

“They Glorify in a Certain Independence”: The Politics of Identity in Kisama, Angola,
and Its Diasporas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

By

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Chapter One: Introduction

In 1632, seven Portuguese captains ventured north from Rio de Janeiro into a region of Brazil as yet unexplored by Europeans. There, they encountered a group of indigenous people and among them, one black (“*preto*”) man. Because this meeting took place at a great distance from any established towns or plantations, the Portuguese captains were “perplexed” and asked the man “who he was and how he came to be” in the area. When he responded that he was an emancipated slave, the Portuguese asked him if he was Brazilian-born. He replied that he was not, but was rather “of the nation of Quissamã.”¹ After noting that they did not see the man afterwards, and surmising that he had fled from his master and was wary of their queries, the Portuguese captains named the location after him. It bears the name Quissamã to this day.² The same year, the former governor of the Portuguese colony of Angola, Fernão de Sousa, wrote from Luanda of the fragility of the Portuguese military, slave-raiding and trading, and plantation enterprises in the region, complaining that the “souas on whom we border are

¹ As is true for historical transcriptions of words in most African languages by European authors, the orthographic representation of Kafuxi Ambari varies wildly, and includes Cafushe, Cafuchy, Cafuxe, Cafuxhe Cambare, Kafuxi kya Mbari, and others. This is also the case for words like Kisama (Quissama, Quisama, Quiçama, Quissamã, Quisyma), and *soba* (*sóva*, *sova*), and many others. Unless quoting an original source, in which case I use the orthography as it appears in the text, I write “Kafuxi Ambari,” “Kisama,” and “*soba*” in accordance not only with the most recent rules on Kimbundu orthography but also with the most current pronunciation within Kisama.

² Miguel Ayres Maldonado and Jozé de Castilho Pinto Pinto, “Descrição que faz o Capitão Miguel Ayres Maldonado e o Capitão Jozé de Castilho Pinto e seus compaheiros dos trabalhos e fadigas das suas vidas, que tiveram nas conquistas da capitania do Rio de Janeiro e São Vicente, com a gentilidade e com os piratas n’esta costa,” *Revista Trimensal do Instituto Histórico e Geographico Brasileiro* 56(1893): 379.

many and powerful, and warlike; in the province of Quissama... [they are] all non-Christians and our enemies.”³

What did these geographically and socio-politically disparate seventeenth-century men mean when they identified “Kisama,” either as a nation of origin or as the center of anti-Portuguese resistance? What did the Brazilian man mean when he spoke of himself as part of a “nation” which -- even by seventeenth-century standards -- without centralized political authority, common political institutions, or shared linguistic identities, hardly qualified? To gloss Kisama as a simple toponym referring to the arid lands between Angola’s Kwanza and Longa Rivers is to miss the cross-regional, trans-Atlantic political processes through which thousands of the most individually weak and vulnerable people in sixteenth- and seventeenth century Angola collectively forged a dynamic political identity predicated on resistance to slavery and the slave trade. Whatever Kisama may have meant in its first appearance in the written record, in a 21 February 1535 pledge of obedience to the pope by the king of the Kongo, Mvemba a Nzinga (Afonso I), its meaning had certainly changed a century later.⁴ We know this

³ “Relação da costa de Angola e Congo pelo ex-governador Fernão de Sousa,” 21 February 1632, in Antonio Brásio, ed. *Monumenta Missionaria Africana: Africa Occidental*, 10 vols. (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1962), VIII: 121.

Soba is a Kimbundu term meaning local leader and usually imbued with both political and ritual authority. The Portuguese appropriated the term and used it throughout Angola to mean “chief”, even in regions where neither “chief” nor “*soba*” initially had any meaning. In present-day Kisama, people use the term *soba*, and the Portuguese sources use it to refer to authority figures in Kisama from the late sixteenth century, but it is impossible to know if that was the term people within Kisama used during that period, or if not, when it was adopted. Because of its presence in archival sources, oral histories and memories, and political culture in present-day Kisama, I use the term throughout this dissertation. For a discussion of the comparative and historical linguistic history of the term *soba*, see Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa Before 1600* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 163-7.

⁴ “Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo III,” 21 Feb. 1535, cited in *MMA* II: 38.

fugitive in Brazil through a Portuguese-ascribed racial designation (“*preto*”) and, more importantly, through a political affiliation he himself claimed (“of the nation of Quissamã”). We also know him through the political discourse inherent in his status as a fugitive and his decision to flee yet again after his encounter with the Portuguese. This otherwise anonymous man in Brazil is the first person whom I have located in archival records who identified *himself* as Kisama, and it is no coincidence that he, as a fugitive, claimed membership in a “nation” that, by the 1630s, had a solid reputation throughout Angola as the home of fierce, intractably resistant warriors and runaways.⁵ While this archival sliver can only leave us guessing as to the political capital such a claim would have carried for an African man seemingly alone in a community of indigenous Brazilians, it appears likely that the Brazilian maroon’s claim drew from the same set of

⁵ The scholarly debate on the meaning of the term “nation” during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade is vast. Applying a quasi-Andersonian understanding to African identities, Douglas Chambers writes, “Although it is tempting to follow the terminology of contemporary sources and think of diasporic named groups as ‘nations’ (*nacións*) [sic], as John Thornton for example has done, or as ‘countries’, it is more appropriate to see them specifically as emergent ‘ethnies’ or nascent ethnic groups. The concept of a ‘nation’ normally presupposes a political formation (a polity), or the aspiration for one...But the diasporic groups generally did not correspond to the names of known African polities...Diasporic named groups did not signify specific political identities or known aspirations for separate nation-states, and generally did not have their own written languages. But they appeared to have been ‘affinity groups’ or intentional communities with a shared proper name, language, cultural identity, links to a homeland, collective memories and, as significantly, ‘shared amnesias...Therefore, one could be Eboe or Coromantee without identifying in any substantive way with the ancestral sub-groups of either collectivity. In effect, then, these diasporic ‘nations’ may well have been *ethnies*, [or] ‘named human population[s] with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members.” D. B. Chambers, “Ethnicity in the Diaspora: The Slave-Trade and the Creation of African ‘Nations’ in the Americas,” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 22, no. 3 (2001): 27. Mariza de Carvalho Soares argues for a distinction, “between the use of the term ‘nation’ as an emblem of identity [deriving from the] point of departure and the use of the term ‘nation’ as an emblem of ethnic identity,” implying a separation of notions of nation linked to geography, ostensibly ascribed by Europeans, and those linked to notions of belonging. Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *Devotos da cor: identidade étnica, religiosidade e escravidão no Rio de Janeiro, século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2000), 188-9. Luís Nicolau Parés, however, insists that, “the concept of provenance, as a determining factor in the construction of the idea of nation, is connected to theories of a primordial character of ethnicity that privileges origins,” and instead focuses on nation as a process in which identities shift from external ascriptions to internally-resonant self-ascriptions. Luis Nicolau Parés, *A formação do candomblé: história e ritual da nação jeje na Bahia* (Campinas, SP: Editora Unicamp, 2006), 26-7.

signifiers that underwrote De Sousa's complaints. The synchronicity of these claims, too, hints at a hidden history of revolutionary ideology circulating through the Africa and the Americas in the early seventeenth century – a history silenced both as it was happening and as it was later narrated.⁶

The historical processes through which Kisama acquired these mutually intelligible meanings are an integral part of the story I am telling. Though relatively small geographically and in terms of population, Kisama has long played a vital role throughout West Central Africa. Even before the Portuguese arrived in 1482, rock salt from the mines of Ndemba in Kisama functioned as a currency throughout the region.⁷ It was likely the importance of this resource that led the king of Kongo to claim suzerainty over Kisama in 1535, just as the king of Portugal specifically granted Paulo Dias de Novais rights to these salt mines in the 1571 charter that enabled him to establish the colony of Angola.⁸ There are tantalizing linguistic and oral historical hints, too, that Kisama's roots as a region of refuge and resistance may lie in the desire to protect this valuable resource from outsiders, long before Europeans arrived, and these mines remained central to outsiders' – both African and European -- understandings of Kisama well into the nineteenth century.

Located between the Portuguese colonial ports of Luanda and Benguela – the first and fourth highest volume ports of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, respectively – Kisama played a vital role in the politics and practices that effected and were affected by the

⁶ See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

⁷ Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 188.

⁸ “Carta da doação a Paulo Dias de Novais,” 19 September 1571, in *MMA* III: 36.

trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁹ However, beginning in the late sixteenth century, the particular political, intellectual, martial, social, and cultural responses of African people to the mounting violence that accompanied the expansion of both slavery and the slave trade in the region led to the emergence of a Kisama identity associated as much with resistance, martial efficacy, spiritual power, political decentralization, and the harboring of fugitives as with salt mining. In this dissertation, I situate the histories of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kisama in a deeper, broader regional historical and political context, and ask how it came to be associated with nearly static tropes of resistance and ferocity from the late sixteenth through the twentieth centuries.

I am motivated to investigate and historically contextualize the meaning to the seemingly obscure 1632 claims above because I believe they help illuminate some of the most pertinent and challenging aspects underlying the study of African lives, beliefs, and political practices in the early modern world and their relationships to what many label the (Black) Atlantic. Touching upon the now-predominant scholarly concern with the nature of African identities around the Atlantic basin during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the questions animating this study revolve around the nature of political discourses in places and spaces characterized by a near complete lack of the institutions and features that most scholars and popular intellectuals take for granted as essential in the formation of political identities. In other words, focusing on Kisama identity in Angola and its diasporas in the sixteenth and seventeenth century allows for us to glimpse the meanings with which African peoples who were not part of empires or centralized

⁹ David Eltis, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment," *The William and Mary Quarterly*. 58, no. 1 (2001): 17-42, Mariana Pinho Candido, "Enslaving Frontiers: Slavery, Trade and Identity in Benguela, 1780-1850" (York University, 2006), 18.

states imbued with their own identities, the axes around which people contested and constructed the meanings of these identities, and how ever-shifting African identities further changed in the context of maroonage in the Americas.

Walter Hawthorne argues convincingly for the previously unrecognized prevalence of members of decentralized societies in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and for the importance of historicizing these societies beyond the older scholarship that simply views them as “hinterlands” for the predatory slave raids of neighboring centralized states. Other historians have more recently expanded Hawthorne’s critical approach from the Upper Guinean context where he works to the Niger River Delta (Nwokeji) and the eighteenth-century Gold Coast (Shumway).¹⁰ The research of Hawthorne, Nwokeji, and Shumway does not merely fill in empty areas in a coherent, overall narrative of Africa and Africans in the Atlantic world; rather, it suggests new and important ways that the narratives themselves need to be fundamentally altered. Building on these valuable insights, I argue that it is essential that we understand more about the worlds outside of the centralized and richly documented kingdoms like Kongo and Ndongo in West Central

¹⁰ Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations Along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400 - 1900* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Prior to the publication of Hawthorne’s book, he and Andrew Hubbell each published articles advancing their arguments about slavery and the slave trade in decentralized societies, to which Martin Klein, who had previously promoted the “predatory state” hypothesis that tended to marginalize the agency of non-state actors, replied. Walter Hawthorne, “Nourishing a Stateless Society During the Slave Trade: The Rise of Balanta Paddy-Rice Production in Guinea-Bissau,” *The Journal of African History* 42, no. 01 (2001): 1-24, Andrew Hubbell, “A View of the Slave Trade from the Margin: Souroudougou in the Late Nineteenth-Century Slave Trade of the Niger Bend,” *The Journal of African History* 42, no. 01 (2001): 25-47, Martin A. Klein, “The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies,” *The Journal of African History* 42, no. 01 (2001): 49-65.

Africa. Important in their own right in Africa, these are also the source communities for the many of those who arrived in the Americas before the nineteenth century.¹¹

There is ample evidence that, barring periods of civil wars, kidnappings and judicial enslavement, one of the benefits of living in a centralized state during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade was ostensible protection from capture and sale. In fact, in his famous 1526 letter of protest to King João III of Portugal, King Mbemba a Nzinga of the Kongo objected not to slavery but rather to the Portuguese violation of treaties which protected the free-born citizens of the Kongo from enslavement; Mbemba a Nzinga and other Kongo nobility at the time imagined that those people living outside of Kongo state control could be justifiably enslaved.¹² While by the beginning of the eighteenth century, citizens of the Kongo were increasingly vulnerable to enslavement from the endless internecine struggles within the kingdom, rulers of centralized states throughout Africa during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade maintained political legitimacy to the degree that they could protect their own citizens from capture while benefitting economically and politically from the enslavement and sale of outsiders.¹³ If those living outside of the protection of powerful states like Kongo and Ndongo were most vulnerable

¹¹ For an excellent discussion of the relationship between colonial and post-colonial politics and the scholarly focus on pre-colonial centralized states, see Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010). Kodesh's work also highlights the ways in which even the most centralized of states, like Buganda, have important, non-state nodes of power whose histories and historical perspectives enable us to re-imagine these societies beyond their courts.

¹² "Carta de Afonso I a João III," 18 October 1526, in *MMA I*: 489-90.

¹³ Linda Heywood, "Slavery and Its Transformations in the Kingdom of Kongo: 1491-1800," *The Journal of African History* 50, no. 01 (2009): 1-22. For a fascinating comparative study of the connections between protection from enslavement and political legitimacy in West Africa, see Jennifer Lofkrantz, "Protecting Freeborn Muslims: The Sokoto Caliphate's Attempts to Prevent Illegal Enslavement and its Acceptance of the Strategy of Ransoming," *Slavery and Abolition* 32, no. 1 (2011): 109-27.

to enslavement, why then did the overwhelming majority of those who arrived in the Americas identify with the polities who had likely been responsible for their capture and sale, appearing in the records of church, plantation, and state as “Congos” and “Angolas”?¹⁴ And for those in Africa and the Americas who instead chose to self-identify as members of (relatively) obscure, decentralized societies like Kisama, what were the stakes? Without the kinds of broad-reaching political and social institutions like centralized governments, age-grade cohorts, secret societies, or literate and mobile citizens that scholars normally define as pre-requisites for the formation of any type of coherent political identity, how did those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers in Angola -- or in maroon societies in the Americas – understand themselves as Kisama?

In this dissertation, I seek to unravel the processes by which Kisama shifted from a primarily geographical referent (“the province of Kisama”) to one with which people identified politically, socially, and culturally (“the nation of Quissamã”) through debates over the meaning and the contours of political legitimacy and its relationship to violence in a world characterized for most by dislocation, alienation, and deprivation.¹⁵ In Angola, changes in local conceptions about the relationship between military prowess and leadership during the early seventeenth century, influenced by the charisma and efficacy of a series of *sobas* named Kafuxi Ambari, helped drive the emergence of an

¹⁴ This is a complex question that can only be understood in terms of extremely localized histories in both Africa and the Americas. For a detailed study of shifting articulations of identity and the relationship between conditions of conquest and violent dislocation in Africa and identity and cultural practices in the America, see James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

¹⁵ For details on the experience of capture and march towards the coast in Angola, see Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

internally-relevant Kisama identity. Those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers transformed the meaning of Kisama from a territorial referent to set of traits modeled on the exceptional qualities and practices of Kafuxi Ambari, including ferocity, commitment to autonomy, and intractable resistance. As the reputation of Kisama as the locus of effective military resistance grew, it attracted thousands of runaways, including entire groups of trained soldiers from the armies of Ndongo and Portuguese auxiliary forces and large numbers of women. These runaways in turn reconfigured the political and cultural landscape of Kisama identities, preserving and encouraging the association of Kisama with martial skill and spiritual aptitude while – in contrast to other groups like the Imbangala who also formed in response to the omnipresent violence and dislocation of the period – refusing to institutionalize martial social idioms. Kisama became a society of warriors by reputation while eschewing the institutionalization of any enduring warrior class. It is no coincidence that during this same critical period of the 1630s, Kisama-identified people first appear in sources from the Americas, almost always in conjunction with maroonage and resistance, as in the case of the Brazilian anecdote above or the several Kisama-identified men and women who appear in documents concerning a *palenque* (maroon settlement) outside of Cartagena in 1634. A study of Kisama can therefore illuminate the complex history of Africans in Africa and the Americas during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from the perspective of the vulnerable as they worked to transform themselves into the collectively inviolable. By studying Kisama, we can understand how local histories informed global historical memories for centuries, and how these global historical memories in turn dialogically shaped local practices and identities.

My dissertation intervenes in several distinct bodies of scholarly literature. First, my focus on Kisama addresses a lacuna in the relatively extensive scholarship (by Africanist standards) on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Angolan history. Kisama's history plays at the margins of most of the important canonical historical texts about the region, normally garnering at most a sentence or two of attention and a mention in a couple of footnotes. For most historians of Angola during this period, a mention of the role of Kisama as a "maroon colony" and as the source of the rock salt of Ndemba is adequate in narratives that tend to center Kongo, Ndongo, Matamba, and the Imbangala/Kasanje.¹⁶ There are only two works that fully engage Kisama's history: one article by Beatrix Heintze in the 1970s (originally written in German, and then abridged and translated into English) and one doctoral dissertation by Aurora da Fonseca Ferreira in 2000.¹⁷ Heintze provides the first secondary scholarly narrative of Kisama's history in her short article. However, she uses only printed published sources, and her study is intentionally more encyclopedic than critical or analytical. Ferreira's preoccupation in her much longer dissertation is to contextualize the rural, non-elite martial rebellion against the Portuguese at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth

¹⁶ See, for example, João Pereira Bastos, *Angola e Brasil, duas terras lusíadas do Atlântico* (Lourenço Marques 1964), David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours Under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), Joseph Miller, "The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History," *Journal of African History* 13(1972), Joseph Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), Miller, *Way of Death*, Adriano Parreira, *Economia e sociedade em Angola na época da Rainha Jinga, século XVII* (Lisbon: Imprensa Universitária, 1990), Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Making of the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Beatrix Heintze, "Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kultur der Kisama (Angola)," *Paideuma* 16(1970): 159-86, Beatrix Heintze, "Historical Notes on the Kisama of Angola," *Journal of African History* 13, no. 3 (1972): 407-18. and Aurora da Fonseca Ferreira, "La Kisama (en Angola) du XVIe au début du XXe siècle" (Ph.D. dissertation, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2000).

centuries. While she does make use of many of the same archival and printed primary sources from which I draw, and indeed spent a short time in Kisama itself interviewing *sobas* and their families, her interest in finding evidence of MPLA- (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, the ruling party in Angola since 1975) authorized nationalism in the rural past renders much of her analysis anachronistic.¹⁸ My engagement with Kisama's history does more than fill in a missing piece of Angolan history, however. I argue that it also fundamentally shifts our understanding of the discourses within which political power functioned and was contested in a region that, given the nature of past scholarship, has been overshadowed by highly centralized systems; it also alters our conception of political imagination in seventeenth-century Angola, and, by extension, in African and African-descended communities in the seventeenth-century Americas.

Second, a detailed study of Kisama's history provides unique insight into discussions of maroonage in the Americas that have remained strikingly Herskovitsian in their approach. Most scholars of maroonage are (Latin) Americanist by training, and their reliance on secondary literature to understand the African histories undergirding American maroon communities has an unfortunate tendency to historically flatten African political, social, intellectual, and cultural processes and logics in much of their work.¹⁹ However, because I consider Kisama *in Angola* an inherently maroon identity,

¹⁸ For example, she writes that, "Our goal is to better understand the relationships between various elites and to deepen relations between the movements of armed resistance against the occupation and the challenge of intellectuals or 'scholars' against Portuguese colonization, thereby also contributing to the increase in knowledge about the origins of nationalism in Angola." Ferreira, "La Kisama", 9.

¹⁹ An important exception is the recent contributions of John Thornton to the study of Palmares. See John K. Thornton, "Les Etats de l'Angola et la formation de Palmares (Bresil)," *Annales de'histoire e sciences sociales* 63, no. 4 (2008): 769-98, John Thornton, "Angola e as origens de Palmares," in *Mocambos de Palmares: histórias e fontes (séculos XVI-XIX)*, ed. Flávio dos Santos Gomes (Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras, 2010).

my detailed examination of the evolution of political ideology between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century allows for me to generate a view of maroonage in the Americas grounded in a particular African political history, rather than merely a region of provenance. Because Kisama's existence was always predicated on its regional reputation, the *idea* of Kisama was a discursive tool that many, if not most, West Central Africans carried with them to the Americas. Investigating the ways in which maroons in the Americas wielded this political tool reveals much more about its contested meanings in Angola than sources from Africa alone could reveal.

Third, my treatment of Kisama intellectual, political, and cultural histories as inherently trans-local and trans-Atlantic intervenes both epistemologically and methodologically in the burgeoning literature of the African Diaspora and the Black Atlantic historical fields, as I discuss below. Though recent scholarship of the Black Atlantic has moved far beyond the essentialist presumptions of the earliest work and the anachronistic revisions of its critics, it is still nearly impossible to locate a historical study of Kisama identity within the existing boundaries of the field. To that end, drawing from important studies of the relationship between centralized power and resistant ideologies in other parts of the world, my dissertation also seeks to map out a new intellectual terrain, which I call fugitive modernities.

Meaning from the Margins: New Chronologies and Geographies from a Small Place

By any measure, Kisama is a small, remote place. The territory between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers commonly considered as Kisama occupies roughly 8,700 square miles, or about the same area as the state of Massachusetts.²⁰ While it is only

²⁰ Ferreira, "La Kisama", 7.

approximately 40 miles from Luanda to the nearest part of Kisama along the Atlantic coast, the social distance from the capital has long been considerably greater. Since at least the sixteenth century, the region has been relatively sparsely populated, at least in relation to the Central Plateau and the Lukala and Bengo River valleys, in no small part because of its endemic aridity.²¹ While the relationship between the natural aridity of the land and the subsistence patterns of those living on it undoubtedly changed during the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century period on which I focus here – perhaps most importantly, through the adoption of the American cultigens manioc, maize, and sweet potatoes, as I discuss in chapter three – the regularity of drought in the region does seem to be an enduring feature.²² While aridity may have been a longstanding attribute of the region, the historical descriptions of the region’s depopulation through endemic disease and drought should be read with a degree of skepticism. Beyond the highly questionable methodology through which these observers obtained their estimates, it is worth noting that the high mortality that early twentieth-century German soldier and ethnographer

²¹ Even in the present day, it is nearly impossible to arrive at a reasonable estimate of the population of Angola as a whole, or of Kisama in particular. The last complete census of Angola was undertaken by the Portuguese in 1970, five years prior to independence; many Angolans avoided being counted for fear of being detained by the colonial government. Since that time, three decades of war and massive dislocation and migration have undoubtedly radically altered even the incomplete picture available from the 1970 census. See “Angola Promises First Census Since 1970 by 2010,” *African Center for Statistics*, 7 December 2006, <http://www.uneca.org/STATISTICS/News_Angola_census.htm>. In her dissertation, Ferreria cites different nineteenth- and twentieth-century estimates of Kisama’s population. Among these are the colonial district official in Massangano’s 1847 estimate of a population of 9,350-10,350 in the northern part of the region. In the same period, German explorer Magyar estimated that a population of approximately 25,000 people lived in Kisama. By 1920s, Mattenklodt cited Portuguese sources who claimed that in the preceding thirty years, only 10,000 of the original 30,000-40,000 inhabitants of Kisama survived a particularly virulent outbreak of sleeping sickness. Near the end of the colonial period, an ecologist estimated approximately 6,000 people lived in the region. Ferreira, “La Kisama,” 69-72.

²² See, for example, Joseph C. Miller, “The Significance of Drought, Disease and Famine in the Agriculturally Marginal Zones of West-Central Africa,” *The Journal of African History* 23(1982): 17-61. and Jill R. Dias, “Famine and Disease in the History of Angola c. 1830-1930,” *Journal of African History* 22(1981): 349-78.

