterpretation is linked not so much to the existence of cultural norms, of structural models...as to the recognition that the innovations or borrowings are mental and

cannot manifest themselves outside the limits set by the experience of the individuals themselves."[364]

Thus, this dissertation hopes to open a conversation about the probability of religious interchanges and transculturation between whites and blacks in the Early Modern Iberian Atlantic World, and the implications that this exchange had for the future development of these societies.

[364] Roger Bastide, Trans. Helen Sebba, *The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations,* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 15.

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Tríbunal do Santo Officio/Inquisição de Lisboa

Arquivo Historico Ultramarino (Lisbon, Portugal)

Angola

Biblioteca da Ajuda (Lisbon, Portugal)

Livro 50

Livro 54

Livro 57

Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Lisbon, Portugal)

Microfilmes

Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid, Spain)

Inquisición

Ultramar

Archivo General de Indias (Seville, Spain)

Audiencia de Santo Domingo

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