Mattenklodt's source attributes to sleeping sickness belies the high number of those killed and displaced in Portuguese early-twentieth-century efforts to fully occupy the land and impose forced cultivation of cotton on the people living there. Later colonial accounts of population are suspect because they reinforce Portuguese arguments in favor of declaring the area first a game reserve (1938) and later a national park (1957).²³ This twentieth-century history of Kisama as a hunting reserve and national game park has contributed to an Angolan national and international mindset that constructs the region between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers as devoid of human settlement.²⁴

Indeed, despite all of the advancement of technology and outsider knowledge about the region, even today, most maps indicate nothing in the region save the national park and, perhaps, Muxima and Cabo Ledo, at the bar of the Kwanza River. In the most literal sense, then, Kisama has been and remains a blank space in the imaginary within and about Angola. Beyond Angola, Kisama has not left an obvious mark in the Americas in the same way that other African identities have. While there are a handful of towns and places that are apparently named after Kisama – two towns in Brazil, including the one in Rio de Janeiro mentioned above and another in Sergipe, one in Panamá, and one in Chile – there are few signs of enduring, widespread, collective, and explicitly Kisama-style cultural institutions in the Americas on the scale of the well-known practices deriving from, for example, Kongo or the Yoruba-speaking areas of southwestern

²³ For example, in 1588, an anonymous Portuguese source reported an extremely severe drought in part of Kisama, which I will discuss at greater length in chapter two. See “Estado religioso e politico de Angola,” in *MMA* III: 375-6.

²⁴ For a detailed critique of this process in an East African context, see Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007).

Nigeria.²⁵ In spite of this apparent marginality on either side of the Atlantic, however, I argue that Kisama's "small" history allows us important insight into aspects of Angolan and African Diaspora/Black Atlantic history that otherwise remain unintelligible.

Those who created Kisama identities are paradigmatic examples of the sort of people James C. Scott meant in his recent call to develop "a global history of populations trying to avoid, or having been extruded by, the state."²⁶ Scott calls for a trans-national, cross-regional approach that understands "hill people" in a dialogic relationship with the states in resistance to whom their identities were forged and re-forged. Arguing against scholarship that tends to, unsurprisingly, replicate ontologies of state by viewing those who live outside of centralized political entities as uncivilized remnants of an earlier stage of human political development (often glossed, especially in African and African Atlantic scholarship as "the hinterlands"), Scott asserts that fragmented, diverse, and non-centralized political regions evolved as conscious responses to the acquisitive, repressive nature of states. According to Scott, "[s]hatter zones are found wherever the expansion of states, empires, slave-trading, and wars, as well as natural disasters, have driven large numbers of people to seek refuge in out-of-the-way places."²⁷ Kisama is exactly such a place, where fugitives from kingdoms in the north, south, and east had long settled, and where those fleeing Portuguese incursions from at least the early seventeenth century into

²⁵ The one notable exception to this statement that I have found is the Kisama-identified *cabildo* (mutual aid association) that seems to have endured throughout the nineteenth century in Buenos Aires, Argentina. See George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 144-9.

²⁶ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 328.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

the twentieth found refuge. Archaeological, linguistic, botanical, and further oral historical research is necessary to be able to say with certainty, but Kisama likely served as a haven from expanding states since the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century conquests of Kongo and Ndongo.²⁸ It is Kisama's status as a shatter zone, or long-standing maroon society, that makes it an ideal place from which to reconfigure many of the most basic categories of time and space that define the fields of African and African Diaspora/Black Atlantic histories and to advance the case for considering fugitive modernities as a perspective from which to interrogate the intellectual and political practices of Africans in Africa and the Americas.

Since at least the mid-1990s, scholars have assailed the still-prevailing convention of dividing the history of Africa (and the rest of the world outside of Europe, for that matter) into pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods.²⁹ The shortcomings of this schematic are clear: "it 'privileges as primary the role of colonialism', and implies that 'all that came before colonialism becomes its own prehistory and whatever comes after can only be lived as infinite aftermath.'" ³⁰ From a historical perspective, this

²⁸ For a detailed discussion of the relationship of oral traditions of voluntary confederation and military conquest in early Kongo to the politics of the sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century state, see John Thornton, "The Origins and Early History of the Kingdom of Kongo, c. 1350-1550," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 1 (2001): 89-120. For a discussion of an ecologically, politically, and linguistically similar shatter zone in Angola, where there is suggestive evidence for the deeper antiquity of the practice of flight, see Jan Vansina's discussion of the area around the lower Okavango River in southern Angola. Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 182-6.

²⁹ See, for example, Ella Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'," *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (1992): 99-113, Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1516-45, T. O. Ranger and Richard P. Werbner, *Postcolonial Identities in Africa* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1996), Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

³⁰ Aijaz Ahmad, "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality," *Race & Class* 36, no. 3 (1995): 6-7., cited in Rita Abrahamsen, "African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge," *African Affairs* 102, no. 407 (2003): 193.

periodization flattens everything that came before the Europeans into a single, indistinct mass, attributes agency only to European actors and those Africans who were influenced by and emulated them, and imposes the illusion of sovereignty onto people who don't experience their own lives as post-colonial in any meaningful way. For example, the Congolese soldiers who, mere days after the official declaration of independence on 30 June 1960, witnessed the Belgian commander who remained in charge of the supposedly sovereign national army write "Before Independence = After Independence" on a chalk board, would likely contest such categories.³¹ Surely, no one imagines that an eleventh-century merchant in an urban settlement in the Niger River bend or a blacksmith in fourteenth-century Central Africa paused during their daily activities to wonder when colonialism would commence and their history would begin.

And, indeed, when *did* colonialism begin? Did colonialism arrive in West Central Africa on board Diego Cão's 1482 ships, or with Paulo Dias de Novais's formal establishment of a colony in Luanda in 1575? Were those who were forced to work as slaves growing manioc in the Lukala and Bengo River valleys of early seventeenth-century Angola colonial subjects? Were their contemporaries who lived under vassalage treaties with the Portuguese? Did a man or woman captured deep in the interior of Africa, forcibly marched to the coast, boarded on a slave ship in chains, and then made to labor until death on a sugar plantation in Brazil transition from pre-colonial Africa to colonial Latin America? Did colonialism start only after 1808, though the British abolition of the slave trade would take another few decades to impact life in the region? Or was it the other date commonly recognized by those who divide African history

³¹ Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (New York: Verso, 2001), 6.

curricula: the beginning of the so-called scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century? Such questions merely illustrate the indefensible teleology and Eurocentric perspective of the pre-colonial/colonial/post-colonial divide. Furthermore, they reinforce how, given Portuguese marginality within Europe and the conventional scholarship of empires, the common use of the nineteenth century as the dividing line only renders places like Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé, Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique further outside of the normative discussions about African history.

Into the twentieth century, Portuguese colonial officials still spoke of the necessity of conquering Kisama and bringing it into the colonial sphere, and yet the Portuguese built a fort on the southern banks of the Kwanza River in the late sixteenth century. In the early sixteenth century, the king of Kongo claimed Kisama as one of his provinces, and yet in the mid-seventeenth century, Queen Njinga described the conquest of Kisama as something no one had yet accomplished.³² While there is no doubt that the violence through which the Portuguese and other European powers and their allies acquired bondsmen and women for sale was on an unprecedented scale, there is no reason to assume that those who may have fled across the Kwanza River to escape Kongo and Ndongo state power would have understood their political options in radically different terms than later fugitives from the Portuguese. Extending the notion of colonialism backward to include these state expansions – and characterizing resistance to it as anti-colonial -- ignores the particularities of local politics in favor of adopting a

³² “Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo III,” 21 February 1535, cited in *MMA II*: 38, Linda Heywood, “Letter from Queen Ana Njinga to the Governor General of Angola, December 13, 1655,” in Kathryn McKnight and Leo Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives from the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World, 1550-1812* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 2009), 47. Translation of text of letter by Luis Madureira.

concept that fails to even adequately explain practices of Europeans in the fifteenth through twentieth centuries.

The use of the conventional periodization throughout the world outside of Europe is part of discourse anthropologist Richard Wilk describes as colonial time. According to Wilk, colonial time is “a system that merges time with distance and cultural difference. The three are treated as aspects of the same phenomenon. Time, distance, and culture are almost interchangeable concepts in explaining and justifying the differences between the colony and the metropole.”³³ From the standpoint of colonial time, the more distant a people or place is from the metropole, both spatially and culturally, the more they represent an earlier stage in a linear history of human society and political development. This discursive conflation of time, space, and location on a supposed linear model of development not only silences histories of places like Kisama, but it also inhibits imagining chronological frameworks sensitive to local and regional conditions. Colonial time is part of the process through which centralized states that were most legible to their European interlocutors continue to dominate studies of earlier African history. This discourse is also inherent to the means through which those who later monopolized central state power throughout Africa represented fugitive politics in the “shatter zone” regions as remnants of an earlier time, and those participating in such politics as primitive, primordial, living ancestors.³⁴ Because colonial time has a spatial element as

³³ Richard R. Wilk, "Colonial Time and TV Time: Television and Temporality in Belize," *Visual Anthropology Review* 10(1994): 95-6.

³⁴ This discourse is perhaps nowhere more clear than in the continued use of present-day non-agricultural people as living windows into a remote past. For important critiques of this ideology and its relationship to the writing of history, see Kairn A. Klieman, *"The Pygmies Were our Compass": Bantu and Batwa in the History of West Central Africa, Early Times to c. 1900 C.E* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze*.

well, deracinating my study of Kisama from a temporal ontology centered on colonization compels me to define a new conceptual terrain within which to locate my research, separate from – or at least distinct within -- the most obvious field within which to locate a study of Kisama history: the long, dynamic body of scholarship concerning the African Diaspora and, in the last couple of decades, the newer domain of (Black) Atlantic Studies. Both of these approaches are tacitly undergirded by colonial time and undermined by their conflation of time, space, and political development. In particular, the popular notion of “creolization” and “Atlantic creoles” correlates cultural change with European contact. By contrast, my study of Kisama and my notion of fugitive modernities allow us to follow the political practices and discursive strategies through which those fleeing from and resisting the violence of states – in this period, violence closely associated with the trans-Atlantic slave trade – without differentially attributing agency to various actors. Those who forged Kisama identities in Angola were not the African source of a more modern African American cultural or political practice, nor the more backward kin of their neighbors in Kongo or Ndongo. Rather, their histories provide a critical perspective on intellectual and political history in sixteenth and seventeenth century Africa and the African Diaspora removed from the problematic chronotopes of earlier scholarship.

The historiography of the African Diaspora has been well-explored in recent years by scholars from diverse perspectives.³⁵ Most agree that the early twentieth-century

³⁵ See, for example, Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43(2000): 11-43, Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), James H. Sweet and Tejumola Olaniyan, eds., *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

scholarship of those like Herskovits and Frazier in the United States, Rodrigues, Carneiro, and Ramos in Brazil, Ortíz in Cuba, and Beltrán in Mexico was animated by the conjunction of ahistorical, essentialized views of Africans and African culture (often in a singular sense) and the perceived need to explain the compatibility of African-descended people in the Americas with modern nation-states.³⁶ In the 1970s, American anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Richard Price changed the debate from a pre-occupation with proving or disproving the unaltered retention of African practices in the Americas to considering the processes through which African bondsmen and women adapted to their new circumstances in the Americas. The major contribution of Mintz and Price's 1976 *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past* -- republished in 1992 as *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* -- is their introduction of a more historically-oriented approach to the relationship between Africa and African Americans; they insisted upon a focus on the processes through which diverse Africans forged unique, cohesive cultures in particular American locations.

However, the fundamental assertion underlying their entire argument that African cultures in the Americas were forged through the process of creolization -- that Africans arrived in the Americas in "heterogeneous crowds" too mixed to allow for the

³⁶ Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), Edward Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), Nina Rodrigues, *Os africanos no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1932), Edison Carneiro, *Religiões negras: notas de etnografia religiosa* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização brasileira, 1936), Arthur Ramos, *O negro brasileiro: etnographia religiosa e psychanalyse* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1934), Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar (advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación)* (Havana: J. Montero, 1940), Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México 1519-1810: estudio etnohistórico* (México: Fuente Cultural, 1946).

coherent presence of any one particular African culture in any place in the Americas – has long since been undermined by the exhaustive efforts of those who have compiled the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*. First released in 1999 and then updated a decade later and published in openly-accessible form on the internet, the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* is the most complete collection of demographic data on those captured, enslaved, and transported across the Atlantic. Comprising records from nearly 35,000 voyages on which slave traders forcibly shipped over 10,000,000 African people, the database reveals discernable demographic waves of captives from particular regions of Africa arriving in specific destinations in the Americas.³⁷ Scholars responded to this new and important data in two ways: by either modifying the creolist thesis to reposition the locus of creolization in Africa (Atlantic creolists) or by insisting on a focus on the transmission of specifically historicized African cultural patterns to the Americas by waves of captives who came from the same regions (the “revisionist” school). The body of scholarship labeled as “revisionist” by Paul Lovejoy “shift[s] the emphasis from the birth of a new culture and society to the maintenance of ties with the homeland.”³⁸ In these revisionist analyses, the interpretation of African Diasporic history begins in a historicized Africa, and many specific case studies have shown that “we should assume that specific African cultural forms and systems of thought survived intact.”³⁹ Since the mid 2000s, few, if any, have questioned the importance of the “revisionist” view on the

³⁷ "The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database."

³⁸ Lovejoy, “The African Diaspora: Revisionist Interpretations,” 4.

³⁹ James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 229. For other examples, see the essays in Lovejoy, ed., *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery*, Lovejoy and Trotman, eds., *The Trans-Atlantic Dimension of Ethnicity* and T.J. Desch Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Arts Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

relevance of particular African histories on African American cultures. If anything, this scholarship has informed the more recent and popular iterations of the Atlantic creolists.⁴⁰

First articulated by Americanist Ira Berlin prior to the release of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, the popular Atlantic creole approach focuses on early generations of enslaved Africans who, “by their experiences and sometimes their persons...had become part of the three worlds that came together along the Atlantic littoral...[T]hey were cosmopolitan in the fullest sense.”⁴¹ Acknowledging the critiques of Berlin’s reliance on creolized West Africans and enslaved people from Spanish colonies to comprise the creolized Charter Generation, Africanists Linda Heywood and John Thornton assert that “[t]hese object[ions] are removed once one accepts...that the vast majority of the Charter Generation had West Central African and not West African roots.”⁴² Thus, the entire plausibility of Heywood and Thornton’s argument for a creolized West Central African Charter Generation relies on their ability to prove both that West Central Africans comprised the majority of Africans first brought to the British- and Dutch- colonized Americas about which they write (a claim whose

⁴⁰ For example, Thornton – one of the primary proponents of the Atlantic creolist position – discusses the significance of the “Angolan wave” on the political practices in the Brazilian maroon community of Palmares in the seventeenth century. See Thornton, “Les Etats de l’Angola,” 769-98. Indeed, in his earlier important article about the role of Kongo politics and martial training in the Haitian Revolution itself seems to be rather “revisionist.” John K. Thornton, “I Am the Subject of the King of Congo’: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution,” *Journal of World History* 4, no. 2 (1993): 181-214.

⁴¹ Ira Berlin, “From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African- American Society in Mainland North America,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1996) See also Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*.

⁴² Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 236.

importance reflects the influence of the “revisionist” scholars generally and the Africanist perspectives of Thornton and Heywood in particular) and, more crucially, that those West Central Africans who were brought were Atlantic Creoles. While the authors succeed admirably in supporting the first claim, the second claim rests on far more tenuous ground.

The first question, on both the African and American side of the Atlantic, is what it truly means to be creolized? For Heywood and Thornton, as for Berlin and Mintz and Price, creolization is the synthesis of Europeans cultural elements by Africans. To prove that Central Africans in Africa were creolized, Heywood and Thornton draw on the ample documentary record of the engagement of the Kingdom of Kongo with Europe. While this is an example of one kind of social shift brought about by engagement with the trans-Atlantic economy, there were undoubtedly others, which Heywood and Thornton do not explore. For example, while the authors mention Kisama at numerous points in their work, they do not even consider the types of cultural changes that took place in communities like Kisama, where thousands of refugees from diverse regions and societies in Angola fled to escape enslavement, forming new political, social, and cultural identities. While Heywood and Thornton do discuss the radical social dynamics of the kinless nomadic warrior society Imbangala at some length, they do not consider how the radical social and cultural forms that enabled Imbangala to assimilate diverse captives are related to creolization.⁴³ These examples of cultural mixing and innovation among

⁴³ The Imbangala, or Jaga in the contemporary sources, were kinless, nomadic warrior societies that proliferated in seventeenth-century Angola in response to the violence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and who figured prominently in European observations of the period. The duality between Imbangala and Kisama politics forms one of the major analytical threads through this dissertation.

various African communities are regarded outside of the creolization rubric for reasons that are never clearly articulated.⁴⁴ Perhaps their assumption of a relatively high degree of West Central African homogeneity does not allow them to consider processes that, in practice, seem no different than those they describe as creolization, except that they took place *among Africans within Africa*, prior to and in resistance to enslavement.⁴⁵ The most fundamental shortcoming of the creolist approach, then, is that it assumes a particular vector and outcome for social and cultural change and ignores the transformative histories of dynamic social change in the absence of Europeans or Europeanization. It is bound to colonial time.

Scholars have begun acknowledging that

‘revisionist’ scholarship of the African diaspora has not fundamentally challenged the process-oriented perspective of the creolization model. Africa might ‘arrive’ in the Americas in coherent social and cultural forms, but these African structures eventually give way to African American ones, just as the creolization scholars tell us.

James Sweet argues for “a shift to a more thoroughly Atlantic approach” that acknowledges that “culture was accretive and assertions of identities were situational, dependent on claims and attributions calibrated to constantly shifting sets of

⁴⁴ These processes of creolization among Africans were also crucial to the formation of communities whose existence Heywood and Thornton take for granted. For example, there is evidence that Kimbundu spread as a *lingua franca* in the seventeenth century among communities who sought to engage Ndongo in trade and adopt a state of political neutrality. If people from these communities, who were marginal and thus highly vulnerable to enslavement, spoke Kimbundu as a *lingua franca*, this is evidence of a kind of creolization among Africans in Africa that undoubtedly shaped notions of identity, personhood, and community for those enslaved in the Americas. See Carolyn Vieira-Martinez, "Building Kimbundu: Language Community Reconsidered in West Central Africa, c. 1500-1750" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Los Angeles, 2006), Pier Larson, *Ocean of Letters: Language and Creolization in an Indian Ocean Diaspora* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴⁵ In earlier work, Thornton argues that the tremendous diversity of the areas in Africa from which Europeans took enslaved captives to the Americas can be understood as only three major cultural zones. See John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 187.

sociopolitical demands.”⁴⁶ James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra concur that the creolist vs. revisionist debate is essentially obsolete, asking,

What, in short, happens when one moves beyond the labels that separate interpretations of the creole cultures of African Americans, the hybrid cultures of Europeans, and the tribal cultures of Native Americans by placing all this ethnogenesis within the panhemispheric and pan-Atlantic processes that linked them to one another?⁴⁷

This processual approach draws from the strengths of both creolist and revisionist scholarship, allowing for a historically- and regionally-specific view of cultural change and, indeed, raising important possibilities for studies of relationships between African and First Nations people in the Americas. As important as Sidbury and Cañizares-Esguerra’s intervention is, however, by foregrounding the creativity of Africans and/or indigenous Americans who forged new identities in the context of historically unprecedented violence and chaos, and by backgrounding the violence and chaos that predicated and necessitated their creativity, such work not only tends to render the adaptability of Africans unique – as did Mintz and Price -- but it also artificially severs the direct causes of changes in identities and cultural practices – violence and extreme alienation – from the processes that it unleashed. Calling our attention to the “feel-good” nature of terms such as hybrid, creole, and cosmopolitan, Sweet reminds us of the politically problematic consequences of scholarly literature operating in the absence of serious contentions with the meaning of centuries of violence on the creative culture-building enterprises of African and First Nations people throughout the Atlantic world.

⁴⁶ James Sweet, "Mistaken Identities?: Olaudah Equiano, Domingos Álvares, and the Methodological Challenges of Studying the African Diaspora," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 2 (2009): 282-3.

⁴⁷ James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2011): 182.

Further entangled with the Atlantic creole scholarship is the notion of the (Black) Atlantic itself. Emerging from Paul Gilroy's efforts to transcend the boundedness of nation states, the Black Atlantic approach is rooted in the desire to take "the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis ... to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective."⁴⁸ Gilroy's critiques of the nation-focused nature of black political and cultural discourses are valuable, and his insistence on a trans-national, mobile black intellectual tradition is important. However, Gilroy's perspective is fixed in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Anglophone world, and, like many whom he critiques, he remains perplexingly silent on *African* participation in the Black Atlantic world. This elision of Africa means that Gilroy accepts a black modernity deriving exclusively from the responses of Africans and their descendants in the Americas and Europe to the legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Gilroy's Black Atlantic is thus not only Anglo-centric and shallow in time depth, but it also silences millennia-long dynamic exchanges across political boundaries and significant geographic divides that were always so significant to African history. Because these processes were not reactions to the modernity that Gilroy re-casts without including Africa itself, they cannot be part of his Atlantic.⁴⁹

A decade later, J. Lorand Matory pushed Gilroy's notions into the South Atlantic world, situating mobile, trans-national Afro-Brazilian religious elites in the nineteenth

⁴⁸ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 15.

⁴⁹ For critiques of Gilroy, see Stefan Helmreich, "Kinship, Nation, and Paul Gilroy's Concept of Diaspora," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 2, no. 2 (1992): 243-9, Patterson and Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations," 11-45, Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic," *African Affairs* 104, no. 414 (2005): 35-68.

and twentieth centuries at the center of his Black Atlantic analysis.⁵⁰ Though Matory's earlier scholarship demonstrates his keen sensitivity to the histories of intellectual and political contestations in Africa, and Matory acknowledges the ancient traditions of translocalism throughout the African continent, *Black Atlantic Religion*, when read alone, locates historical agency almost exclusively in Afro-Brazilian, rather than in African, intellectual and political activities.⁵¹ Even when read as a sequel to *Sex and the Empire That is No More*, there is no question that Matory, like Gilroy, can conceive of trans-Atlantic intellectual mobility only in terms of the physical mobility of elite actors.

What is the utility of a concept like the Black Atlantic, then, for representing the intellectual creativity of non-elite actors before the nineteenth century? What can the Black Atlantic do to elucidate the histories of people forged a political culture like that in Kisama without ever seeing either the Atlantic Ocean or a European? With much of the impetus for Black Atlantic cultural history stemming from a desire to locate agency in the minds and bodies of the enslaved, is it possible to engage the intellectual and political histories of those who lived under or fled from the trans-Atlantic slave trade?⁵² Can African political histories that were complicated before the arrival of Europeans be narrated continuously through the ruptures of wars, dislocation, starvation, and chaos

⁵⁰ James Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁵¹ James Lorand Matory, *Sex and the Empire That is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyo Yoruba Religion* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

⁵² Writing about ritual practices in Cuba, Stephan Palmié argues for the political nature of social structures typically studied in a strictly culturalist sense. He writes, "New World [sic] cults of affliction – or, in other words, incipient polities – based on a notion that, no less than the allocation of sacred authority to human persons, things could bind people into relations of power and dependence may be hidden by the scant documentation we have." Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002), 184.

wrought in Africa by the beneficiaries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, across the Middle Passage, and through enslavement and struggles for liberty in the Americas?

Following historian Vincent Brown's call to move beyond the "mistaken impression that people's sole aim was to achieve a distinct cultural identity," in this dissertation, I attempt to craft just such a narrative, seeking to view African identities in Africa and the Americas through the lens of "the politics of practical behavior."⁵³ While the often de-politicized culturalist discourse underlying much of the scholarship on the African Diaspora emerged out of a desire by scholars to counter the economically-determined structural literature that reduced enslaved Africans and their descendents to mere units of capital production, as Jason Young argues, it is more productive to move beyond the demography/culture dichotomy to instead view the Atlantic world as "[m]ore than a simple scattering of dispersed bodies ... [but rather] as a system of theoretical and intellectual engagement whereby Africans on the continent and enslaved in the Americas redressed and resisted the trauma and violence of slavery and the slave trade."⁵⁴ In other words, in this dissertation, rather than investigating the transmission of particular cultural practices from Africa to the Americas by waves of people who left Africa from the same ports, I will be exploring the contours of debates about the meanings of community,

⁵³ Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 7.

⁵⁴ Jason Young, *Rituals of Resistance: African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 16. Earlier, Mariza de Carvalho Soares critiqued the culturalist roots of much of the scholarship of the African Diaspora, noting, "culturalist authors begin from the presupposition that an ethnic group is defined in terms of cultural traits that operate in society, as discrete entities that can be subtracted or added, without this effecting the relations that comprise the unity of the group... these retentions assume a quasi-ontological existence, without considering the conditions and the transformations through which segments of the 'transplanted' ethnic groups pass, violently, from one continent to another." Soares, *Devotos da cor*, 114-5.

freedom, and political legitimacy in Kisama and how those who advocated particular political positions used the discourses of Kisama identity in the context of maroonage in the Americas. I am less interested in the movements of individual bodies and more interested in the political consequences of the movement of ideologies that coalesced under an identity called Kisama.

What is necessary, then, is to begin imagining a new intellectual space, distinct from both (Black) Atlantic Studies and the African diaspora, beyond the creolist and revisionist debates, within which to locate Kisama's dynamic, diffuse history and the ripples of fugitive ideologies spreading both within the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers and well beyond, both regionally and trans-Atlanticaly. As appealing and heuristically useful as the term "Atlantic" is in explaining translocal histories, I believe that it is important to move away from the Eurocentric nature of this term. The practical politics of dissent through flight and evasion of the state was a deep tradition in Kisama, though of course the contours of this practice shifted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both in Angola and in the Americas. Those shaping Kisama identities, however, did not face the Atlantic Ocean, even in the sense in which "the Atlantic" is synecdoche for "mobile, profit-focused merchants."

The "ethnogenesis" that Sidbury and Cañizares-Esguerra evoke had long been a feature in the "shatter zones" of Africa, and likely in the Americas as well. Furthermore, what is particularly "ethnic" about these novel political configurations? The language of ethnicity is too laden with the baggage of the same positivist models that equate political complexity with centralized states; in many cases, "ethnicity" is merely "tribalism" in new clothing. Instead, building on the translocal, process-oriented approach of Sidbury

and Cañizares-Esguerra, as well as Scott's and Kodesh's useful insights into the dialogic relationship between states – ancient, colonial and post-colonial – and non-state people, here I advocate adopting fugitive modernities.

Fugitive modernities encompass the political strategies, economic and subsistence adaptations, and intellectual and cultural conceits forged by those who fled from totalizing state power and all of its manifestations. Pirates, bandits, maroons, and others wove together distinct, often interacting, and at times conflicting forms of fugitive modernities in contiguous spaces. Just as James C. Scott argues for the multi-millennia “anarchist history” of southeast Asia that spans several epochs of history and conventional, state-centered periodization schemes, I too contend that the practice of flight from the sporadically intolerable excesses of states in West Central Africa is a long-standing practice.⁵⁵ In other words, there is nothing particularly “modern” about the practice of flight from tyrannical states and their violence, in the sense that modern represents a profound rupture from a “non-modern” antiquity. However, if we understand modernities as multiple – not only in a geographic or cultural sense, but also chronologically, rejecting the notion that there was ever a static “zero point” of political, cultural, intellectual, or social history – then we can begin to resolve the tensions and

⁵⁵ The archaeological, linguistic, and oral data from the Kavango River delta in southern Angola support this contention. While there is suggestive evidence that Kisama also functioned as such a refuge for those fleeing Kongo and Ndongo before the sixteenth century, until comparable linguistic and archaeological studies are conducted in Kisama, it is impossible to detail this history conclusively. Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 182-6. It is also important to note that much of Scott's argument rests on the particular forms of economic extraction and violence associated with societies organized around padi-based rice cultivation. Because the agriculture labor regimes and political culture of West Central African states differed greatly from those of southeast Asia, the contours of state practice and resistance also differed.

contradictions that Cooper details in his critique of the use of the concept.⁵⁶ While those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers may not have articulated their political strategies as “modern,” whether fleeing from an expanding and consolidating Kongo or Ndongo or from the predations of the Portuguese and their allies, these maroons certainly did perceive significant ruptures in their world.

As an emic category, then, modernity is synonymous with political and social disjuncture; as an etic category, modernity requires qualifiers. The modernity within which this study is situated has multiple historical sources, including the broader political traditions of the region, the particular political cultures of neighboring state and non-state people, and, perhaps most importantly, the local intellectual traditions of resistance from which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century West Central Africans drew. Unlike Vansina, I do not argue that the onslaught of colonialism – whether in the sixteenth century or the nineteenth – represented the end of political tradition in Kisama or in the region more broadly.⁵⁷ However, if we understand the “tradition” of Kisama, as a constant adaptation to the broader regional predations of state from which people fled, then we can cease viewing modernity and tradition as diametrically opposed, and more closely approach asking what contemporary actors would have perceived as novel about their own experiences, given local historical understandings. The fugitive modernities on which I focus here evolved between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, possibly building on older fugitive modernities in the region.

⁵⁶ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 113-49.

⁵⁷ Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

However, those who forged Kisama identities during this time did so as a response to the truly unprecedented scope of bloodshed and warfare that were the local experiences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The political, intellectual, and social strategies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kisama are thus best understood not only from within a deeper regional history where those resisting expanding states had created other fugitive modernities, but also in a contemporary, comparative perspective with the fugitive modernities that emerged in Imbangala society. This term allows us to consider histories that occurred entirely within Africa and among Africans within the same intellectual framework as trans-oceanic people. It allows us to view maroon communities in seventeenth-century Angola and in the Americas as part of an intellectually, politically, socially, and culturally contiguous space; its capaciousness also permits us to imagine a new way to periodize modernity itself.

The terrain of fugitive modernities is rich with possibilities for conceiving of new logics of historical causality and new frameworks through which to grapple with the political and social strategies of those who have long played at the margins of national and nationalist imaginations. While nations across the globe have adopted some form of the “Out of Many, One People,” as their official motto, in the past decade, it has become increasingly clear that the notion of distinct “peoples” seamlessly joining together to forge secular nation-states governed by rule of law has always already been at best a fantasy. Building not only on the work of James C. Scott, but also of scholars like Vincent Brown and James Sweet, I argue that the concept of fugitive modernities allows us to untangle the intellectual and political histories of non-state identities on their own

terms, as distinct from and yet always in conversation with states.⁵⁸ It provides a framework for voicing counter-narratives to colonial time and to the well-documented tendency since the 1960s for scholars of African history to seek to legitimate African political, cultural, and social forms by fitting them into an inherently provincial, Eurocentric/universalizing concept of modernity.⁵⁹ Fugitive modernities and state modernities were always in dialog with each other, at times borrowing discourses, practices, and institutions in order to adapt to new circumstances. If fugitive modernities seems an inherently reactionary concept, it is – but no more so than state modernities, be they monarchical or republican.

Outlines of the Dissertation

Drawing from archives in Angola, Brazil, Portugal, and Spain, as well as oral histories and ethnographic fieldwork in various maroon communities in Pará, Brazil, and villages throughout Kisama, Angola, in 2010, I present my major arguments concerning fugitive modernities and the intellectual, political, and social histories of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kisama in the four chapters that follow. In the next chapter, I explore the early formation of Kisama identity between c. 1588-1630, when the martial and spiritual efficacy of *Soba* Kafuxi Ambari led to the enduring association of Kisama identity with armed and active resistance and political autonomy. Here, it is possible to see the imprint of individual charismatic leadership on a Kisama strain of fugitive modernity that would inform both regional and global histories. In the third chapter, I

⁵⁸ Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*, Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *The American Historical Review* 24, no. 5 (2009): 1231-49, Matory, *Sex and the Empire That is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyo Yoruba Religion*.

⁵⁹ See Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze*, Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

investigate how the thousands of fugitives who were drawn to Kisama by promise of security in an increasingly turbulent world reconfigured the meanings of Kisama identity and shaped notions of political legitimacy within Kisama during the revolutionary era of the 1620s and 1630s. By the time of the war of 1655-1658, the Portuguese and their allies confronted communities into which fugitives had been integrated through a variety of social and political institutions over several generations. In the fourth chapter, I draw from the lengthy transcripts of the trials of the leaders of the maroon community of Limón outside of Cartagena, Colombia, to continue to analyze the ways in which the ideologies developing within Kisama during the 1620s and 1630s shaped political practices in the Americas. Exploring the ways in which identities index competing discourses about the relationship of violence to political legitimacy, I argue that by viewing Kisama and Limón as socially contiguous spaces within the framework of fugitive modernities, we are able to glimpse fragments of an otherwise unthinkable history. In my fifth chapter, I trace the development of the Kisama meme – a static depiction of Kisama, frozen in the early seventeenth century – and interrogate its relationship to the competing fugitive politics of the Imbangala as they coalesced into the centralized state of Kasanje. I ask how the Kisama meme informed the study of the famous seventeenth-century Brazilian *quilombo* (maroon community) Palmares, and how a more nuanced understanding of fugitive modernities in Kisama helps illuminate the political and intellectual history of Palmares.

Chapter Two: Kafuxi Ambari and Kisama Identity in Angola, c. 1580-1630

In Kisama, the legacy of resistance in public memory focuses heavily on *Soba* Kafuxi Ambari.⁶⁰ Little recognized outside of the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, Kafuxi Ambari remains a vital part of everyday life in today's Kisama.⁶¹ Time and time again, when I explained to residents of Kisama – old, young, male, female, literate or without access to education, from the northern boundaries along the Kwanza River to the southern limits along the Longa River -- that I was conducting historical research, I was asked if I knew the story of Kafuxi Ambari. It was essential, I was told repeatedly, that I know and understand the story of Kafuxi Ambari, because too many of the young people today did not know about him. Even teenagers remarked ruefully on their concern that members of their generation or generations yet to come would fail to appreciate the importance of Kafuxi Ambari's legacy. When I asked what I needed to know about Kafuxi Ambari, the response was unequivocal: he was the most important soba who resisted against the Portuguese because his resistance was the most effective. I found this emphatic and universal assertion interesting, given that not only had I heard personal accounts of living residents of Kisama who had themselves participated in anti-

⁶⁰ As is true for historical transcriptions of words in most African languages by European authors, the orthographic representation of Kafuxi Ambari varies wildly, and includes Cafushe, Cafuchy, Cafuxe, Cafuxhe Cambare, Kafuxi kya Mbari, and others. This is also the case for words like Kisama (Quissama, Quisama, Quiçama, Quissamã, Quisyma), and *soba* (sóva, sova), and many others. Unless quoting an original source, in which case I use the original orthography, I write "Kafuxi Ambari," "Kisama," and "*soba*" in accordance not only with the most recent rules on Kimbundu orthography but also with the most current pronunciation within Kisama.

⁶¹ While Kafuxi Ambari plays a limited role popular national historical consciousness outside of Kisama, various MPLA-affiliated authors and playwrights have employed a Kafuxi Ambari character. See Pepetela, *As aventuras de Ngunga* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 1976), Manuel Pedro Pacavira, *Nzinga mbandi: romance* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 1979), José Mena Abrantes, "*Sem herói nem reino ou o azar da cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela com o fundador que lhe tocou em sorte*," in *Teatro II* (Coimbra: Cena Lusófona, 1999). I discuss Pepetela's use of Kafuxi Ambari in chapter five.

Portuguese resistance or whose parents and grandparents had, but I also knew of written records of *sobas* in Kisama who organized armed resistance against Portuguese well into the twentieth century. With seemingly contradictory evidence of more recent resistance flourishing in both living memory and the archives, I was compelled to attempt to better understand the enduring impact of Kafuxi Ambari's legacy and to attempt to discern what made the resistance of Kafuxi Ambari unique enough to merit its own category of historical memory.

While *sobas* named Kafuxi Ambari appear in written documents from 1588 until the early twentieth century, those living in Kisama today – and those outside of Kisama who evoke Kafuxi Ambari for their own reasons – inevitably refer to the actions of Kafuxi Ambari from the late sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth centuries when they discuss his historical legacy. Within Kisama, Kafuxi Ambari's home territory is considered to be the region now known as Luandos, along the Longa River in the extreme eastern part of Kisama. As I will discuss, however, at times his territory extended far beyond this area. Narratives about Kafuxi Ambari are mostly anchored by references to what archival sources tell us was his decisive victory over the Portuguese and their allies in 1594, his defense of thousands of fugitives from slavery and the slave trade who fled to his lands, and his struggles against Portuguese scorched-earth tactics during the mid-seventeenth century.

Further complicating my efforts to decipher the role of Kafuxi Ambari and his resistance in the emergence of notions of Kisama identities and his legacy in the historical memory of those who identify as Kisama in the twenty-first century is the fact that not only was the historical Kafuxi Ambari of the late sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries far from the last *soba* or individual within Kisama to have resisted the Portuguese, but that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – the period for which we have the most detailed historical records of Kafuxi Ambari – he was also not the only *soba* to resist. Indeed, Portuguese sources often mention him in conjunction with other *sobas* as leaders of resistance, and he also fought battles against other *sobas* within Kisama. How, then, did he emerge from the complex and conflicted history with such a singular reputation, and how does that reputation connect to notions of Kisama identity and the particular kind of fugitive modernity that emerged there? What is the relationship between Kafuxi Ambari’s reputation, the practices of violence and warfare in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Kisama, and the ways in which thousands of fugitive outsiders became and shaped what it meant to be Kisama? In this chapter, I approach the history of Kisama as a region and the emerging sense of a Kisama identity during the period from roughly 1580 through the 1630s through an engagement with the particulars of oral histories and written records concerning Kafuxi Ambari. Focusing on the changes in local notions of political legitimacy in the period from roughly the 1580s to the 1630s, I argue that the growing role of the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers as a refuge for those fleeing the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the accompanying escalation of the scale of slavery and the slave trade within Angola necessitated the formation of new concepts about political legitimacy and the role of authority, and, in turn, new understandings of identity. The ways in which Kafuxi Ambari navigated through and capitalized upon these changes through his martial and spiritual superiority cemented him in the historical consciousness of residents of Kisama to this day as “the last *soba* to resist the Portuguese,” and these feats and memories in turn marked the ways

in which fugitive modernities emerged in Kisama. In fact, Kafuxi Ambari and his historical memory is the nexus of the discourses and ideologies of fugitive modernities in Kisama.

Both historians who have written about Kisama, Heintze and Ferreira, discuss Kafuxi Ambari's importance as "the most powerful ruler in Kisama" and both also mention the early twentieth-century oral tradition recorded in Libolo that Kafuxi Ambari immigrated to Kisama in the wake of Portuguese incursions along the Kwanza River.⁶² While Heintze and Ferreira acknowledge Kafuxi Ambari's power and importance within Kisama – a fact that emerges starkly from seventeenth-century sources, I go further, arguing that it was the actions of Kafuxi Ambari in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that made Kisama a coherent, legible identity for those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers who came to identify with it, for those who heard rumors of the martial and spiritual aptitudes of *sobas* in Kisama and fled there, and for those state actors who strove unsuccessfully to subdue Kisama. However, Kafuxi Ambari's unique powers and charisma located him on the shadowy borderlands between effective leadership and dangerous witchcraft. Therefore, there are multiple strands of oral traditions that identify him as an "outsider," and claims of Kafuxi Ambari's immigration should be read through that lens.

⁶² Heintze, "Historical Notes on the Kisama of Angola," 412-4, Ferreira, "La Kisama", 88-9, Paes Brandão, "Diário da marcha do chefe do Concelho de Libolo, tenente Paes Brandão, a região de Quibala," *Portugal em Africa* 2(1904): 407-8. While Miller mentions Kafuxi Ambari as an *ngola* title in *Kings and Kinsmen*, he does not discuss Kisama at length in *Way of Death*, beyond mentioned the importance of Kisama as a "maroon colony" and also to role of the salt from Ndemba in the regional economy. As I argue in chapter five, this may be because in *Way of Death*, Miller is concerned with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Kafuxi Ambari faded from the archival record. See Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, Miller, *Way of Death*.

While Kafuxi Ambari's reputation endures into the twenty-first century, however, it is important to note that the remarkable characteristics associated with him are not the property of those who consider themselves his descendents or descendents over whom he directly ruled alone. In other words, people in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Angola transposed these traits from Kafuxi Ambari onto the land of Kisama itself and then identified as "Kisama" rather than as personal followers or descendents of Kafuxi Ambari. While those who lived in Kisama, who fled to Kisama, and who forged the meaning of what it meant to be Kisama relied on Kafuxi Ambari's power to help secure their freedom, a warrior identity was more of a strategic presentation to outsiders (a public face) than an organizing idiom for social organization within Kisama. The reputation increasingly associated with Kafuxi Ambari and all who lived between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers was a rich resource on which those in the Americas – whether of "Kisama" origins or merely familiar with Kisama's reputation -- could draw.⁶³ I trace the emergence of Kisama's reputation in conjunction with the rising power of Kafuxi Ambari and the growing regional emphasis on military skill and the ability to protect vulnerable peoples from the depredations of the Portuguese and their allies as a pre-requisite for leadership. Kafuxi Ambari's military success helped the region of Kisama develop into a secure asylum for those fleeing Portuguese captivity by the 1620s. In turn, these refugees participated in the complicated debates around political legitimacy and violence through which Kisama identities were forged.

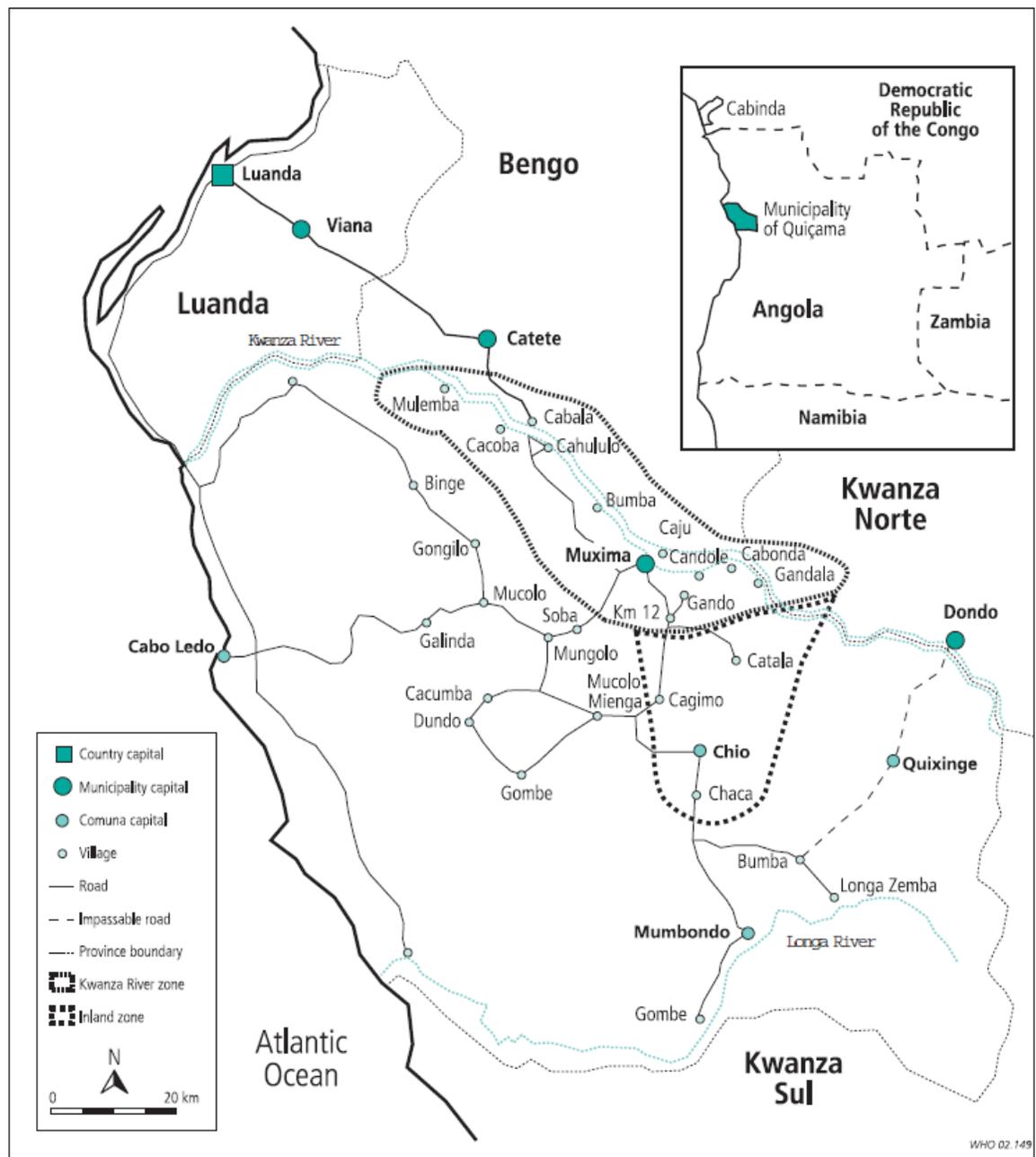
⁶³ According to Beatrix Heintze, fugitives from as far away as Luanda fled to Kisama throughout the seventeenth century. When combined with the regular flight of those whom the Portuguese purchased from many inland markets and congregated at the forts in Muxima, Massangano, and Cambambe, this means that Kisama developed a far-flung reputation as a safe haven. See Beatrix Heintze, *Asilo ameaçado: oportunidades e consequências da fuga de escravos em Angola no século XVII* (Luanda: Museu Nacional da Escravatura, 1995).

When people within Kisama refer to Kafuxi Ambari or other *sobas*, they do so as if they are speaking of an individual. Specific elements of these histories, however, can be linked to events over a number of centuries in the written record. Scholars traditionally refer to this practice as positional succession, or “the notion that social roles or positions termed ‘names’ [...] with permanently defined rights and obligations exist independently of actual living persons.”⁶⁴ Kafuxi Ambari was not merely a title, like “king” or “pope,” but rather a living embodiment of the spiritual essence of an enduring Kafuxi Ambari. In this sense, then, “Kafuxi Ambari” and other names of *sobas* referred to a particular structural relationship with both the ancestors and the living. Far from being easily synonymous with political titles, however, this widely dispersed practice in Africa points to notions of selfhood and identity centered on the incorporation of sedimented pasts into an embodied present. Kafuxi Ambari was not merely a title to which any and all could aspire, but rather all who were Kafuxi Ambari contained within them the living spirits (or aggregated spirit) of all Kafuxi Ambari. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, European and African conceptions of chronology and leadership were far closer than a twenty-first-century person would imagine. Just as Kisama-based narrators speak of Kafuxi Ambari as a singular entity across the centuries, so too do records generated by the colonial officials and priests who were present in Angola from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries refer to Kafuxi Ambari as one individual, without mention of individual names, politics, or life histories of discrete people from the first time Kafuxi Ambari appears in the written record (1588) to the last

⁶⁴ Joseph Miller, “Imbangala Lineage Slavery,” in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 208-9.

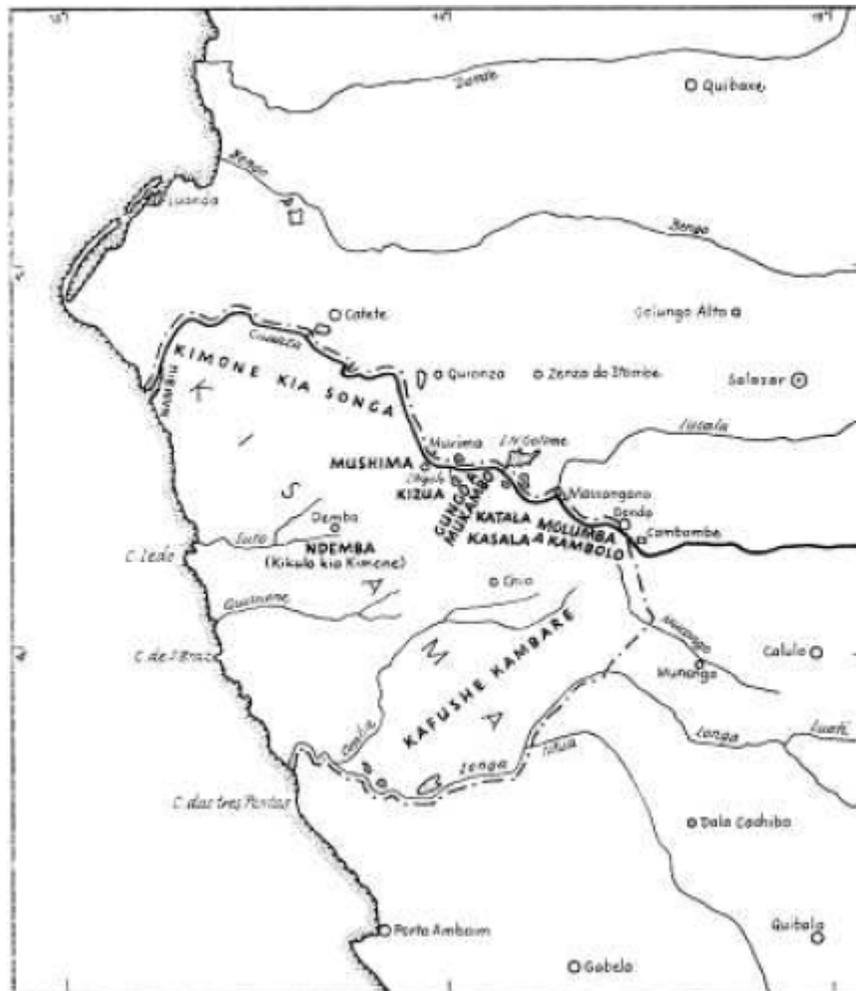
(1916), with the exception of the 1693 letter in which he petitioned the Portuguese governor of Angola for vassalage and baptism.⁶⁵ While I acknowledge that the different individuals who embodied Kafuxi Ambari over the centuries operated within the political, cultural, and social climates of their eras as men of their times as well as embodiments of the past, because the silences in both oral and written sources preclude me from discussing individual Kafuxi Ambari or from discerning the dates at which different people held the title, and because I find that the notion of historical embodiment is central to the role of Kafuxi Ambari in the emergence of the politics of Kisama identities, I refer to Kafuxi Ambari in the same terms and using the same pronouns as my sources: as a single person.

⁶⁵ “Cópia da carta ao Soba Cafuchi, que pede o baptismo,” 23 February 1693, in Brásio, ed. *Monumenta Missionaria Africana: Africa Occidental*, XIV: 279-81. For the death of Kafuxi Ambari in 1916, see “Carta de Frederico Augusto Esteves, Capitania Mor da Quissama, ao Chefe da Secretaria Militar do Distrito do Cuanza,” AHM, 2/2/45/7, Muxima, 1 August 1916.



Map of Present-Day Kisama⁶⁶

⁶⁶ J. A. Ruiz, P. P. Simarro, and T. Josenando, "Control of Human African Trypanosomiasis in the Quiçama Focus, Angola," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 80, no. 9 (2002): 739.



Map of territories of *sobas* of Kisama and neighboring regions in the seventeenth century⁶⁷

“A Time When Seeds Were Lost for Lack of Water”

Aridity has long been the defining natural characteristic of the land between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. The people living between these two rivers developed complex survival strategies that largely favored low population densities, widely dispersed, small settlements, trade, extensive hunting and fishing, and subsistence practices that maximized the potential of riverine areas with intensive cultivation of beans, sorghum, and plantains as a way to survive and thrive. If the rains do not come in

⁶⁷ Heintze, "Historical Notes on the Kisama of Angola," 409.

the short rainy season between late October and March, however, local people are still highly vulnerable to drought.⁶⁸ While hunting, fishing, and foraging are important survival strategies in the face of starvation, they are not always enough.⁶⁹

Living along the Atlantic coast and at some distance from the more fertile inland river valleys of the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, in 1588, Kafuxi Ambari and his people suffered from drought and crop failure. Though the anonymous author of the 1588 account on the religious and political state of Angola does not detail the precise location of Kafuxi Ambari's lands, he does mention that he was on the sea coast, only twenty or thirty leagues (approximately fifty-two to seventy-eight miles) from a land "abundant in meats, and provisions, very cool and well-watered, all resembling a fresh garden" – a description that could only apply to the higher-altitude and well-watered Longa River valley. While such fertile lands existed only a short distance away, Kafuxi Ambari's people suffered the deprivation of what the author described as "a time when seeds were lost for lack of water." In order to remedy the situation, Kafuxi Ambari called on one of his *nganga* (ritual authorities) to initiate a rain-making ceremony. In front of a large crowd comprised of both local people and the same Portuguese soldiers who briefly served as Kafuxi Ambari's allies on their march to Cambambe, the *nganga* arranged a circle of bells and other instruments around him. He used these to invoke the necessary

⁶⁸ See Dias, "Famine and Disease in the History of Angola," 349-78.

⁶⁹ Based on what he admits is "sparse linguistic evidence," Jan Vansina speculates that "the society of the proto-Njila speakers [including the ancestors of those living in sixteenth-century Kisama] had become less structured than earlier Bantu-speaking societies to its north had been through the loss of formal overarching institutions concerning both leadership and political territory. If this impression is borne out by future research, then one can certainly attribute this loss of formal complexity to an increased influence of the foraging way of life on horticulturalists as a result of the emergence of proto-Njila speakers into new environments so different from their familiar equatorial rain forests." Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 52.

ancestral and local spirits for bringing the needed rain. However, after much lightning, thunder, and gathering clouds, no rain came. According to the author, the *nganga* himself was decapitated by a bolt of lightning sent to instruct the local people about the Christian god's power.⁷⁰

After the failure of his ritual specialist, Kafuxi Ambari elected to make war on one of his neighbors. While the author does not specify against which “enemy” he waged his campaign, nor about the motives for such a battle, we can reasonably infer from the context of extreme drought and deprivation that Kafuxi Ambari intended either to raid provisions – presumably from the neighboring peoples whose land was fertile and well-watered – or to raid for captives, or, most likely, both.⁷¹ That the Portuguese were active in this campaign with Kafuxi Ambari on their trek towards Cambambe makes the possibility that they were interested in purchasing those whom Kafuxi Ambari captured during war even more likely. The author reports that due to the drought conditions, the Portuguese “couldn’t proceed for him [Kafuxi Ambari] without carrying all necessary supplies[,] water, and vessels in which to cook or eat, and all of this on the shoulders of blacks, because there are no beasts [of burden] in this land.”⁷² Such porterage labor was the domain of enslaved laborers of the lowest value – newly acquired war captives who were a danger to those holding them in bondage. Kafuxi Ambari could have traded such

⁷⁰ “Estado religioso e politico de Angola,” in *MMA* III: 375-6.

⁷¹ In their discussion on the historical ramifications of drought, disease, and crop failure in West Central African, both Jill Dias and Joseph Miller mention the correlation of warfare and raiding with drought and crop failure. See Dias, “Famine and Disease in the History of Angola,” Miller, “The Significance of Drought,” 17-61. For discussion of raiding during times of drought in areas to the south of Kisama, see also TJ Desch Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 20.

⁷² “Estado religioso e politico de Angola,” 375-6.

captives to the Portuguese for food, as was apparently common throughout Kisama in later centuries.⁷³ Whether the Portuguese retained these captives after they arrived in Cambambe is unclear from the records. We can only speculate on the fate of these bondsmen and women, who may have lived the remainder of their lives in a variety of states of servitude in Cambambe, at Massangano, in Luanda, or even in the Americas. It is also possible that some of these captives from 1588 fled their Portuguese captors, recrossed the Kwanza River, and re-joined their home communities – a path traveled by many in the decades that followed. While neither oral nor written records allow us to trace the paths of these individuals, we can recognize them as among the first people from the region who were projected into the broad and violent world of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and forced labor in Angola. Kisama as a region appeared to already have some salience for outsiders – for example, King Mbemba a Nzinga of the Kongo who in 1535 claimed suzerainty over Kisama as a province -- but the people of Kisama as yet seem to have had no particular reputation that marked them within the socio-cultural and political matrix of the region.⁷⁴ Thus, these individuals, whether they stayed in Angola or left for the Americas, do not appear to have yet carried with them any distinctive sense of Kisama as a political or politicized identity.

⁷³ Dias, "Famine and Disease in the History of Angola," 355, J.J. Monteiro, *Angola and the River Congo*, 2 vols. (London: Cass, 1968 [1875]), 103-4.

⁷⁴ "Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo III," in *MMA* II: 38.

It Is “Mad to Penetrate Quissama to Make a War There, With the Goal of Conquering Territory”

A mere five years after Kafuxi Ambari allied with the Portuguese against his unnamed neighbor as a response to localized drought and crop failure, in 1593, the Portuguese succeeded in briefly defeating the *soba* who controlled the lucrative rock salt mines of Ndemba. People throughout the region used bars of the high-quality Kisama rock salt as currency from long before the Portuguese arrived until as late as the mid-nineteenth century, and access to these salt bars greatly facilitated Portuguese aims to purchase enslaved captives from at least the sixteenth century through the nineteenth century.⁷⁵ In 1594, the Jesuit chronicler Francisco Rodrigues mentioned that “the mines of silver [in Cambambe] mean little to them, but the salt is their treasure, because it is the currency with which one can buy slaves (*peças*) and all types of provisions.”⁷⁶ The Portuguese in fact retained control of the mines for less than a year and would never again regain it. Even today, the memory of the importance of these mines and pride in their autonomy remains an important aspect of historical memory throughout the region. Residents of Kisama today assert that “no white man has ever set foot in Ndemba” and no

⁷⁵ David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858), 246.

⁷⁶ Francisco Rodrigues, “História da residência dos padres da Companhia de Jesus em Angola, e cousas tocantes ao reino, e conquista,” 5 January 1594, in *MMA IV*: 571. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Miller, *Way of Death*, 57, 182, 255. For the nineteenth century, see Dias, “Famine and Disease in the History of Angola,” 355. By the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese were forced to concede that these famed silver mines of Cambambe, which motivated so much of the Portuguese interest in Angola’s interior in the later sixteenth century, as they dreamed of controlling mines as rich as those the Spanish had conquered in the Americas, did not exist. See Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (hereafter AHU), Conselho Ultramarino, Caixa 1, Document 3-A, Regimento to Governor Manuel Perreira, 23 March 1607.

one is permitted near the mines except on foot and with special clearance from the local *soba* and his *jimbanda* (singular, *kimbanda*, ritual authority).⁷⁷

In 1593, however, the Portuguese were confident that their victory over the *soba* of Ndemba was enduring, and Rodrigues predicted that “it was necessary to conquer a powerful Soba, by the name of Cafuche Cambare, in order to subjugate all of Kisama.”⁷⁸ The Portuguese governor at the time, Jerónimo de Almeida, “march[ed] for Quissama with the intention of subjugating first Cafuxe Cambare.” Kafuxi Ambari, however, did not enter into a vassalage treaty with the Portuguese, instead choosing to engage them in battle.⁷⁹ The following year, Portuguese Captain-General Baltazar de Almeida had some success against Kafuxi Ambari’s forces, primarily through his use of cavalry.⁸⁰ Rodrigues writes that Kafuxi Ambari’s forces “could not resist, and so gathered themselves and all of their families together, some shattered, and fled for the big forest.”⁸¹ While the majority of the armed men stayed to guard the women and children, a smaller force left to provoke the Portuguese.⁸² These troops fought those whom

⁷⁷ Resident of Ngalinda, interview by author, Muxima, Angola, 22 July 2010. In his efforts at gathering and understanding local history and oral traditions, António Sondoka has also heard people throughout Kisama, including in Ndemba, relate this as common knowledge.

⁷⁸ Rodrigues, “História,” 571.

⁷⁹ Original text from 1594 transcribed by Capitão José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade in AHU, Sala 1L, Caixa 790, Doc. 227, 15 December 1885.

⁸⁰ For the importance of cavalry for Portuguese military operations in Angola in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Roquinaldo Ferreira, “Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650-1800” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Los Angeles, 2003), Roquinaldo Ferreira, “The Supply and Development of Horses in Angolan Warfare (17th and 18th Centuries),” in *Angola on the Move: Transport Routes, Communications and History*, ed. Beatrix Heintze and Achim Von Oppen (Frankfurt: Lembeck, 2008).

⁸¹ Rodrigues, “História,” 576.

⁸² Transcription by Capitão José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade.

Almeida had left under the command of a subordinate, who approached Kafuxi Ambari's forces with a barrage of rifle fire from horseback. Kafuxi Ambari allowed the Portuguese to enter their camp and believe that they had won, only to attack the retreating forces and lead the cavalry into the forest, thus mitigating their advantage. By the end of this campaign, Kafuxi Ambari's forces had killed "almost all [except for]...two captains...with old veteran soldiers, and some sobas who fought for us [the Portuguese] with their people. The captain general fought until there was nothing left to do, no more ammunition, and the horses that he brought were broken and fell dead...only five [P]ortuguese escaped."⁸³ According to another account, Kafuxi Ambari's forces killed "two hundred and six whites and a large number of our vassals...[this account was] by one of the seven Portuguese who escaped."⁸⁴

Though it is difficult to surmise through existing sources the precise routes that tales of Kafuxi Ambari's dramatic victory over the Portuguese and their allies travelled through the region and the ways in which his victory was articulated through locally intelligible idioms of political and ritual power, his success could only have augmented his prestige, power, and reputation. In addition to his defeat of the Portuguese forces near Cambambe, later in 1594 Kafuxi Ambari attacked the Portuguese in their fort at Ndemba, "defeat[ing] them in an ambush, and this fort, of which they say few vestiges still remain, was abandoned."⁸⁵ Suggestively, an oral history in the region today, collected by Kisama resident António Sondoka, recounts that the salt mines of Ndemba were first

⁸³ Rodrigues, "História," 576-7.

⁸⁴ Transcription by Capitão José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

discovered by goats. After noticing that goats grazing in dense brush returned with crusted white material on their faces and bloated bellies, people alerted their *soba*. When the *soba* went to investigate, he discovered pristine, crystalline rock salt. Recognizing that he lacked the military might to retain control of this valuable resource, the *soba* asked a neighboring, more powerful *soba* who was his older brother to help him protect the mines.⁸⁶ Such foundational stories often compress time, rendering years, decades, or even centuries of change in a single narrative moment.⁸⁷ In this case, the unnamed historical *soba*'s recognition that he needed more powerful protection of his resources and the description of the neighboring *soba* as his "older brother" may record a memory of political shifts in the region that occurred in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when Kafuxi Ambari helped the *soba* of Ndemba free his lands from Portuguese occupation.

It is difficult to know for certain if the relationship between Kafuxi Ambari and the *soba* of Ndemba was fleeting or more enduring. In an account written in 1594, Kafuxi Ambari is described as having at his command twenty five sobas and all of their men of war.⁸⁸ Later in the seventeenth century, Cadornega, recounting the history of the period of 1600-1, depicts Kafuxi Ambari as "the Head and ruler of this province [Kisama], and then King of it without qualification despite being the former tributary of the King of Angola [Ndongo]."⁸⁹ Contemporary written accounts and present-day oral

⁸⁶ António Sondoka, interview by author, Muxima, Angola, 28 July 2010.

⁸⁷ Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*.

⁸⁸ Transcription by Capitão José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade.

⁸⁹ António de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1972 [1680]), I: 69.

histories universally concur that Kafuxi Ambari was the most powerful soba in the region at the time. But was he the head of some formalized regional political institution, or did he rather command through his own personal charisma and military skill the allegiance of many of the other local leaders?

While it is impossible to conclusively argue from the lack of discussion within written or oral histories of formal political institutions that none existed, the possibility that Kafuxi Ambari commanded more situational widespread allegiance beyond his own territory seems likely. By the mid-seventeenth century, Cadornega confirms the lack of enduring political hierarchy or formally institutionalized centralization within the region, commenting on the continuous conflicts between *Soba* Mulumba Akambolo with his neighbors Kafuxi Ambari and Katala Kasala by observing, “his Lordship [Mulumba Akambolo] is in the middle of these two Potentates [Kafuxi Ambari and Katala Kasala], if you can call them that, because they are not ruled by a King nor any Prince, but each one lives in Liberty and independence.”⁹⁰ By the seventeenth century, then, the prevailing political culture of the region emphasized the autonomy of individual leaders whose power depended not on affiliation with a centralized locus of political and/or ritual authority, but rather their own ability to attract followers – which increasingly meant fugitive bondsmen and women -- through ritual and military prowess. These political strategies were flexible and fluid; autonomous *sobas* could form alliances in moments of need, though as the oral history suggests, these political confederations were often not understood as relationships between equals. If the oral history about *Soba* Ndemba and the salt does indeed reflect this period, then Kafuxi Ambari was, in this moment, the

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, II: 114.

“elder brother” to *Soba* Ndemba, but he was not his king nor did this subordinate relationship persist indefinitely. These temporary alliances allowed for the people of Kisama to respond effectively to imminent threats without compromising their autonomy in the long term.

Kafuxi Ambari’s commanding defeats of the Portuguese near Cambambe and within their own fortress at Ndemba alone would have greatly enhanced his prestige and reputation. However, in contrast to his ritual weakness in the case of the drought in 1588, from 1593 onward Kafuxi Ambari’s martial skill combined with apparent ritual aptitude to give him power over his Portuguese adversaries. Jerónimo de Almeida, the governor who first began to battle against Kafuxi Ambari in 1593, became gravely ill in the field and was forced to leave the campaign to seek medical attention in Luanda.⁹¹ While Cadornega paid tribute to the unrivaled military skill of Kafuxi Ambari, his allies, and his followers, he also alluded to the complimentary role of martial aptitude and ritual expertise in Kafuxi Ambari’s success, writing:

what the enemy Quisama could not achieve through his bizarre animus he achieved through calamity of the land, sickening with an illness to which he is accustomed[.] Few are those who do not pay him tribute, and [for] the natives and inhabitants of this land and the interior it is one more belief that they will get sick.”⁹²

Whereas the anonymous writer of the 1588 account was quick to dismiss Kafuxi Ambari’s recourse to his *nganga* to bring rains and to cite the *nganga*’s decapitation via lightning as proof of the Catholic god’s supremacy, Cadornega here affirms Kafuxi Ambari’s power to strike down his enemies with illness and his use of such powers to

⁹¹ Transcription by Capitão José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade.

⁹² Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, I: 70.

command allegiance. Far from afflicting merely “natives and inhabitants of the land,” Kafuxi Ambari was also able to “afflict... our Conquistador [João Rodrigues Coutinho] with this ordinary illness when he came to pay the tribute to which all natives are subjected.”⁹³ Citing contemporary documents, the anonymous compiler of the 1784 “Catalogo dos governadores de Angola” (“Catalog of the governors of Angola”) affirms that Coutinho was named as governor in January 1601 “but only arrived in Angola in 1602, bringing many reinforcements of men and arms and munitions, and greater powers than his antecessors...entering in the lands of Cafuxe who attacked him with a illness of the country that carried him off in six days.”⁹⁴ While twenty-first-century historians may view Coutinho’s affliction through the lens of epidemiology or coincidence, seventeenth-century residents of Kisama and neighboring areas and Portuguese alike attributed Coutinho’s dramatic, sudden death as evidence of Kafuxi Ambari’s spiritual powers.⁹⁵ As a consequence of Kafuxi Ambari’s defeat of Coutinho, “all of the hopes that this Conquest would achieve the desired ends were lost.”⁹⁶ Kafuxi Ambari eluded defeat and subjugation by both Portuguese and Africans through the apparent superiority of both his military and spiritual tactics.

Such formidable powers not only influenced the Portuguese colonial officials and priests who produced documents, but also other residents of Kisama and those in

⁹³ *Ibid.*, I: 70-1.

⁹⁴ “Catalogo dos governadores de Angola,” in *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessoes portuguezas na Africa occidental e oriental, na Asia occidental, na China e na Oceania escriptos de ordem do Governo de S. M.D. Maria II*, ed. José Joaquim Lopès de Lima (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1784), XXI.

⁹⁵ Steven Feierman, “Change in African Therapeutic Systems,” *Social Science and Medicine* 13, no. 4 (1979): 277-84.

⁹⁶ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, I: 71.

neighboring regions. In the year following Kafuxi Ambari's success at Ndemba, *sobas* in the northern part of Kisama along the Kwanza River -- whom the Portuguese had allegedly decisively pacified in the campaigns of the 1580s that led to the establishment of the fort at Massangano by 1583 -- crossed the river to lay siege to the Portuguese fort itself.⁹⁷ Perhaps inspired by Kafuxi Ambari's success, these neighboring people struck at the fortified citadel of Portuguese power in the region. The Portuguese were only able to subdue these *sobas* and their followers by constructing a fort in Muxima, on the southern bank of the Kwanza River, in 1595.

Indeed, the ramifications of Kafuxi Ambari's 1594 victory were international and lasted for centuries. It is perhaps unsurprising that such a dramatic event still lived strongly in the historical consciousness of those Portuguese with whom the English sailor Andrew Battell would have had contact only a few short years after 1594. Battell, who travelled across the interior Angola in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, wrote of meeting the forces of Kafuxi Ambari in 1601, while he accompanied Kalandula's band of Imbangala.⁹⁸ He wrote that Kafuxi Ambari "was a great warrior, for

⁹⁷ Rodrigues, "História," 566-75, José Joaquim Lopès de Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessoes portuguezas na Africa occidental e oriental, na Asia occidental, na China e na Oceania escriptos de ordem do governo de S. M.D. Maria II*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), XXI.

⁹⁸ Nearly every historian who writes about Angola during the age of the trans-Atlantic slave trade writes about the Jaga, or Imbangala. The debates concerning Jaga historiography are vast and deep, and contend with questions as varied as origins, cultural practices, and the veracity of the widespread claims in contemporary European sources that the Jaga practiced cannibalism. See Jan Vansina, "More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda," *Journal of African History* 7(1966): 421-9, Miller, "The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History," 549-74, Joseph Miller, "Requiem for the 'Jaga' " *Cahiers D'Etudes Africaines* 13(1973): 121-49, John Thornton, "A Resurrection for the Jaga," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 18(1978): 223-31, Beatrix Heintze, "The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga through the Centuries: Critical Approaches to Precolonial Angolan Historical Sources," *History in Africa* 34(2007): 67-101. For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to recognize Imbangala society as a rejection of kin-based descent in favor of a society bound by a newly-forged warrior ethos. In the next chapter, I will explore the difference between Imbangala and Kisama responses to these conditions at length.

he had some seven years before [sic; in 1594] overthrown the Portugals camp, and killed eight hundred Portugals and forty-thousand negroes, that were on the Portugals side.”⁹⁹

In late 1790s, however, infantry Colonel Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda wrote in his account of his own military activities that in the lands of Kafuxi Ambari, “there is a tradition, that in ancient times an Army of Portuguese were lost there in a Trap that this Barbarian set, in which all died including the leader [of the Portuguese].”¹⁰⁰ As late as 1885, as the Portuguese struggled to gain control of the island of Kisanga (so-called by the Portuguese; Kisanga actually means “island” in Kimbundu) in the Kwanza River, the captain in charge of the campaign, José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade, included in his report to the king a lengthy transcription of a contemporary account of Kafuxi Ambari’s defeat of the Portuguese in 1594 – a story he claimed was “well known [–] to affirm his argument that, more than imprudent, [it is] mad to penetrate Quissama to make a war there, with the goal of conquering territory.”¹⁰¹ In the immediate wake of Kafuxi Ambari’s triumph, both the local political and social landscape and the terms within which the Portuguese and other Europeans viewed it shifted dramatically, and these changes would reverberate throughout Angola and the Americas for centuries to come. Kafuxi Ambari’s political strategies, practices, and personal characteristics would shape not only the ways in which the people between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers responded

⁹⁹ Andrew Battell, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh, in Angola and the Adjoining Regions* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1901), 27.

¹⁰⁰ “Notícia de Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda, coronel de infantaria da Província de Quissamã, em Angola, a respeito do exército enviado para punir os gentios dessa mesma província pelos furtos e mortes cometidos contra os moradores de Luanda e das margens do rio Cuanza,” Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (IHGB), África/Angola, DL32,12.01, C791, 9v., 1798.

¹⁰¹ Report of José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade, AHU, Sala 1L, caixa 6/790, document 227, 13/01/1885.

to the violence and dislocation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, but also the intellectual terrain within which people throughout the region – and, ultimately, throughout the Americas – imagined the possibilities for (re)constructing viable communities. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were a critical juncture in shaping the contours of political imagination within and about Kisama.

Warfare and the Forging of Kisama Identity, 1600-1630

Those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers in the region that first the BaKongo and later the Portuguese labeled “Kisama” acquired a reputation in the Portuguese colonial world as fierce warriors and intractable resisters that would endure from the time of Kafuxi Ambari’s crushing defeat of the Portuguese until the first few decades of the twentieth century.¹⁰² The same contemporary Jesuit chronicler who recorded Kafuxi Ambari’s military victory, Francisco Rodrigues, wrote of “Kisama” in general that, “The people [of Kisama are] the most bellicose, and ferocious that there are in the Kingdom [of Angola] who will fight in the battlefield with much force and at times come and take hold of the rifles [of the Portuguese] without fear of death.”¹⁰³ This reputation emerged in the wake of Kafuxi Ambari’s success in the late sixteenth century. While Cadornega writes that in the time of Paulo Dias de Novais’s conquests (1570s-1580s), Novais “stood on the other bank of this great river [Kwanza] from the bellicose province of Quissama...He had many battles and warlike encounters with these valorous quissamas,” he seems to be anachronistically attributing a later view of Kisama and its inhabitants to an earlier period; Cadornega arrived in Angola in 1639 and published his

¹⁰² Ferreira, “La Kisama”.

¹⁰³ Rodrigues, “História,” 550-1.

works in 1680.¹⁰⁴ No known documents from the 1570s or 1580s describe Kisama or its inhabitants in these terms. The transformation of Kisama from a regional designation to a broad social, cultural, linguistic, and above all political identity appears rooted in the attachment of Kafuxi Ambari's military success in the 1590s to an over-arching and unifying stereotypical characteristic of a heterogeneous and broadly dispersed group of people within a bounded geographical zone. The shift from describing Kisama as a province to maligning "the Kisama" – for transforming the term Kisama from a geographical toponym to a highly politicized socio-cultural identity identified with that toponym – took place over the seventeenth century and reflected a strategic performance of identity by Kafuxi Ambari and those who followed his lead, particularly those fugitives whom he attracted. While in 1594 Rodrigues described "the people of Quissama" as ferocious and bellicose, it was Cadornega who, writing later in the seventeenth century, first spoke of "quissamas." For the next three centuries, both African and European outsiders continued to describe "Kisamas" in this flattened, stereotypical way. The people of Kisama ensured that the land between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers would be a secure refuge for the thousands of people who fled slavery and the devastation caused by slave raids by continuing to interact with Portuguese and their allies in ways that reinforced this stereotype. However, it is possible to more finely historicize both the process through which outsiders grew to understand those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers as a distinctive people characterized by their resistance to the Portuguese and their allies and military valor and the means by which

¹⁰⁴ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, I: 33-4.

these qualities informed a locally-relevant and resonant sense of identity tied to the land and yet portable beyond its borders.

While in 1588 Kafuxi Ambari's territory was apparently restricted to the coast and its immediate hinterlands, by 1593 he was close to Cambambe and by 1601, Battell found him "within three days' journey of Massangano," representing a sizeable expansion of his lands. Not only did Kafuxi Ambari rule over more land by 1601, but he also ruled over more populous and fertile land along the Longa River – possibly the same lands whose people he had attacked in 1588.¹⁰⁵ This shift was crucial in the emerging politics of Kafuxi Ambari, whose name Cadornega later (erroneously) glossed as "multitude of people."¹⁰⁶ It also points to the complexities of Kisama identities in the early seventeenth century, when the boundaries of communities increasingly comprised of fugitives were in near-constant flux; Kafuxi Ambari's use of violence against his neighbors suggests that while the less powerful within Kisama may have come to identify with Kafuxi Ambari, the powerful leader of the early seventeenth century did not necessarily share this same sense of common identity. Conquest expanded Kafuxi Ambari's power by increasing his pool of dependents, but it did not appear to alter the fundamentally decentralized, non-state form of politics that he practiced.

According to Cadornega, the Portuguese governor and military officials wanted to ally with Kafuxi Ambari against the King of Ndongo because "it would make his conquest the easiest; he [Kafuxi Ambari] had had many victories and [his] encounters well demonstrated his valor and the nobility who followed him showed on all occasions a

¹⁰⁵ Battell, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell*, 28.

¹⁰⁶ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 93.

great disposition, as those who well understood things of war[,] of which he was a master.”¹⁰⁷ With his martial and ritual power well-recognized and his regional prestige at an all-time high, Portuguese attempts to compel or persuade Kafuxi Ambari to ally with them against Ndongo had little chance of success. By the early seventeenth century, Kafuxi Ambari’s formidable political, martial, and ritual authority was recognized by nobles within Ndongo itself. In 1603, the Jesuit priest Fernão Guerreiro related that “even the King of Angola [Ndongo] is afraid [of Kafuxi Ambari], because it is he who according to their laws succeeds him ... [as king] and whom the other sobas [of Ndongo] agree to make the next king, because he is so brave, that he can defend them from the Portuguese.”¹⁰⁸ The king of Ndongo, Mbandi Ngola Kiluanji, Queen Njinga’s father, may well have feared Kafuxi Ambari. At that time, Ndongo was embroiled in a constitutional crisis over forms of political legitimacy with an emergent conflict between the king, the nobles (the “other *sobas*” Guerreiro mentioned), and a growing number of people enslaved to the king. The king employed these enslaved people to strengthen himself in relation to the nobles, usurping their previously-held source of military powers, relative local autonomy, and perhaps their ability to influence royal succession. Rival factions within Ndongo cited historical precedent to support either a notion of strict hereditary succession or of the right of nobles to appoint a more (militarily) suitable leader.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, I: 69-70.

¹⁰⁸ Fernão Guerreiro, “Missão dos Jesuítas em Angola,” 1602-3, in *MMA* V: 53.

¹⁰⁹ John Thornton, “Legitimacy and Political Power: Queen Njinga, 1624-1663,” *The Journal of African History* 32(1991): 25-40.

Guerreiro's report that the King of Angola feared Kafuxi Ambari because he was acclaimed for his bravery and the local nobles believed him better able to protect them from the depredations of the Portuguese reflects the growing importance of military defense and particular kinds of power in regional notions of political legitimacy. If people throughout the region supported Kafuxi Ambari as a more suitable leader than Mbandi Ngola Kiluanji because he seemed better able to defend them against the Portuguese, then at least some of the *sobas* of Ndongo believed that protecting citizens from foreign violence was an essential prerequisite for rule.¹¹⁰ It was not only Kafuxi Ambari's ability to fight well, but his strategic aptitude for maneuvering both soldiers and spiritual forces in defense of his people – his particular efficacy as a leader during this tumultuous time throughout the region – that led to his wide acclaim and perception of suitability to rule in Ndongo. Kafuxi Ambari's ability to inspire such confidence in his power by the early seventeenth century contrasts sharply with the situation in 1588, when he faced a local crisis of legitimacy for his failure to bring rains; by the early seventeenth century, a militarily adept and ritually powerful Kafuxi Ambari appeared a desirable potential replacement for the weaker Mbandi Ngola Kiluanji. Despite his lack of association with the royal lineage of Ndongo or the families of any of its nobles, Kafuxi Ambari was apparently considered a viable candidate for the kingship simply by virtue of his strategic prowess. For some, by the early seventeenth century, the ability to protect citizens from the Portuguese and their allies had become an important, if not primary,

¹¹⁰ The ability of leaders to keep those over whom they ruled safe from capture and enslavement became a crucial factor in political legitimacy and in societies throughout Africa during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. See, for example, Heywood, "Slavery and Its Transformations in the Kingdom of Kongo: 1491-1800," 1-22. For a fascinating comparative study of the connections between protection from enslavement and political legitimacy in West Africa, see Lofkrantz, "Protecting Freeborn Muslims," 109-27.

qualification for rule.¹¹¹ In this context, a ruler like Kafuxi Ambari, unhindered by the apparatus of state, would have been an attractive protector for the many vulnerable people within the region.

While at the turn of the seventeenth century the Portuguese imagined harnessing Kafuxi Ambari's martial skill for their conquest of Ndongo and some of Ndongo's *sobas* envisioned him as the leader of a more secure, better defended state, Kafuxi Ambari ultimately played neither of these roles; the desires of those within Ndongo were not necessarily congruent with Kafuxi Ambari's interests. Instead, in 1603, he faced a concerted attack by the newly appointed Portuguese governor, Manuel Cerveira Pereira, whose goal was to open the way for the Portuguese occupation of the famed, fictitious silver mines at Cambambe. According to Guerreiro, Pereira attacked Kafuxi Ambari's forces in three major battles, in which he destroyed Kafuxi Ambari's capital, caused "great destruction and mortality," and compelled Kafuxi Ambari himself to flee.¹¹² The author of the 1784 "Catalogo dos governadores de Angola" claims that Pereira actually subjugated Kafuxi Ambari and forced him into vassalage to the Portuguese on his way to

¹¹¹ Unfortunately, there are no ethnographic materials describing spiritual beliefs and practices in Kisama during this period in any detail. While perhaps some of the same complexes of belief that were operant north of the Kwanza River in Ndongo and south of the Longa River in the central highlands may have also been a part of Kisama society, it would be unwise to assume such unity. It seems likely, however, that these dramatic changes in the political landscape were accompanied by an alteration of the spiritual landscape as well. For an intriguing examination of the connection between militarization, masculinization, and ritual practice in Oyo, see Matory, *Sex and the Empire That is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyo Yoruba Religion*. For a discussion of the ways that anthropological and historical obsessions with lineage and kinship in Africa spring from and recreate problematic racist notions about Africa and a compelling argument that lineage theory is a Western myth, see Wyatt Macgaffey, "Changing Representations in Central African History," *The Journal of African History* 46, no. 2 (2005): 189-207.

¹¹² Guerreiro, "Missão," 54.

defeating the *soba* of Cambambe.¹¹³ While the Portuguese did advance to Cambambe and build a fort there in 1604, the claim that Kafuxi Ambari was subjugated in 1603 appears patently false.

Those *soba* whom the Portuguese had decisively subjugated in this period accommodated their conquerors not only by allowing them to build forts and other outposts as in Muxima, Massangano, and Cambambe, but also through providing their own vassals as a tribute for the never-ending Portuguese appetite for enslaved laborers to work both in Angola as plantation laborers, porters, and military conscripts, and to be sold in the Americas.¹¹⁴ However, only nine years after Pereira supposedly conquered Kafuxi Ambari, André Velho da Fonseca wrote from Luanda that the entire reason for the difficult, costly maintenance of the three Portuguese forts along the Kwanza River was to guard the slaves for trade to

the sugar plantations of parts of Brazil, all of which without the service of slaves that leave from these Kingdoms would be very difficult. And the reason for maintaining the fortresses, is because between this port of Luanda and the mentioned forts [Muxima, Massangano, and Cambambe] there are very powerful enemies with vast territories, like in part of the province of Quiçama, Capacassa, Cafuche[,] Langere and many others, who do not trade with the black merchants...who must come through many enemy lands ... to arrive at this port of Luanda, neither will the white merchants send their black pombeiros [itinerant African merchants who worked as dependents of the Portuguese¹¹⁵] through this wilderness to trade, because they will rob and kill the pombeiros and even some whites that enter the wilderness, as happened many times during the time of Paullos Dias de Nouaes [sic], when there were no forts.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ "Catalogo dos governadores de Angola," 93.

¹¹⁴ Beatrix Heintze, "The Angolan Vassal Tributes of the 17th Century," *Revista de História Económica e Social* 6(1980): 57-78.

¹¹⁵ Miller, *Way of Death*, 189-90.

¹¹⁶ "Carta de André Velho da Fonseca a El-Rei," 28 February 1612, in *MMA* VI: 65.

Rather than a vanquished vassal of the Portuguese, here Kafuxi Ambari and other *sobas* of Kisama, including Kapakasa and Langere, appear as the single greatest threat to the lucrative commerce in enslaved Africans to fuel the powerful and growing Brazilian sugar industry of the early seventeenth century. As Portuguese demands for enslaved captives increased, in 1611, Portuguese Governor Bento Banho Cardoso noted in his longer discussion of the state of the slave trade in Kongo and Angola that, “it is not necessary to discuss the part in the south [i.e. south of the Kingdom of Ndongo and the Kwanza River] because slaves do not come from there.”¹¹⁷ It was not only along the Kwanza River that the people of Kisama rejected participation in the slave trade. In 1631, the Governor of Benguela complained that the people of Kisama living along the Longa River “do not participate in the [slave] trade, nor do they wish to become vassals.”¹¹⁸ Refusing to trade with the Portuguese and *pombeiro* merchants and disobeying the kind of systemic order that the Portuguese believed they had imposed on the region with the establishment of their forts, the actions of Kafuxi Ambari, Langere, Kapakasa, and others belied the tenuous Portuguese sense of progress, stability, authority, and permanence that followed in the wake of the construction of the fort at Cambambe. Despite the many Portuguese attempts to implement the type of warfare/slave raiding system in Kisama that they and their allies used to rend apart communities and capture men, women, and children throughout the rest of West Central Africa, Kafuxi Ambari

¹¹⁷ “Carta de Bento Banho Cardoso,” AHU, Caixa 1, Document 16, 10 August 1611. Contrast this with the situation in the late eighteenth century, when Portuguese Coronel Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda described Kisama as, “populated with many blacks, all heathens, and where many whites, and other merchants, come to buy slaves.” “Notícia de Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda,” 1v.

¹¹⁸ Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-IX-21, f. 18, letter by the Governor of Benguela to the King of Portugal, Benguela, 21 February 1631.

and the other *sobas*' refusal to participate in the slave economy during the early seventeenth century interrupted more than three decades of Portuguese conquests and colonization in Angola and heavily influenced regional notions of the political and social character of Kisama.

As the notion that these lands and their leaders represented a safe haven from the violence of the slave trade expanded beyond merely those lands under Kafuxi Ambari's rule to eventually encompass nearly all of the land between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, a Kisama identity began to gain salience for local people. The process of transforming from merely an outsiders' ascription or geographic location to an internally-relevant and highly politicized identity began with Kafuxi Ambari's use of his military and ritual power not only to defeat the Portuguese but to convince other *sobas* in the region to follow his lead. In Battell's account from 1601, he describes Langere as "one of the greatest Lords...[of the] province of Casama" who was nevertheless loyal to the Imbangala Kalandula, whose forces he guided to Kafuxi Ambari's lands.¹¹⁹ By "obey[ing]" Kalandula and conveying his enemy force to Kafuxi Ambari's lands, Langere showed that he was certainly no ally of Kafuxi Ambari's. However, by the time of André Velho da Fonseca's account in 1612, Langere is named as a *soba* who along with Kafuxi Ambari and Kapakasa refused to participate in the slave trade and reacted with violent hostility to slave merchants, showing a certain political alignment of Langere along with Kafuxi Ambari that differed from the situation earlier in the century, when Langere willingly led Kalandula's Imbangala band against Kafuxi Ambari. The same group of three *sobas* -- Kafuxi Ambari, Langere, and Kapakasa -- again appear in the

¹¹⁹ Battell, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell*, 27.

1632 account of then ex-governor Fernão de Sousa with which I opened the dissertation; he complained that the “souas on whom we border are many and powerful, and warlike; in the province of Kisama, Cafuche, Langere, Capaccaça and others, all non-Christians and our enemies.”¹²⁰ Unlike Kafuxi Ambari’s earlier relationship with *Soba* Ndemba or perhaps those *sobas* whom Kafuxi Ambari conquered in order to expand his territory and, more importantly, his dependents, these allegiances appear to have been relatively non-hierarchical.

The political dimensions of this common identification are clear from an account of Queen Njinga sending ambassadors to Kisama in an effort to gain allies. The Portuguese captain at Massangano wrote that *Soba* Malumba, who lived directly south of the fort on the Kisama side of the river, informed him that Njinga’s emissaries were on the lands of Kapakasa, where Langere and Kafuxi Ambari along with other unnamed *sobas* had congregated to receive them. Kapakasa’s advisors were reticent to pass along Njinga’s emissaries’ message because they suspected that the Portuguese had sent spies. Indeed, they were correct; the *sobas* Malumba and Katala, who, in the words of Malumba as reported by the Portuguese captain, “did not want to go to Capaccaça to hear the message because they are the sons of the [Portuguese] captain,” hurried to report on these events to the captain at Massangano.¹²¹ Through the language of descent and through their actions in providing intelligence to the Portuguese forces, Malumba and Katala declared themselves on one side of a political chasm that divided this region of Angola in

¹²⁰ “Relação da costa de Angola e Congo pelo ex-governador Fernão de Sousa,” 21 February 1632, in *MMA* VIII: 125, 129.

¹²¹ Fernão de Sousa, “O extensor relatório de governador a seus filhos,” 1625-30, in Beatrix Heintze, ed. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1988), I: 285.

the 1620s through the 1660s into allies of the Portuguese and those who fought against them, most notably Queen Njinga and her affiliates.

The pro-Njinga v. pro-Portuguese division was far from the only axis along which political identities within the Kisama region fractured, however. As early as the 1570s, certain *sobas* of Kisama who lived along the southern banks of the Kwanza sought the military aid of the Portuguese forces under Paulo Dias de Novais in an effort to maintain their independence from Ndongo.¹²² Long before those living in Kisama acquired the reputation that emerged post-1594, in the early 1580s, *Soba* Kamona Kasonga who lived near the mouth of the Kwanza River, became the first *soba* south of the Kingdom of Kongo to be baptized. By 1582, his godfather, the Governor Paulo Dias de Novais, had him appointed High Captain of the Native People (“*gente da terra*”). Novais and the Portuguese colonial and ecclesiastical authorities in the area at the time regarded Kamona Kasonga’s conversion and loyalty particularly valuable, as he was considered a father-in-law to the King of Ndongo, for whom he served as an oracle.¹²³ Later, *Soba* Muxima became a vassal on whose lands the Portuguese constructed a fort in 1593; Muxima and Kamona Kasonga had persistent conflicts that each hoped to resolve successfully through an alliance with the Portuguese.¹²⁴ While factionalism characterized the region between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers during this and later periods, by the beginning of the seventeenth century and certainly by the 1620s, *sobas* in the region found themselves largely compelled to either actively oppose the Portuguese, their aggressions, their

¹²² Ferreira, "La Kisama", 202.

¹²³ “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira para O Padre Sebastião de Moraes,” 31 January 1582, in *MMA* III: 208-11.

¹²⁴ Ferreira, "La Kisama".

incursions, and their growing trade in people that centered in areas just to the north of the Kwanza River and increasingly in Benguela and its hinterlands, to align themselves politically with Queen Njinga, or to flee deeper into the interior of Kisama. By 1612, Kafuxi Ambari emerged as the most formidable of a group *sobas* that included Kapakasa, Langere, and others, who positioned themselves against the Portuguese and with Njinga while retaining their independence in relation both to Ndongo and Matamba and to each other. Indeed, independence and autonomy remained primary for these leaders in Kisama, against whom Queen Njinga was prepared to turn after she negotiated her peace with the Portuguese in the 1650s.¹²⁵ On the other hand, Malumba, Katala, and others calculated that being “sons of the Portuguese” better ensured their people’s survival in this chaotic, violent period. *Sobas*, however, did not make such choices absent input from those whom they governed and whose allegiances they commanded. By the late 1620s, an increasing number of fugitives fleeing the Portuguese forts at Muxima, Massangano, and Cambambe as well as Portuguese- and Luso-African-run plantations in the river valleys fled to Kisama. The mere presence of these fugitives and their political will would have a substantial impact on the nature of politics and identity in Kisama for the remainder of the seventeenth century and beyond, and influence the ways in which Kisama political identities travelled in the region and to the Americas.

Conclusions

It was likely around the 1620s that the term “Kisama” shifted from an outsider’s description of a territory or stereotyped ascription of a “tribal” identity, as evident in texts

¹²⁵ John Thornton, “Letter from Queen Ana Njinga to the Governor General of Angola, December 13, 1655,” in McKnight and Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices*, 47. Translation by Luis Madureira in text. I will discuss this letter in the next chapter.

from BaKongo and Portuguese authors, to a locally meaningful term. While it is impossible to determine from linguistic evidence when the term “Kisama” originated as a label for the region, it is certainly far from a common place name prefix in the Kimbundu language. Like all Bantu languages, Kimbundu, the language spoken in both Kisama and by neighbors north of the Kwanza River, uses a system of noun classes in which the meaning of a noun word stem can be altered by changing to prefix.¹²⁶ For example, the stem *mbundu* can be rendered Ki-*mbundu*, the language, or A-*mbundu*, the people. The prefix *ki-* is normally reserved for inanimate objects or languages, as in *kima* (thing) or Kimbundu the language, though it can also indicate a superlative.¹²⁷ When I asked people to explain this origin of the name “Kisama,” I was told that in some indistinct time in the past (“in the time of regional wars”), the most renowned and mighty of all of the local warriors wore his hair uncombed. As his uncombed, tangled, and large hair was so distinctive, people began to call him *Kisamunu* (Comb). Because of this man’s skill in warfare, the entire region eventually became known by a truncated form of the warrior’s

¹²⁶ Citing the Italian Capuchin Cannecattim, who compiled a dictionary and linguistic observations of Kimbundu based on his time as a missionary in the region during the nineteenth century. Joseph Miller argues that Kisama was an Umbundu (Guthrie R10), rather than Kimbundu (Guthrie H21)-speaking region until the late eighteenth century. Undoubtedly, as Miller argues and I discuss in the next chapter, changes to the cultural and linguistic environment of Kisama did occur as a result of the increasing numbers of fugitives who fled to Kisama. However, to be true, Miller’s argument would have to explain why the Umbundu-speaking inhabitants of Kisama either completely shifted language or were overwhelmed or eliminated in the (relatively, in the world of languages) short period of two centuries. See Bernardo Maria de Cannecattim, *Collecção de observações gramaticas sobre a lingua Bunda ou Angolense e dictionario abreviado da lingua Congueza (aque acresce uma quarta columna que contém os termos da lingua Bunda identicos ou semelhantes à lingua Congueza)* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1859), Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 39. In her study of the development of the Kimbundu language, Carolyn Vieira-Martinez argues that Kisama emerged as a distinct dialect of Kimbundu by 1300. Vieira-Martinez, "Building Kimbundu: Language Community Reconsidered in West Central Africa, c. 1500-1750", 186-7.

¹²⁷ Jan Vansina, personal communication with author, 6 March 2011.

nickname, *Kisama*.¹²⁸ While it is possible that *Kisama* originated as a term in Kikongo, rather than Kimbundu, this local etymology still reflects the historical association of the *Kisama* identity with a warrior who lived outside of the conventions of civilization.¹²⁹

Stories of the founders of societies being men with large, uncombed hair are quite common throughout much of Bantu-speaking Africa, and Jan Vansina notes that it would be ideal for such a founder to have a name that incorporated the superlative prefix *Ki-*.¹³⁰ While we have evidence of *Kisama* as a geographical referent by the early sixteenth century when the King of Kongo (falsely) claimed to rule *Kisama* the province, this historical memory suggests that *Kisama* became a legible, intelligible identity for those within the region as it grew to be associated with martial skill, superior ritual power, and a certain alienation: the same circumstances that characterized the rise of Kafuxi Ambari's power in the early seventeenth century.¹³¹ *Kisama* became a coherent identity which people could adopt as they integrated themselves into the practice of *Kisama*'s particular style of politics, modeled after Kafuxi Ambari's turn-of-the-seventeenth-century practices. Kafuxi Ambari – and the meaning of his strength for the vulnerable people whom it attracted to his lands as dependents – forged a *Kisama* identity that was both profoundly political and also enduring.

¹²⁸ Resident of Cacumba (anonymous by interviewee's request), interview with author, Cacumba, Angola, 15 July 2010. Resident of *Kisama*, (anonymous by interviewee's request), interview with author, Ndemba Chio, Angola, 18 July 2010. António Sondoka, interview with author, Muxima, Angola, 2 August 2010. Resident of Mumbondo (anonymous by interviewee's request), interview with author, Mumbondo, Angola, 10 August 2010.

¹²⁹ According to John Thornton, place names beginning with *Ki-* are common in KiKongo. John Thornton, personal communication with author, 7 January 2011.

¹³⁰ Jan Vansina, personal communication with author, 6 March 2011.

¹³¹ "Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo III," in *MMA* II: 38.

It is worth noting that one of the distinct features of the Kimbundu spoken in Kisama is the use of the *ch* sound (as in the English word “change” and written in Angolan national languages as *c*) in places where other dialects of Kimbundu use a hard *c* sound (as in the English word “can”). Though far from universal – many in Kisama today will use the hard sound – it is common to hear someone say “a good thing” as *cima cyambote*, rather than *kima kyambote*, as in the other dialects of Kimbundu. While this is not a sound in other dialects of Kimbundu, it is common in the neighboring languages spoken to both the east (Cokwe) and the south (Umbunudu).¹³² Suggestively, Kisama carries meanings associated with ferocity, strength, and power in lands to the east. In Luvale, a language spoken on both sides of the Angolan/Zambian border and also into the Democratic Republic of Congo, *-sama* means “Cheetah [or] hunting-leopard,” or, alternately, “‘Grows up to a lion’ i.e. it is like a little lion.” These roots are considered by Luvale speakers to be loans from Cokwe, a language spoken to the north and northwest of Luavle.¹³³ In Cokwe, *-sama* means leopard.¹³⁴ The root of Kafuxi Ambari’s name, -

¹³² While linguistic data is suggestive for earlier histories, I can draw only tentative conclusions. I have not myself conducted a rigorous linguistic study of language practices in Kisama, and it is as ever absent from the extremely limited existing literature on Kimbundu linguistics. Carolyn Vieira-Martinez mentions Kisama dialect a few times in her study of Ambaquista and Awkaluanda dialects of Kimbundu, but her references come from secondary sources and not primary research. See Vieira-Martinez, “Building Kimbundu: Language Community Reconsidered in West Central Africa, c. 1500-1750”. There has been one recent study comparing lexicons in the Kisama, Libolo and Songo dialects. However, when I contacted the primary author, she confirmed that, as stated in the article, the information about Kisama speech was obtained from a single speaker living in Luanda. Maria Fátima Lima de Sousa, Vatomene Kukanda, and Joane Lima Santiago, “A posição lexical do Songo dentro do Grupo H20 (Kimbundu *strictu sensu*, Sama, Bolo, e Songo),” *Papia* 21, no. 2 (2011): 306., Maria Fátima Lima de Sousa, personal communication, 18 February 2011.

¹³³ A. E. Horton, *A Dictionary of Luvale* (El Monte, CA: Lithographed by Rahn Bros. Print. & Lithographing Co., 1953), 127, 280, 315. David Schoenbrun helpfully brought these glosses to my attention.

¹³⁴ Adriano C. Barbosa, *Dicionário cokwe-português* (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1989), 479.

fluxi, likewise means “quickly [or] swiftly” in Luvale.¹³⁵ These meanings suggest the profound connections of Kisama with lands to the south and east, and remind us of the importance of re-situating this history away from an ever-westward-glancing “Atlantic” view. Further studies of linguistic practices within Kisama will likely yield valuable information about the time depth and nature of these relationships with Cokwe and Umbundu speakers. As I will discuss in the next chapter, however, by the mid-seventeenth-century, many speakers of these languages had very likely become Kisama, finding refuge in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers.¹³⁶

While the term “Kisama” appears in written records generated by outsiders from the Kongo and Portugal beginning in the 1530s, its relevance for those living in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers truly emerged in the early seventeenth century. While the *soba* Kafuxi Ambari of 1588 was compelled by the desperation of drought and crop failure to raid his neighbors, the Kafuxi Ambari of 1594 achieved a profound victory over the Portuguese forces that strove to conquer Angola’s interior. Inspired by Kafuxi Ambari’s success, many neighboring *sobas* successfully waged war on the Portuguese. After the turn of the century, Kafuxi Ambari and several of his neighbors, including the previously inimical Langere, found themselves on the same side of a political divide. Beginning in the 1610s, Kafuxi Ambari and other leaders began actively attacking

¹³⁵ Horton, *A Dictionary of Luvale*, 37.

¹³⁶ The complexity of linguistic practices in Kisama begs for a new framework of linguistics that applies the same tools that scholars have devised for analyzing “creole” languages. Kisama shows every sign of having long been a contact language, though, as Vansina notes, there is a deep history of language contact and borrowing throughout the region. However, linguists traditionally reserve the term “creole” for analysis of languages formed through contact between an Indo-European and non-Indo-European language – the same epistemological pitfall that characterizes historical scholarship on Atlantic creoles. See Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 53.

Portuguese and allied slaving interests, gaining a reputation as warlike and resistant. In the following decade, fugitives from the slave trade began recognizing the lands of these leaders as a safe haven. As Queen Njinga fought against the Portuguese north of the Kwanza, *sobas* south of the river who allied with her – including Kafuxi Ambari, Kapakasa, and Langere – found themselves at odds with those who, like Malumba and Katala, considered themselves “sons” of the Portuguese empire. For those who suffered the profound tragedy of capture and sale into the trans-Atlantic slave trade but the paradoxical fortune of surviving the Middle Passage to the Americas, the association of Kisama with rebelliousness, marginality, and martial skill was a powerful signifier upon which they could draw to reconstitute meaningful social communities in the wake of the social dismemberment of their natal communities; this was the exact purpose to which thousands of fugitives would use Kisama identity during the seventeenth century. Within Angola, the conflation of Kisama identity with militarized resistance against the Portuguese and their allies both attracted more fugitives and inspired growing concern from the Portuguese, who, after they negotiated their peace with Queen Njinga, would turn the bulk of their military forces towards a bush war in Kisama. The public face of Kisama -- the warrior -- brought many of those who would become Kisama to the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers and, once they were there, helped keep them safe from the predations of the Portuguese and their allies, including the Imbangala. In the next chapter, I will explore the private faces of Kisama and the idioms through which the people of Kisama – men, women, soldiers, farmers, fisherman, hunters – forged their own fugitive modernities in the context of the arrival of continuous waves of fugitives and

with the added burden of a major war with the Portuguese and their allies from 1655-1658.

Chapter Three: “They Publicize to the Neighboring Nations that the Arms of Your Majesty Do Not Conquer”: Fugitive Politics and the War of 1655-1658

Beatrix Heintze describes the seventeenth century as “the century of fugitives” in Angola; the mid-seventeenth century in particular was a period of particular turbulence.¹³⁷ The Portuguese competed with the English, Dutch, and French along the coast for control of a growing flow of captives leaving for the Americas. The leaders of Kongo and Ndongo strove to increase their own power through control of an ever-burgeoning number of unfree laborers. The previously nomadic bands of Imbangala consolidated into a powerful kingdom, Kasanje. Subjugated leaders in the interior sought to maintain alliances with the Portuguese by meeting both legal and illegal demands for tribute in bondsmen and women.¹³⁸ By 1633, Gonçalo de Sousa complained that there were virtually no captives for sale except at distant markets and at high prices. Sousa reported that the regions immediately surrounding Luanda were almost completely depopulated by slave-raiding and warfare – a complaint echoing that of the Governor of Benguela two years earlier -- and that *sobas* who were vassals to the Portuguese were fleeing with their people into the bush to escape demands for tribute in captives.¹³⁹ Conditions of near-perpetual warfare and the ever-present threat of capture, enslavement, and potential sale made life in seventeenth-century Angola fraught with dangers for the vulnerable. Many thousands were captured; many thousands more fled their homes and

¹³⁷ Heintze, *Asilo ameaçado*.

¹³⁸ Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-IX-20, “Copia da rellação que foy ao secretario de estado Francisco de Lucena,” 30 January 1627, f. 236.

¹³⁹ Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-IX-21, letter by the Governor of Benguela to the King of Portugal, Benguela, 21 February 1631, AHU, Caixa 3, Document 5, report by the Camara of Luanda to the King of Portugal, 20 June 1633.

lands in an effort to escape capture. By the late 1620s, ex-Governor Fernão de Sousa described how many *sobas* were fleeing, and those who remained as vassals to the Portuguese were increasingly forced to pay their tribute with elders and children, since their young adults had run away.¹⁴⁰ Of the many thousands who were captured and the even greater number who fled, a significant number risked their lives to flee captivity and seek asylum in other lands. By the late 1620s, many of these refugees found their best chance for safety in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers.

The first direct mention of Kisama as a refuge for those fleeing enslavement comes from the Portuguese Governor Fernão de Sousa's authorization of the Imbangala leader Nzena to "wage war on...the...rebellious province of Quiçama, [where] the soba Cafuche...has become very powerful, and is our main enemy...in order to restore all of the slaves belonging to the Portuguese."¹⁴¹ While this is the earliest archival reference to Kisama as a refuge for fugitives – in this case those who were among the tens thousands of bondsmen and women working the Jesuit, Portuguese or Luso-African manioc plantations in the Bengo, Lukala, and Kwanza River valleys – Kafuxi Ambari and other *sobas* in Kisama had been attracting fugitives as dependents at least since the 1590s, following Kafuxi Ambari's defeat of the Portuguese. Tellingly, in this earliest direct source, however, it is Kafuxi Ambari who is named as the protector of the fugitives and

¹⁴⁰ Biblioteca da Ajuda, Papers of Fernão de Sousa, 51-1X-20, f. 208.

¹⁴¹ The Portuguese authorization of Nzena's war against Kafuxi Ambari was necessary in order to satisfy the formal legal conditions for a "just war" and "legitimately acquired slaves." See Emilia Viotti da Costa, "The Portuguese-African Slave Trade: A Lesson in Colonialism," *Latin American Perspectives* 12(1985): 41-61. Fernão de Sousa, "O extenso relatório do governador a seus filhos," 1625-1630, in Heintze, ed. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, I: 226.

the primary enemy of the Portuguese.¹⁴² While Kafuxi Ambari may not have controlled the lands that were the most geographically convenient to those fleeing from the Portuguese forts along the north bank of the Kwanza River, his unparalleled reputation easily made him the most likely protector for these highly vulnerable people; Kafuxi Ambari's renown as a warrior promised safety for those who could align themselves with him as dependents, and the increasing number of fugitive dependents whom he attracted only amplified his reputation and power. De Sousa's explanation of his authorization of Nzenza's attack on the basis of the need to recapture fugitives speaks directly to the growing political strength of Kafuxi Ambari in the late 1620s and the role that these maroons played in consolidating his power throughout the region. By the late 1620s, Kafuxi Ambari's martial aptitude had made him a power with whom to reckon for more than thirty years, allowing him to attract followers from those who freed themselves from captivity on Portuguese plantations, as well as from among those who fled in advance of the slave raiders and from their coffles. Fugitives came to Kafuxi Ambari for protection, but his ability to provide security from the Portuguese and their allies depended in no small measure on the numerical and military strength of his followers – in essence, a cycle by which large numbers of the weak and vulnerable transformed themselves into autonomous, well-defended, and strong communities of Kisama.

Kafuxi Ambari was not the only *soba* in Kisama to whose lands fugitives from slavery fled, and the increasing numbers of fugitives in the lands of other *sobas* dramatically influenced notions of political power, legitimacy, and identity in the region.

¹⁴² Letter of Governor Sousa Chicorro to King of Portugal, 22 November 1658, in *MMA* XII: 179-80, Jan Vansina, "Histoire du manioc en Afrique centrale avant 1850," *Paideuma* 43(1997): 259-62.

As Kafuxi Ambari's prestige and militaristic reputation spread beyond the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, it encouraged more and more fugitives from enslavement to attempt to find security and the opportunity for freedom in Kisama. There is ample evidence that throughout the tumultuous seventeenth century *sobas* in Kisama assimilated fugitives through institutions of dependence and social inequality. Certain *sobas* within Kisama also participated in the slave economy by giving captives to the Portuguese as conditions of their vassalage. However, these conditions of inequality and vulnerability were features of all neighboring state societies as well. What set Kisama apart was the instrumental role that fugitives and dependents played in shaping notions of political legitimacy and in forging a new form of politics and society in which the individually vulnerable could together re-constitute themselves into well-defended living communities. The central importance and agency of maroons in re-configuring the political dynamics of Kisama – indeed, of imbuing Kisama identities with political meaning – is not only what distinguished Kisama from its neighbors, but also what molded Kisama's fugitive modernities.

Kisama's public face after 1594 may have been largely singular, monolithic, and static well into the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries; however, the internal social and political dynamics of Kisama were complex, contested, and changing. By the early seventeenth century, the rising tide of fugitives compelled at least some *sobas* within the region to adapt older social structures in innovative ways to accommodate an ever-increasing influx of men and women of diverse backgrounds and statuses. From formally trained soldiers to dependent women, these fugitives impacted the evolution of Kisama politics and society. While the formidable public face of Kisama remained the same,

archival snapshots of two significant moments in the mid-seventeenth century evince the complicated, shifting nature of political and social life in the region. In this chapter, I focus first on the succession struggle within the lands of Langere and then on the war of 1655-1658 in order to explore evolving fugitive modernities in Kisama in the mid-seventeenth century. These two moments in Kisama history illustrate the nature of the societies that the fugitives built in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, where they constructed new natal lineages to reconstitute their communities in stark contrast to the radical, violent, kinless warrior ethos of Imbangala societies who were their contemporaries; paradoxically, these kinship-oriented fugitives remained committed to decentralized political forms, while, by the 1630s, the kinship-eschewing Imbangala formed a kingdom, demonstrating the true multiplicity of fugitive modernities. By the late 1620s, the fugitives in Kisama were able mobilize collectively to assert their political will and to reject leaders they perceived as illegitimate. While during the war of 1655-1658 other *sobas* were forced to ally with the Imbangala, the continued defense of the most vulnerable members of Kisama society reveals the degree to which fugitive politics had come to define the landscape of Kisama, where power came from the cohesion of the weak and vulnerable.

Political Legitimacy, Political Geography and Identity in the Shadow of Chaos: The Langere Succession Struggle

In 1629 or 1630, a man arrived at Massangano with his *tendala*, *mani quizico*, and *makotas* claiming to be a successor to *Soba* Langere and petitioning Portuguese Captain

João Carvalho Mascarenhas to affirm him as the rightful ruler of the lands of Langere.¹⁴³

After Mascarenhas asked the man whether he would obey the Portuguese, be a vassal of the king of Portugal, and pay his tribute, the pretender Langere and his *makotas* assented and signed a treaty.¹⁴⁴ He then left for Langere's lands with his advisors and a *kimbare*, or African soldier who had fought as an auxiliary with the Portuguese forces, to ensure the pretender Langere's compliance with the terms of his vassalage. Mascarenhas wrote to De Sousa that he dared not "send a white man, nor a creole, nor a person who wore [European] clothing, for the inconveniences that could result."¹⁴⁵ So eager was

Mascarenhas to avoid any conflict with the pretender Langere that he "did not speak of

¹⁴³ The document from which this account is derived, Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-1X-20, f. 264-5, is undated and comes from materials Governor Fernão de Sousa wrote for his sons between 1624-1630, according to Heintze. I consulted the original document in the Biblioteca da Ajuda, but also viewed Heintze's notes on her transcription of parts of the archival source in order to better date the document. Heintze, ed. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, I: 217. I have arrived at the 1629 or 1630 date by assuming that the account could have been written no later than 1630 per Heintze, and no earlier than 1629 due to De Sousa's mention of Portuguese official Dionísio Soares de Albergaria, who did not arrive in Angola until 1629. See *ibid.*, I: 67. In the document, the term De Sousa uses is *gingo*, translated by Beatrix Heintze as, "the potential candidate for a title and political function, for example the mani in the region of Luanda or the soba of the Mbundus." *Ibid.*, I: 117-8. While it is unclear from De Sousa's account, it seemed that the individual who had previously been Langere was expelled from his own lands by his people, thus precipitating a succession struggle.

¹⁴⁴ Here I use "pretender" to refer to the man who sought investment as Langere at the hands of the Portuguese. I do not mean to imply a personal opinion on his political legitimacy.

¹⁴⁵ See Heintze, ed. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, I: 126-7. Drawing from the documents to which Heintze refers in her glossary, however, Thornton adds that *imbare* were also the specially trained, professional, free and bonded soldiers of the Kingdom of Ndongo. See John Thornton, "The Art of War in Angola, 1575-1680," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 30(1988): 362. TJ Desch Obi agrees with Thornton's view, defining *imbare* (the Kimbundu plural of *kimbare*) as "groups of professional soldiers [...] in the northern region of West Central Africa." TJ Desch Obi, "Koup Tet: A Machete Wielding View of the Haitian Revolution," in *Activating the Past: History and Memory in the Black Atlantic World*, ed. Andrew Apter and Lauren Derby (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 248. In an article on Ambaca society and the slave trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jan Vansina quotes Cadornega and various dictionaries to define *imbare* as "African mobile traders [...], a term which in an earlier age was reserved for 'workers [for the Portuguese] who pay a tithe from their harvest, just as if they were chiefs.'" Jan Vansina, "Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade c. 1760-1845," *The Journal of African History* 46, no. 01 (2005): 9. In the context of this argument, I follow Heintze's definition which seems the most consistent with De Sousa's meaning all of his writings, though I acknowledge that a socio-linguistic study of the changing meanings and slippery applications of *kimbare* throughout Angolan would likely shift our understanding of what De Sousa meant to convey.

the *quimbare*s who are fugitives in his land, nor of other things in order to not engender distrust.”¹⁴⁶

After passing through Cambambe and Combe Riaquina, the pretender Langere and his delegation attempted to re-enter the lands of Langere along with the captain of Cambambe, Miguel Barreiros de Brito.¹⁴⁷ Far from being welcomed home, however, the Portuguese-backed pretender and his delegation found

that in the quisico and those of the banza did not want to obey him [the pretender Langere] because the Jaga Zenza said that he wanted install the *soba* who had been cast out of the lands, and [who] had asked him permission to make war against some of his rebellious subjects, and that he [Nzenza] gave him help in this.¹⁴⁸

This particular Imbangala leader, Nzenza, had already served as an ally of the Portuguese Governor Fernão de Sousa, who had authorized his attacks on Kafuxi Ambari. So when the Governor informed Nzenza through the captain of Cambambe that the pretender had Portuguese support, the Imbangala leader withdrew.¹⁴⁹ This episode represents a rare occasion in which the colonial archive allows us even the smallest glimpse into the nature of political contestation *within* Kisama. Two distinct groups of people within the lands of Langere – the people of the “quisico” (*ijiko*) and those of the “banza” [*mbanza*] -- here opposed the Portuguese imposition of a pretender Langere. While the text does not specify under what conditions the other *soba* had been forced from his lands, he had

¹⁴⁶ Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-1X-20, f. 264 v.

¹⁴⁷ Combe Riaquina was a vassal *soba* in Libolo. I have chosen to reproduce the word here as it appears in the original text, despite the fact that there is no “r” phoneme in Kimbundu.

¹⁴⁸ Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-1X-20, f. 264 v.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

apparently been pushed out by an unnamed political faction powerful enough to require Imbangala support to return.

The people of the *ijiko* were essentially serfs, or outsiders who were incorporated as dependents and could not be sold.¹⁵⁰ The *mbanza* described, among the Imbangala “positions for aliens, which the Imbangala used to assimilate other strangers of various sorts in addition to slaves,” while Heintze, drawing on material from Ndongo, defines the *mbanza* as a “population of certain importance, a principal place, [or] city.”¹⁵¹ Vansina notes that the people of the Kingdom of Ndongo borrowed the term *mbanza* from the Kingdom of Kongo in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.¹⁵² These two glosses for *mbanza* point to divergent social and political histories. In the more centralized kingdoms of Kongo and Ndongo, where though the violence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade irrevocably altered notions of political legitimacy and reciprocity it did not completely sever older forms of social organization, the term *mbanza* maintained the older meaning, referencing a stable, politically powerful people or the geographical location in which such people resided. The Imbangala, however, were essentially *all* outsiders or aliens,

¹⁵⁰ See Miller, "Slavery in Africa," 231. Heintze relates the term *quizico* as derived from the ethnonym Anzico (Tio) which refers to those around the Malebo Pool, but nevertheless identifies it with a subservient status. See Heintze, ed. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, I: 127. John Thornton disagrees with this etymology, pointing to how its use confirms its application to those in a position of subservience. John Thornton, personal communication, 1 June 2011. For linguistic and semantic reasons, I agree with Thornton and Miller's positions. Indeed, early seventeenth-century Jesuit priest Pierre du Jarric refers to *ijiko* as “those who are strictly speaking are the serfs and slaves [...] who are like an attachment to the patrimony of the Lord thereof, and devolve to the successor of the estate, like other patrimonial goods.” Pierre du Jarric, *Histoire des choses plus memorables advenues tant ez Indes Orientales, que autres païs de la descouerte des Portugais, en l'establissement & progresz de la foy chrestienne, & catholique: et principalement de ce que les religieux de la Compagnie de Iesvs y ont faict, & enduré pour la mesme fin; depuis qu'ils y sont entrez jusques à l'an 1600.*, 3 vols., vol. II (Bordeaux: S. Milanges, 1614), II: 79.

¹⁵¹ Miller, "Slavery in Africa," 211, Heintze, ed. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, I: 115.

¹⁵² Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 203.

until they had undergone martial training and ritual incorporation.¹⁵³ Even then, alterity and outsider-ness remained an essential part of Imbangala identity. For example, the name of the Imbangala leader Nzenza literally means “stranger” in both Kimbundu and Kikongo.¹⁵⁴

Because this snapshot comes from a moment of political flux within the lands of Langere, it may be problematic to interpret the social institutions depicted here as representative of what was actually happening in Kisama at the time. Though the Portuguese understood the man who arrived in Massangano as a pretender Langere and his delegation as authorities within Langere’s lands, it is impossible to say whether those who identified themselves as vassals of Langere at the time would have recognized them as such. However, given the apparent power of the *ijiko* and *mbanza* classes in rejecting the Portuguese-backed pretender and supporting the Imbangala-backed *soba* who had previously been exiled, I believe that it is likely that the social institutions of *ijiko* and *mbanza* were a reality in late-1620s, whether or not the particular *tendala*, *mani kijiko*, and *makotas* that the Portuguese-backed pretender brought with him were recognized by the people in Langere’s lands or not.

While it is impossible to know how, precisely, Langere’s people would have understood *mbanza* in the seventeenth century, its distinction from *ijiko* likely indicates that those of the *mbanza* had a higher status than those who were newly fugitive. That the interests of two such seemingly distinct social classes converged in this case, and both

¹⁵³ Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 232-5, Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 133.

¹⁵⁴ António da Silva Maia, *Dicionário complementar: Português-Kimbundu-Kikongo* (Cucujães: Tipografia das Missões, 1961), 266.

of these elements of Langere's populace opposed the Portuguese-endorsed pretender reveals the likely prominence of fugitives in both of these groups. If fugitives, or those whose interests resonated with fugitives, were part of the *mbanza*, it suggests that they had been a part of the local political landscape for over a generation – enough time for *ijiko* to have children who achieved an even more assimilated status as *mbanza* within Kisama society. For those who had been captured by either the Portuguese or Imbangala and subjected to the violent dimensions of their rule, someone willing to treat with these powers had little claim to political legitimacy, and by the late 1620s, they were powerful enough to challenge Langere's authority. That both the Portuguese-backed pretender and the exiled *soba* were compelled to seek support from the outside reveals the political power of fugitives and their descendents within Kisama.

It is important, too, to note that the only directly, distinctly named fugitive population on Langere's lands at this time are the *imbare*, or trained soldiers who fled from bonded service as Portuguese auxiliaries. The Portuguese were clearly in no position of power in their negotiations with the pretender Langere, and Mascarenhas mentioned to De Sousa that though the Portuguese at Massangano were well aware of the number of fugitive *imbare* who had fled to Langere's lands, he did not discuss these for fear of causing dissent and discord with his newly-sworn vassal. Mascarenhas's hesitation here reveals the importance of this distinct cohort of fugitives in this particular region of Kisama. For the perpetually understaffed, underarmed, and overwhelmed Portuguese forces along these forts, the loss of even a few soldiers would have taken a tremendous toll. To lose such trained soldiers (and likely their arms and munitions) not

to illness or battle but to the camp of their perpetual enemies in Kisama represented a devastating blow to Portuguese efforts to control the people of the region.

But what did it mean for the people of Langere's lands? We can assume that fugitives arriving with such important skills would have been welcomed in a society whose material survival was largely predicated on martial aptitude. Undoubtedly, their savvy and any supplies that they may have brought with them were important attributes in the evolving martial repertoire of Kisama, and were likely critical in teaching people within Kisama how to use the firearms that they deployed during the war of 1655-1658.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, in 1652, officials in Luanda complained that those fleeing captivity on Portuguese plantations in Angola, "because they were fugitive blacks and ladinos, could seduce the kingdom into total ruin, and give favors to the enemies and bring them against the [Portuguese] settlers of this kingdom."¹⁵⁶ Thus, the knowledge, skills, and supplies that fugitives brought with them to Kisama were as critical to Kisama's political viability as the ever-growing stream of new residents, and the particular military acumen of *imbare*, their familiarity with firearms, and their intelligence concerning Portuguese tactics would have proven invaluable.

Though the *imbare* were undoubtedly important to the practice of warfare in Kisama, and the Portuguese recognized them as a distinct class of fugitives within Kisama, the political imagination of Kisama was less focused on warfare and more focused on relationships of incorporation and social reciprocity. Mascarenhas's use of

¹⁵⁵ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 93.

¹⁵⁶ Biblioteca Municipal de Luanda, cód. 6, fls. 105v.-106v., "Assento que fizeram os oficiais da camara em 6 de janeiro de 1652." I am grateful to Roquinaldo Ferreira for providing me with his transcription of this source.

the terms *tendala*, *mani quizico*, and *makotas* and his familiarity with Ndongo political culture warrant some attention to his claims that the pretender Langere arrived with an entourage that emphasized the centrality of fugitive dependents within his society: a viceroy who was likely drawn from the *kijiko* class (*tendala*), an official whose job it was to oversee the *ijiko* (*mani quizico*), and elders from various lineage groups (*macotas*).¹⁵⁷ This seemingly radical change from a more decentralized form of political culture, even if it occurred only within the lands of Langere, may reflect a borrowing from the political culture of Ndongo, or it may simply be a result of the Portuguese tendency to view political institutions in Angola through a monolithic lens shaped by the cultures with which they were most familiar – Ndongo and Kongo. Even if they existed only in the lands of Langere, and other *sobas* in Kisama found different political strategies for incorporating outsiders that simply did not leave a trace in historical archives, these political institutions suggest that political actors in Kisama could adapt and adopt tools of the state for explicitly non-statist – and indeed, counter-statist – goals. In both Ndongo and the lands of Langere, however, the importance of these three positions connects directly to slavery and the slave trade.

By inference from Ndongo, the role of the *mani kijiko* was to oversee those *ijiko* who were dependents of the *soba*.¹⁵⁸ To require a titled position in the government of a relatively small-scale society, the *ijiko* must have formed a relatively large and powerful class who potentially threatened the legitimacy of the *soba*, as was clearly the case for this particular pretender whose legitimacy was contested by the *ijiko* and the *mbanza*.

¹⁵⁷ See Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, 75-9*.

¹⁵⁸ John Thornton, personal communication, 1 June 2011.

The Portuguese-backed pretender Langere arrived in Massangano with his *tendala*, *mani quizico*, and *macotas*, pointing to the centrality of social inequality in the world that the fugitives were building. That a leader like Langere who ruled within the notoriously decentralized region of Kisama required a *mani kijiko* by this period implies the importance of *ijiko* within his community. If in 1588 the Langere who led the Imbangala leader Kalandula to Kafuxi Ambari's lands was described as powerful, and likely already had a number of dependent *ijiko* on his land, then the Langere of the late 1620s and early 1630s, who had a titled official simply to oversee the *ijiko*, must have had even more. The pretender Langere's *makotas*, or lineage elders, may have been longer-standing residents of the lands, but after a few generations, even such esteemed titles would inevitably pass to descendants of fugitives. Though fugitives would continue to flee into Kisama well into the nineteenth century, by the late 1620s or early 1630s, the small-scale communities between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers were already at least a couple of generations into the process of becoming mature maroon societies.¹⁵⁹ Whatever the social practices in these regions prior to the sixteenth century, by the mid-seventeenth century, fugitives and their descendants pervaded every aspect of social and political order within Kisama. As much as Kisama was defined by the warlike traits transposed from Kafuxi Ambari onto all of those living in the land, it was also characterized by the

¹⁵⁹ Roquinaldo Ferreira, "Dos sertões ao Atlântico: tráfico ilegal de escravos e comércio lícito em Angola, 1830-1860" (M.A. thesis, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1996), 86-7. I do not mean to imply that the political forms of the early seventeenth century would remain static through the nineteenth century, or indeed that the broader regional and global contexts remained stable over three centuries. In the nineteenth century, for example, the decline of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the subsequent increase in the number of Africans held in bondage locally would re-configure the material imperatives for maroonage in the region. See 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).

political institutions and social mechanisms that allowed for so many thousands of fugitives to form new and enduring communities.

The strife over the pretender Langere's claim illustrates how the fugitives who fled to Kisama, attracted by the reputation of Kafuxi Ambari and other *sobas*, were instrumental in shaping the social and political dynamics of the societies to which they fled. While the societies that these maroons built maintained – or perhaps incorporated for the first time -- aspects of social inequality, including the division between *ijiko* and *mbanza*, the omnipresent turbulence and violence of the slave trade compelled members of different social strata to work together to ensure that they were led by individuals who were capable of maintaining their autonomy from the Portuguese. While the treaty that the pretender Langere signed with the Portuguese was less onerous than comparable treaties signed by other leaders in Angola or maroon leaders in the Americas during the seventeenth century, it still rendered him an illegitimate leader in the eyes of both *ijiko* and *mbanza*, who rejected him even as an alternative to the Langere who had been exiled earlier from his own lands. Even in the face of social inequality, fugitive dependents already so pervaded Langere's society as to control succession and determine the contours of political legitimacy. Though the fugitive *imbare* in Langere's lands and others undoubtedly engaged in violence in defense of their freedom, Kisama's unwillingness to define their social forms through idioms of or reference to the violence so integral to Imbangala society is essential to understanding the distinctive ways in which Kisama politics developed in the early seventeenth century.

In present-day historical memory, the only individuals who are remembered for their martial aptitude and are described as warriors are either *sobas* – most particularly

Kafuxi Ambari – or the mythical *Kisamunu* figure discussed in the last chapter.¹⁶⁰ While certain families in Kisama are widely reputed to have been active in armed resistance against the Portuguese in more recent times, their honorific names reflect skill in hunting, not warfare.¹⁶¹ Hunting -- always a crucial survival skill in Kisama and particularly in the more agriculturally marginal regions in the interior -- is something with which nearly all males who arrived in Kisama would have had experience. Aptitude as a hunter would have allowed for these fugitive men to demonstrate their value to the communities whom they joined as dependents. When game was scarce, and when those practicing agriculture were harried or forced to flee by raids of the Portuguese and their allies, however, turning to “hunting” the Portuguese for supplies could become a crucial strategy for survival.

We have already seen how Kafuxi Ambari used raiding as a strategy for survival in the face of the intensive localized drought conditions of 1588. In fact, he appears to have gone further than merely raiding for supplies and/or captives, moving from the chronically arid Atlantic littoral to seize the more fertile land along the Longa River

¹⁶⁰ Though obviously conditioned by the many intervening contexts of the years in between, that the present-day historical memory concedes a “warrior” role only for a mythological founder and for *sobas* is an interesting comment on political notions that *sobas* possess a just monopoly on the exercise of violence within Kisama society. Perhaps not coincidentally, as of 2010, many of the most powerful and best-respected *sobas* within Kisama are veterans not of the civil war (1975-2002), but rather of the war for independence (1961-75), and will typically wear their military uniforms at social and local political gatherings. In a perhaps related note, Geschiere discusses the conceptual linkage in Maka society (Cameroon) between leadership and the just exercise of witchcraft. Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997).

¹⁶¹ For example, one family who was instrumental in fighting against the Portuguese in their early twentieth-century iterations of scorched earth campaigns designed to force people off of the land in order to convert it to a game park has a surname that alludes to the ability to move around game without being detected. According to family members and others from the same region, this family has been “renowned elephant hunters” since the time of the wars of slavery.

Valley by 1593, and certainly by 1601.¹⁶² In the mid-seventeenth century, however, as Queen Njinga and her Dutch allies and the Portuguese and their allies fought to control Luanda and its hinterlands, the rivers of Angola became increasingly vital sites of conflict and those living along them bore the brunt of the ill effects of violence and dislocation. By the 1620s, the Portuguese began using the Kwanza River as a major artery through which to export captives from the interior to the Americas in an effort to circumvent the Dutch; “*Pataxos* [two-masted ships], boats, and canoes, the *pumbos* [*pumbeiros*] would all go up the river, and the same boats would return to the City of Loanda with *pumbieros* and laden on their return with slave (*peças*) and ivory, and more types of fruit of the land for sustenance.”¹⁶³ The “fruit of the land” in particular would have made these boats an attractive target for the ever-increasing fugitive population of Kisama. By mid-century, Captain-General P. Barreiros, who had served at Massangano for nineteen years, named the *sobas* Gunga, Songa, Kamoka, and “other rebels who impede the passage of traffic [in] people on the Coanza River because they are confederates of the Dutch.”¹⁶⁴

Barreiros’s attribution of the motives of these *sobas* seems dubious, given that the Dutch with their artillery and superior ships would have been unlikely to rely on canoe-borne allies to sustain a major naval campaign. If, however, the food and other supplies on this boat were the primary goal of the canoe-borne raiders from Kisama, freeing the captives on board and augmenting the strength of their societies by adding these additional dependents would have been an added benefit of such attacks. Indeed, by the eighteenth

¹⁶² Battell, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell*, 28.

¹⁶³ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, I: 170.

¹⁶⁴ AHU, Caixa 6, Document 67, petition by Captain-General P. Barreiros to the Governor of Angola for more troops, Massangano, 21 August 1656.

century, the Portuguese complained explicitly that the people of Kisama attacked the slave ships navigating the Kwanza River in order to collect the enslaved captives and bring them back to their *sobas*.¹⁶⁵

The succession struggle in the lands of Langere reveals how the fugitives of Kisama re-shaped the social and political institutions of the communities within which they sought refuge. Though these men and women may have arrived in Kisama as *ijiko*, and the *soba* had an official specifically responsible for overseeing them, within a generation or two, these *ijiko* could become *mbanza* and become integrated within the local lineage structures, whose heads (*makotas*) were important advisors to the *soba*. Even the *ijiko*, however, were not without power, as evinced by their joining with the *mbanza* to reject both the authority of both the Langere who was exiled and sought Imbangala support and the pretender Langere who attempted to assert his rule through alliance with the Portuguese. As the art of ruling the increasing numbers of fugitives in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers became ever more crucial to maintaining power, these fugitives were able to exercise decisive political agency. In the war of 1655-1658, however, even Kafuxi Ambari would be compelled to forge at least a temporary alliance with some Imbangala bands in a desperate effort to defend the autonomy of his people from the Portuguese.

The War of 1655-1658

In December of 1655, as she strove to negotiate a peace with the Portuguese that would allow her to simultaneously retain her sovereignty, renounce her alliance with

¹⁶⁵ AHU, “Carta Régia para o governador geral de Angola,” 23 November 1735, cód. 546, fls. 92v.-93.

Imbangala groups, and ransom her captive sister, Queen Njinga wrote to the Portuguese governor of Angola, Luís Martins de Sousa Chicorro, arguing that

I trust with God that Your Lordship [Sousa Chicorro] will be in His Majesty's good graces only if you leave me in peace and tranquility and conquer Quissama, a thing that no governor has earned the glory of accomplishing. I offer Your Lordship my assistance in the conquest of Quissama. If it refuses to pay obeisance to you, and if it pleases Your Lordship, I will dispatch one of my grandees with as large a force as can be mustered.¹⁶⁶

For Njinga, Sousa Chicorro, and various African and European actors in the region at the time, the association between leaving her in peace in Ndongo and Matamba and the Portuguese turning their armed forces against Kisama would have required little explanation. Throughout the 1640s and early 1650s, as the Portuguese and their allies focused on wars against the Dutch and Queen Njinga, refugees continued to flee to the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. Indeed, this flight was likely facilitated by an ephemeral alliance between *sobas* of Kisama along the Kwanza River and those in Illamba, a region between the Bengo and Dande Rivers that, by the 1640s, was already home to many Portuguese-run plantations.¹⁶⁷ During the conflict with the Dutch the major rivers of Angola – particularly the highly navigable Kwanza River along which the Portuguese located most of their important forts and local powers situated their slave markets -- became both increasingly important to Portuguese strategic interests and increasingly impossible to control. As those living along the Kisama bank of the Kwanza River attacked Portuguese river traffic between Luanda and the forts at Muxima,

¹⁶⁶ Linda Heywood, "Letter from Queen Ana Njinga to the Governor General of Angola, December 13, 1655," in McKnight and Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices*, 47. Translation of text of letter by Luis Madureira.

¹⁶⁷ AHU, Caixa 4, Document 11, "Carta de Diogo Gomes Morales," 20 October 1648.

Massangano, and Cambambe, those living along the Kisama bank of the Longa River impeded all Portuguese attempts to open a land route for communication between Luanda and Benguela.¹⁶⁸ If the notoriety of Kafuxi Ambari had helped shape the regional reputation of Kisama as an identity of the bellicose, invariably recalcitrant, brave, and warlike, the actions of those who identified or were identified as Kisama in the 1640s and 1650s only reinforced this notion. While some of the *sobas* of Kisama allied with Queen Njinga, some allied with the Portuguese, and some allied with the Dutch in the 1640s, nearly all continued to defend their autonomy from outsiders, whether European or African.¹⁶⁹

Even before he left Portugal for Luanda, Sousa Chicorro remarked on the paucity of captives available in Angola and the centrality of the slave trade in the economic life of the residents, proposing the necessity of “wars against the King of Congo, Queen Ginga and the Province of Quiçama, all persecutors of my vassal sovas for participating in commerce with the Portuguese.”¹⁷⁰ Unlike the centralized states of Kongo and Ndongo, with whom the Portuguese had regular if problematic diplomatic relations since the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, respectively, even a vassal *soba* like Muxima in Kisama did not participate in the kinds of letter writing and diplomatic

¹⁶⁸ AHU, Caixa 5, Document 28, “Relação que Bertholameu Pays de Bulbão fez a VS Mag,” 17 September 1655.

¹⁶⁹ On 6 October 1650, Portuguese Governor Salvador Correia de Sá erroneously claimed in a letter to the king of Portugal that, “the province of Quissama made an accord with us and is pacified.” “Salvador Correia au roi,” Luanda, 6 October 1650, in Louis Jadin, *L'Ancien Congo et l'Angola, 1639-1655: d'après les archives romaines, portugaises, néerlandaises et espagnoles*, 3 vols. (Brussels: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 1975), III: 1265. The Dutch were in Kisama itself by 1644. See AHU, Caixa 5, Document 33, Lisbon, 14 July 1644, and “Les maîtres de camp, gouverneurs de Pernambouc, à João IV, ET pour copie au comte de Vidigueira,” in *ibid.*, II: 865-6.

¹⁷⁰ AHU, Caixa 6, Document 92, “Carta de Luís Martins de Sousa Chicorro,” 16 September 1653.

activities that made the politics of Kongo and Ndongo at least partially legible in Lisbon. That an official in Portugal was aware of the reputation of the people of Kisama and the ways in which their actions impeded the Portuguese commerce in people – and influenced the exercise of political power in the region -- is testimony to the centrality of this putatively marginal space in early modern global consciousness and the dramatic resonance of the fugitive modernities emerging in Kisama well beyond the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. As unintelligible as Kongo, Ndongo, and Portuguese leaders often found each others' political cultures, all perceived the threat of Kisama in the same terms. The same promise that Kisama represented to the vulnerable, alienated fugitives throughout the region reverberated as threat through the state political cultures to which it represented such a challenge.

After arriving in Angola, Sousa Chicorro fulfilled both his wish and Queen Njinga's. After lengthy negotiations, he finally signed a peace treaty with Njinga on 12 October 1656; the Portuguese recognized Njinga's sovereignty while gaining much of Ndongo's former territory and access to the lucrative markets in which bondmen and women were sold in Matamba. With Njinga no longer a barrier to the Portuguese and their voracious appetite for captives, Sousa Chicorro followed the queen's counsel and initiated a prolonged and devastating war in Kisama lasting from 1655 until 1658. Thornton and Heywood describe Sousa Chicorro's campaign as, "more like a great slave raid than an attempt to bring the area into submission," despite acknowledging Cadornega's comparison of this campaign to great battles of antiquity.¹⁷¹ While for the century preceding the conflict, violence had marked the lived realities of all in the region,

¹⁷¹ Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 157.

the war of 1655-1658 represented a critical point in which the political, social, and environmental topography of Kisama changed in ways that would reverberate for centuries to follow. While for the Portuguese and their allies in Matamba and Ndongo the war may have appeared as naught but an extended and intensive slave raid, for those within Kisama, this war would reify divisions in political ideology, sharpen notions about the relationship between violence and political legitimacy, and demonstrate the various ways in which differing people across the region assimilated fugitives into their communities. In this moment of tremendous flux and turmoil, we can glimpse further snapshots of Kisama politics and society after a few generations of assimilating fugitives.

Rumor and the Art of Warfare and Diplomacy in Kisama

Before he departed Portugal for Angola, Sousa Chicorro already expressed his desire to make war on Kisama along with Kongo and Ndongo because of their enmity towards Portuguese allies. After arriving in Angola, however, he was able to articulate much more particular complaints about Kisama. A few months before receiving Queen Njinga's missive, in July of 1655, Sousa Chicorro accused the

blacks of Quiçama, who more than not desiring the Catholic Faith, rob the Portuguese of their slaves; and in the same Province there are at present more than ten thousand slaves, which is the reason you find the residents of the Forts at Mazangano, Cambambe, and Muchima in poverty. These people seal the routes for the [slave] trade of the Portuguese, attack the *pumbeiros*, take what they carry from them, and they publicize to the neighboring nations that the arms of Your Majesty do not conquer, because theirs [those of the people of Kisama] are the strongest. It is expected that knowledge of these war preparations, without reaching effect, will reduce to obedience the slaves ran away, that the trade in ivory, and slaves remain open and abundant, [that the troops will] seize the salt mines of Demba, that can give means to pay the infantry and cover the expenses of the Conquests, that the lines of communication with the Kingdom of Benguella will open, the roads leading to ports Coast will be free and people of this Province will be defeated (with their bag[s of salt]

the owners will recover a large amount of slaves) [...] while the vassals may stay at home safe from these enemies, who are equally concerned about both the dead and the continuous flights [of slaves].¹⁷²

Some of Sousa Chicorro's accusations here read as part of the standard litany of complaints against the people of Kisama. That they were heathens who harbored fugitives from the Portuguese settlers in the communities around Massangano, Cambambe, and Muxima, attacked both land- and river-going slave traders and prevented the Portuguese from conducting their commerce in the region were oft-repeated Portuguese grievances since at least the 1610s. Sousa Chicorro's emphasis on the important impact of Kisama on the regional economy of knowledge bears some examination, however, for what it can reveal about the translocal influence of Kisama's fugitive politics.

Sousa Chicorro seemed to realize that rumors and beliefs were just as important as directly observed events in the period leading up to the war of 1655-1658. Amidst the more standard complaints, Sousa Chicorro emphasizes the importance of Kisama's continued defiance of the Portuguese to regional perceptions of political and military power. According to Sousa Chicorro, the people of Kisama, "publicize to the neighboring nations that the arms of Your Majesty do not conquer, because theirs are the strongest." He does not elaborate the places and means by which those of Kisama described their triumphs to their neighbors, nor does he give details that would permit us insight into the idioms within which these conversations occurred.

¹⁷² Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino, "Exame das cartas do Governador de Angola acerca do estado da Provincia, guerra da Quiçama e do Congo," 13 July 1655, in *MMA* XI: 498-9.

As was clear in the case of Kafuxi Ambari's martial skill deriving from his spiritual power in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, for the vulnerable people who were attracted to Kisama, spiritual and healing powers may have been crucial to the idioms within which the people of Kisama publicized their supremacy over the Portuguese. Suggestively, the Italian Capuchin priest Cavazzi, who wrote extensively about the world of mid-seventeenth-century Ndongo and its neighbors, mentions that the region of Kisama (and neighboring Libolo) were home to

renowned [priests of] *navieza* and *cassumba*, his woman, called thus after the name of their idols. For the first, the Jagas [sic., the people of Kisama and Libolo were not Imbangala] built a house and for the second a lean-to, amply supplied with everything they need: food, drink, weapons, skins, cloths, and containers[...] Here all come to solicit a cure for their illnesses.¹⁷³

Both along the Kwanza River and further south in the region of Benguela, people suffered rampant illness, drought, and famine in the period leading up to and during the war of 1655-1658.¹⁷⁴ The presence of large numbers of troops moving through Kisama during the war only exacerbated these ills. In August 1656, Sousa Chicorro reported that many of his infantry soldiers were dying of the "many and grave illnesses [...] that continue in this army[. It is] more than that the climate is unhealthy, it appears that is already a pestilent year."¹⁷⁵ If the (relatively) better provisioned Portuguese troops suffered, we can only imagine how people throughout Kisama weathered the ravages of these unnamed diseases. In such conditions, the famed *navieza* and *cassumba*, who

¹⁷³ Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos do Congo, Matamba e Angola*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1965), II: 210.

¹⁷⁴ Miller, "The Significance of Drought," 44.

¹⁷⁵ AHU, Caixa 6, Document 59, Letter by Governor Sousa Chicorro to the King, 3 August 1656.

attracted followers from far and wide, may have been instrumental in spreading Kisama's renown throughout the region.

Whether the reputation of Kisama spread primarily through idioms of warfare or ritual power and healing – or, more likely, both -- given the wide geographical area from which fugitives fled to Kisama, awareness of its peoples' resistance stretched from north of Luanda south to at least to Benguela and far to the east. To counter this, Sousa Chicorro suggested that the mere knowledge that the Portuguese were preparing for conflict would be enough to compel the people of Kisama to return fugitives and allow for the Portuguese to trade in men, women, and children as well as in ivory. For those in Kisama who publicized the frailty of the Portuguese military in comparison to their might, however, rumor and anticipation alone were not enough to compel obedience. While in the period leading up to the war in 1655, some *sobas* did send ambassadors to the Portuguese promising allegiance and to return those fugitives who were in their lands, none of those who attempted to escape Portuguese depredations through diplomacy actually followed through with their promises. Instead, they used these diplomatic missions as a stalling technique.¹⁷⁶ To return fugitives – who, along with their descendents, likely comprised the majority in some communities and a sizeable and powerful minority in others – would have meant losing political power and claim to legitimacy to rule for these *sobas*; it would have also necessitated tearing apart multiple generations of families. Those *sobas* who did seek to negotiate vassalage with the Portuguese did so only after observing the devastating impact of the war on their people

¹⁷⁶ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 90.

and neighbors and concluding that jeopardizing legitimacy and power was necessary to ensure the survival of even a few.

In the first offensive campaign of the war, the Portuguese left the fort at Cambambe for the nearby lands of *Soba* Langere. Langere's soldiers used the woods as "their fortress and principal defense," attacking the Portuguese artillery and musketeers from within the security of their densely wooded defenses.¹⁷⁷ The Portuguese intended to pass through Langere's lands to those of Kafuxi Ambari, which were not only populous and fertile, but were also the least densely wooded in the region – a distinct advantage to a Portuguese force that was determined to use a cavalry and to fight in formation.¹⁷⁸ However, as they attempted to pass through Langere's lands, the Portuguese discovered that though the leaders of Kisama ardently defended their autonomy, they were still quite capable of working together against an immediate danger like that presented by Sousa Chicorro's soldiers.

By the 1650s, Kafuxi Ambari was still "the most powerful Lord in Quisama"¹⁷⁹ and he had also apparently transformed his relationship with *Soba* Langere from the enmity of the 1580s and the shared political positions of the earlier seventeenth century into a more durable alliance. Indeed, as the Portuguese attempted to march into Kafuxi Ambari's lands, soldiers of *Soba* Karindo, a vassal of *Soba* Langere, attacked the Portuguese from within the cover of dense forest "to impede the passage of the

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, II: 93.

¹⁷⁸ For an overview of Portuguese and African military tactics in seventeenth century Angola, see Thornton, "The Art of War in Angola." Thornton de-emphasizes the importance of cavalry for Portuguese forces in seventeenth-century Angola. For a discussion of the importance of horses, see Ferreira, "The Supply and Development of Horses in Angolan Warfare (17th and 18th Centuries)."

¹⁷⁹ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 93.

Portuguese Army[,] and there was a great skirmish with many deaths and injuries on both sides.”¹⁸⁰ Karindo’s soldiers recognized the threat that both cavalry and formation fighting posed, and so manipulated the landscape to force the Portuguese soldiers and their auxiliaries – including the King of Ndongo and his son – to march single file.¹⁸¹ Other people within Kisama employed similar tactics during this war, planting thorny grasses across the paths that forced the Portuguese to stop and clear the passages with iron machetes.¹⁸² The assaults from the woods and the disruption of the Portuguese formation were so effective that the Portuguese had to change their route and turn from their intended assault of Kafuxi Ambari to instead attack the people of *Soba* Kimbambala, whom Cadornega describes as being one of the *sobas* who sheltered the greatest number of fugitives from Portuguese captivity in the period leading up to the war of 1655-1658. Indeed, the Portuguese earlier attempted to attack Kimbambala in order to re-capture these fugitives, but Kimbambala’s forces were alerted to the Portuguese advance by the noise and disruption resulting from an auxiliary’s beating of his bondsmen.¹⁸³

From existing sources, we can discern only that Kafuxi Ambari, Langere, Karindo, and indeed even Kimbambala worked together as allies during this period of intensive conflict, though Cadornega does claim that Karindo was in a more permanent

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, II: 94.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, II: 94. Intriguingly, the Jamaican maroons famously used the same tactic of forcing a single-file assault on their stronghold in the Cockpit Country on the western part of the island. See Robert Charles Dallas, *The History of the Maroons: From their Origin to the Establishment of Their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leone*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 41-2.

¹⁸² Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 96.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, I: 191-3.

position of vassalage to Langere. What, beyond the obvious exigencies of war, promoted this kind of cooperation among leaders who were committed to their own autonomy? Given the role that fugitives apparently played in re-shaping the contours of political legitimacy in the lands of Langere, and the centrality of fugitives to the political positions of both Kafuxi Ambari and Kimbambala, it is likely that these maroons themselves wove the social fabric that permitted this kind of durable alliance during the mid-seventeenth century. Fugitives were the common element within Kisama's fragmented political landscape, and the ramifications of harboring fugitives helped align the interests of various *sobas*, at least during times such as the war of 1655-1658.

After passing through Kimbambala's lands, the Portuguese moved towards the lacustrine areas in the eastern part of the region, near the Kwanza River. Already, the people of the region had essentially besieged the Portuguese at Massangano, and they continued to plague the Portuguese military with continuous waves of archery, projectile spear, shotgun, and musket fire from their fishing and trading canoes.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, while it is impossible to definitively date the adoption of firearms within Kisama, their use at this juncture likely resulted from instruction by fugitive *imbare* and the use of seized firearms and supplies.¹⁸⁵ While the armed forces of centralized states like Kongo and Ndongo, who had professional, trained soldiers, relied more on hand-to-hand combat techniques, the irregular and essentially guerilla forces of various *sobas* of Kisama appear to have normally depended upon these long-distance projectile weapons.¹⁸⁶ For non-professional

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, II: 96-7.

¹⁸⁵ Biblioteca Municipal de Luanda, cód. 6, fls. 105v.-106v., "Assento que fizeram os oficiais da camara em 6 de janeiro de 1652."

soldiers with backgrounds as hunters, using these more common weapons combined with evasive techniques based on mastery of the land would have been tremendously effective.

Violence and Political Legitimacy: Kisama in the Age of the Imbangala

As Africans along the Atlantic littoral and the routes of trade and bondage connected to it developed discourses about cannibalism and zombis who were forced to work beyond death to enrich others as moral and political critiques of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Europeans involved in this trade re-cast unrelated nomadic peoples who attacked the established states of Kongo, Ndongo, and Benguela as “Jaga.”¹⁸⁷ As Thornton notes, in contemporary European usage, “it is a name which describes more a way of life than any ethnic group in particular,” and, by the mid-seventeenth century, that “way of life” included not only nomadism and lineage-free social reproduction, but most infamously, anthropophagy.¹⁸⁸ Being “Jaga”, then, meant embodying and enacting a particular extreme form of fugitive modernity, radically rejecting not only the structures of state but also the logic of the lineage and the normal precepts that governed social and cultural life throughout the region. While Imbangala discursively maintained the latter position, from around 1632, the foundation of the Imbangala state of Kasanje and Queen Njinga’s formal alliance with Imbangala meant that these radical dimensions of Imbangala politics and culture were incorporated into stable, and statist, social forms.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Thornton, "The Art of War in Angola."

¹⁸⁷ Joseph Miller deracinates the “Jaga” who invaded Kongo in the sixteenth century from the “Jaga” who ravaged many parts of Angola in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Miller, "Requiem for the 'Jaga' ". John Thornton recognizes Miller’s contribution in this respect, but problematizes his understanding of the invasions of Kongo. See Thornton, "A Resurrection for the Jaga."

¹⁸⁸ Thornton, "A Resurrection for the Jaga," 226.

¹⁸⁹ Thornton, "Legitimacy and Political Power," 32.

The lifestyle of the nomadic pillaging Imbangala of late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Angola, however, was an extreme response to the predatory incursions of slavers, whose raids rent families and communities asunder and made long-term investments in social reproduction – from raising children to tending crops and animals – at best risky and at worst, a costly and futile expenditure of time and resources. As early as the 1630s, entire populations around Luanda left their homes, their crops, and the graves of their ancestors to flee into the bush.¹⁹⁰ Some of those who fled joined Imbangala communities and moved from place to place, murdering, enslaving, seizing children, livestock, and crops and cutting down wine palm trees, responding to the violence of the political landscape of seventeenth-century Angola by creating a profoundly anti-social sociability.¹⁹¹

While the Portuguese and their allies ripped communities apart through warfare and kidnapping, those who remained alive in Angola no less than those enslaved and transported to the Americas were forced to contend with a world in which older notions of reciprocity and obligation between the powerful and the subordinate were violated more often than they were upheld. In the Congo River basin, for example, those local people who benefitted most from the trans-Atlantic trade established the dynamic drum of affliction called *Lemba* in order to shield local communities from the pernicious

¹⁹⁰ AHU, Caixa 3, Document 5, report of Camara de Luanda officials to Lisbon, 20 June 1633.

¹⁹¹ Battell, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell*, 30. Miller notes, however, that “felling palm trees to obtain the edible pulp turns up repeatedly as desperation tactic to avoid starvation,” an argument belied, however, by the fact that, “Battell also noted ample provisions in the Imbangala camp.” Miller, “The Significance of Drought,” 40.

spiritual and material illness of capitalism and the commodification of people.¹⁹² In Imbangala society, however, the rituals through which people forged new communities were distorted mirrors of the very violence through which they had been dispossessed initially; John Thornton goes so far as to argue that, “Imbangala organization and its initiations, were in fact those of anti-social brigands, and the initiation, like that of child soldiers in modern day Africa required leadership that was ruthless and exploitative.”¹⁹³ These qualities were useful to both Portuguese and Imbangala who sought to benefit from the commodification and sale of people.

The Portuguese were quite willing to forge alliances with Imbangala groups in order to defeat those whom they deemed difficult or impossible to subjugate. Indeed, Vansina argues that “it is not much of an exaggeration to claim that it was largely due to Jaga support that the Portuguese managed to defeat the Ndongo king by 1620.”¹⁹⁴ Already, we have seen Fernão de Sousa’s alliance with the Imbangala leader Nzenza in his attempts to defeat Kafuxi Ambari. Sousa Chicorro, too, viewed the Imbangala as crucial allies in his war against the people of Kisama. He enlisted the help of various Imbangala leaders who were camped across the Longa River in Libolo at the time, including Nanboa Ambungo and Lunga dya Kafofo, to whom the Portuguese gave both captives and land as gifts, “which is the same as paying them, as is done with Soldiers of

¹⁹² See John Janzen, *Lemba, 1650-1930: A Drum of Affliction in Africa and the New World* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1982).

¹⁹³ For a fascinating discussion of mimesis, violence, ritual, and colonialism in a different context, see Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

Thornton, "Angola e as origens de Palmares," 55.

¹⁹⁴ Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 199.

fortune who go where they are paid best [...] this type of people can be compared to the Cantons of Esquizaros who serve one or another Prince for a salary, and go where they are best paid, and perhaps some [will fight] against others.”¹⁹⁵ For the Portuguese, this kind of mercenary behavior was intelligible and comparable to their experiences in wars throughout Europe. As inhuman as the Portuguese rendered them, the mercenary Imbangala fit far better within the kind of system that converted people into trade items than *sobas* and everyday people of Kisama, not least because, by this time, the Imbangala were transforming themselves into a state.

In his efforts to understand the incessant resistance of Kisama, Cadornega remarked, “the motive of these powerful Sobas of Quissama to make this revolution, even though they have no need, is that some three hundred slaves of a recently deceased [Portuguese] resident have fled to their lands.”¹⁹⁶ While for Cadornega, the continued revolutionary violence of *sobas* in Kisama in defense of outsiders – those who had only recently fled from Portuguese plantations to their land – was largely incomprehensible, such an act was at the very core of Kisama political philosophy during the seventeenth century. Tautologically, *sobas* within Kisama, especially Kafuxi Ambari but also others, attracted fugitives like those who comprised this large group because they were powerful; their power, in turn, was intimately connected to their ability to defend such people from outside predations, and to assimilate them and their descendents, albeit through relationships of subordination and institutions of social inequality. As the succession struggle in the lands of Langere demonstrates, at least some *sobas* within Kisama adopted

¹⁹⁵ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 90-1.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, II: 381.

class language and institutions from Ndongo. Even the *ijiko*, or the most vulnerable class of people within society, however, exercised important political agency, and time and time again, *sobas* in Kisama fought to defend even the newest of fugitives from the raids of the Portuguese and their allies. Kisama resembled its neighbors to the extent that its society was marked by social inequality. What was distinctive, however, was, as Cadornega described, the revolutionary willingness of leaders within Kisama – some of whom themselves were likely descendents of fugitives – to not only defend even the newest fugitives, but to mount offensive campaigns to ensure their safety, and to attract yet more fugitives.

In the early seventeenth century, *Soba* Kafuxi Ambari was instrumental in forging the kind of revolutionary identity with which Kisama was associated. By the time of the war of 1655-1658, however, Kafuxi Ambari was forced to adapt to the dire situation within which he found himself and his people, making alliances with the socially unpalatable and politically problematic Imbangala from the other side of the Longa River – the same Imbangala whose support of one of the pretender Langere had rendered his claim to political legitimacy so suspect some twenty years earlier.¹⁹⁷ Like Queen Njinga's alliance with the Imbangala when her rule was under such threat from both internal opponents within Ndongo and Matamba and external attacks from the Portuguese and their (Imbangala) allies, during this war, Kafuxi Ambari was forced to come to terms with this strikingly different practice of fugitive modernity in order to defend his largely fugitive society.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, II: 103.

The Portuguese acknowledged that the defeat of Kafuxi Ambari was essential to their campaign against Kisama, as he was “the greatest power, and [...] King of this Province.”¹⁹⁸ Kafuxi Ambari was so powerful at this time that he commanded land from his more recently-conquered territory along the inland Longa River valley all the way to his old territory on the sea coast, where the Portuguese and their allies were camped. That he conquered the fertile land of the Longa River valley illustrates the fragmentary nature of politics in early seventeenth-century Kisama; while Kafuxi Ambari’s leadership played an essential role in the discourses about Kisama identity from the late sixteenth century onward, those who shared in this common identity as Kisama did not necessarily also share a common political allegiance to each other. Furthermore, for Kafuxi Ambari to have conquered land, he must have mobilized an organized military force, demonstrating that although Kafuxi Ambari himself had no designs on forging a centralized state, he was not opposed to raiding, land seizure, and other tactics of state in order to promote the well-being of his own dependents. From within his newly-conquered lands, Kafuxi Ambari’s forces ardently guarded the *imbondeiro* tree cisterns that were the only sources of potable water inland from the Longa River, forcing the Portuguese to depend entirely on ported water.

Kafuxi Ambari’s strategy of monopolizing the only drinking water in the region drove the Portuguese into a desperate situation once they were in the region; defeating Kafuxi Ambari was no longer a question of pride or political maneuver, but rather of necessity. According to Cadornega, “our people proceeded so desperately because they

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

realized that they had to win, or perish from thirst.”¹⁹⁹ In confronting the Portuguese and their allies, including the King of Ndongo, his son, and a significant contingent of *imbare* from Ndongo, Kafuxi Ambari employed both psychological and martial tactics. Kafuxi Ambari’s forces, “scream[ed] and taunt[ed] that we [the Portuguese] could not drink their water.” Kafuxi Ambari’s forces and their Imbangala allies then, “let loose torrents of arrows, barrages of spears, and shots from Rifles and Muskets; the arrows were [...] let loose from very long Bows drawn with force, with the ends on the ground [...] to prevent slipping.” Arrows shot from these bows, “ripped holes in bodies that were awesome [to behold].” According to Cadornega, these arrows were the most notably effective weapons used in this battle, and “those who most used this kind of cruel and ferocious arrows were those Jaga from the other bank of the Longa River.” The Portuguese were confident that their military response, however, had killed a great number of the Imbangala and driven the remainder across the Longa River. The Portuguese gained access to the *imbondeiro* tree cisterns of water only after killing a number of Kafuxi Ambari’s soldiers, who continued to fight until shot at point-blank range.²⁰⁰

The tactics that Kafuxi Ambari and his Imbangala allies used throughout this conflict demonstrate military training and organization. For Kafuxi Ambari’s forces to mount an effective archery and projectile assault, complete with the use of at least two types of firearms, a certain degree of training and drilling would have been necessary. In his examination of warfare in seventeenth-century Angola, Thornton notes how both Kongo and Ndongo forces typically relied on a single volley of arrows before engaging in

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, II: 104.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, II: 104-5.

hand-to-hand combat. Because of this, commanders normally adopted a more dispersed pattern that would allow individual, professionally trained soldiers the opportunity to parry, dodge, jump, and otherwise acrobatically and skillfully maneuver against an enemy's strikes. If the commanders of one army perceived that they were losing, he would typically order his soldiers to disperse, only to re-form in a few days.²⁰¹ Kafuxi Ambari's approach here, however, reflects a variation on the strategy. Though his forces used firearms, Cadornega believes that it was the extraordinarily long-range longbows that were the most effective weapon. While Kafuxi Ambari's Imbangala allies may have possessed more of these weapons or used them more skillfully, their employment in this conflict belies a certain material departure from the weapons of hunting in favor of the weapons of war. Such long bows would have been unwieldy hunting weapons, but they were well-suited to a more stationary defensive battle, such as this last-ditch defense of an essential resource like the *imbondeiro*-tree cisterns. For Kafuxi Ambari's forces to stand in defense of the cisterns until shot at point-blank range, rather than dispersing and reforming as was typical throughout the region or as they had done in 1594, reveals both the organized military training necessary to wage such a campaign and Kafuxi Ambari's awareness of the high stakes of the conflict.

Even as narratives of Kafuxi Ambari's individual battles may be lost to oral history, the centrality of these *imbondeiro* conflicts to sovereignty -- and survival -- of the region's residents almost certainly informed the way in which they figured in the political and social life of communities in Kisama. It is possible that people have maintained memories of these trees and the connection of their defense in this and possibly other

²⁰¹ Thornton, "The Art of War in Angola."

conflicts to slavery in judicial practices they understand as “traditional.” António Sondoka described the *imbondo ya mbumbu*, an *imbondeiro* tree under which those accused of crimes like murder, adultery, witchcraft, and theft were tried. If the tree began to ooze blood, the accused was deemed guilty and killed immediately.²⁰² During the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, rulers often replaced the death penalty for offenders with the punishment of sale to the Europeans and their agents.²⁰³ While I have found no written accounts of the use of the *imbondo ya mbumbu* in Kisama or elsewhere, it is possible to imagine how the capture of significant numbers of Kafuxi Ambari’s forces – those who were not shot lethally at point-blank range – in defense of the *imbondeiro*-tree cisterns could have led to the ritual association of *imbondeiro* trees, bloodshed, and slavery/death.

It is clear that Europeans maintained a memory of this desperate combat even into the nineteenth century, and it informed their perceptions of the nature of the people of Kisama. In 1858, the Scottish missionary and traveler David Livingstone wrote:

The Kisama are brave; and when the Portuguese army followed them into their forests, they reduced the invaders to extremity by tapping all the reservoirs of water, which were no other than the enormous baobobs of the country hollowed into cisterns. As the Kisama country is ill supplied with water otherwise, the Portuguese were soon obliged to retreat.²⁰⁴

While Livingstone appears here to have conflated the water-centered battle of the mid-seventeenth century with the Portuguese retreat during the conflict with Kafuxi Ambari at the end of the sixteenth century discussed in the last chapter, that this particular strategy

²⁰² António Sondoka, interview with author, Muxima, Kisama, Angola, 25 July 2010.

²⁰³ Miller, *Way of Death*, 123.

²⁰⁴ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa*, 441.

endured for centuries as a symbol of the bravery of the people of Kisama in the minds of Europeans attests to the efficacy of Kafuxi Ambari's strategy. Unfortunately, there is no clear record of how Kafuxi Ambari himself or those of his people who lived outside the immediate area of the battle and survived it viewed the alliance with the Imbangala or the aftermath of the battle. The fact that after the conflict the Imbangala retreated back across the Longa River suggests that this alliance was temporary and that Kafuxi Ambari was able to maintain his position of authority.²⁰⁵

Though we do not know the direct ramifications of Kafuxi Ambari's losses or of his alliance with the Imbangala, we do know that he continued as a prominent leader throughout the region even after his alliance with the Imbangala during the war. Cavazzi observed that, following the war, the Portuguese sought to open the slave trade and expand their missionary activities into

various provinces, especially that of Cafuxi, situated on the side [of the Kwanza River] of Quissama [...] He [the missionary] related that this prince [Kafuxi Ambari] presented him with thirty seven sons, all of them beautiful, and well maintained. After this, when Mr. Bravo [the translator and guide] presented some bottles of European wine and a very expensive umbrella, the prince [Kafuxi Ambari] offered the wine to a large idol and put the umbrella on the head of the same idol before using it.²⁰⁶

Though the war of 1655-1658 was indeed devastating for many of the people between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, Kafuxi Ambari appears to have weathered both his conflict with the Portuguese and his situational alliance with several Imbangala bands with minimal impact to his status. His many "sons" may well have been personal dependents – likely fugitives -- rather than biological offspring, demonstrating how Kafuxi Ambari's

²⁰⁵ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 105.

²⁰⁶ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, II: 119.

power derived from the dependence of those whom he was able to attract to his lands. Indeed, Kafuxi Ambari's power, and the power of Kisama writ large, was connected in the ability to facilitate the transformation of dispossessed, alienated individuals into materially and discursively powerful new communities. While the Portuguese yearned to establish a trading relationship with Kafuxi Ambari, even after the war, he was unwilling to enter into any sort of alliance with those against whom he had struggled, and from whom many of those who were the base of his power had fled. As Cavazzi notes, "But all of their [the Portuguese governor's emissaries'] efforts were useless, especially because of that chief [Kafuxi Ambari]."²⁰⁷ His use of the foreign wine to libate a local spiritual figure demonstrates that he recognized how rooted his political legitimacy was in his spiritual power and its military manifestations. While his personal charisma and status allowed him to endure both his conflicts with the Portuguese and his engagement with those who, in other contexts, called the political legitimacy of other *sobas* into question, Kafuxi Ambari remained keenly aware of the ultimate sources of his power and of the importance of retaining political legitimacy among the expanding constituency of fugitive dependents in his land.

Though in the immediate aftermath of the war, Kafuxi Ambari appears to have retained his autonomy and to have continued to derive his political power from his ability to assimilate large numbers of dependents who were attracted by his martial skill, later in the seventeenth century, Kafuxi Ambari's power waned. While Cadornega describes him as, "ruler of a large number of people, from which he derives his greatest power, as king of this province [Kisama ...] all of these sovas [in Kisama] recognize and pay tribute to

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, II: 119.

him as their king and lord,” he also includes him among the *sobas* who “call themselves sons of *Maniputo* [the king of Portugal], but are hardly obedient.”²⁰⁸ By 1693, however, the political climate within Kafuxi Ambari’s lands had shifted, and Kafuxi Ambari was compelled to shift from a merely nominal allegiance with the Portuguese to seek a more enduring relationship, petitioning the governor for vassalage and baptism.²⁰⁹ Thus, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, while the discourse of fugitive modernities forged in the early seventeenth century in Kisama endured, actual practices within much of Kisama shifted. The early seventeenth century, however, remained the point of reference for political discourses both within Kisama and about Kisama for centuries to come, as I will discuss at greater length in chapter five.

Wars of Plenty and Wars of Starvation: The Role of Food Surpluses and Shortages in the War of 1655-1658

Violence was omnipresent within communities in Kisama as it was for all throughout the region in the seventeenth century, but unlike in Imbangala society, the incorporation of outsiders into local communities within Kisama was predicated on domestic reproduction rather than reproduction through warfare. While hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild produce and honey were important survival strategies throughout the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, the people of Kisama who lived in lands where intensive agriculture was possible took full advantage of these opportunities. In the 1655-1658 war, Sousa Chicorro and his troops passed through a “very fertile lowland in which there were many houses in which lived the greater part of

²⁰⁸ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, III: 248-9.

²⁰⁹ “Cópia da carta ao Soba Cafuchi, que pede o baptismo,” 23 February 1693, in *MMA* XIV: 279-81.

the Cultivators, and where there were many fugitives from the Portuguese that because of its fertility lived there mixed with the Quisamas.”²¹⁰ Here, Sousa Chicorro distinguishes between these fugitive cultivators and “the Quisamas.” While it is unclear as to whether or not the local people made such distinctions, it is certainly likely that full-fledged membership in local society came only with time, or that different avenues to incorporation were available to hunting/fishing/fighting men and to women. These groups of cultivators, then, may have been comprised primarily of women.

Women and the food they produced appear to have played a much greater role in the war of 1655-1658 than scholars have previously recognized. While Heintze does not discuss the conflict in any detail, Ferreira argues that Sousa Chicorro was motivated primarily by the desire for captives for sale in the slave trade.²¹¹ Thornton and Heywood contend that Sousa Chicorro was compelled to fight this expensive, high-casualty conflict by the role of Kisama as a refuge for fugitives from Portuguese enslavement and as a constant impediment to Kwanza River traffic.²¹² There is no doubt that seizing captives, re-capturing fugitives, and putting an end to the incessant attacks on Portuguese river boats were priorities for Sousa Chicorro. However, the importance of the independent salt and food merchants of Kisama in the local economy – and the role of fugitives and fugitive women in particular in generating manioc, millet, and maize for market – remains an unexplored and essential aspect of the conflict of 1655-1658.

²¹⁰ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 111.

²¹¹ Ferreira, "La Kisama", XLII-III.

²¹² Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 157.

Already by the early 1630s, Portuguese colonial Governor Fernão de Sousa had concerns about the presence of merchants from Kisama in Lembo, a market town on the Lukala River, where rock salt from Ndemba served as currency in a trade centered on the acquisition of captives.²¹³ De Sousa ordered the captain of Massangano to clear Lembo of free people from Kisama, free people attached to residents, and all others, “without exception of Christians, pretenders to titles, *cassueas*, and others who have been attached to us for many years, and are already naturalized.”²¹⁴ When the local officials protested the governor’s orders, De Sousa modified them to require that they expel only, “those black brigands of Quiçama who were not Christians, pretenders to titles, *cassueas*, or naturalized.”²¹⁵ De Sousa’s insistence on the expulsion of “those black brigands of Quiçama” points to the unique position that these merchants played in the local economy. Since the sixteenth century, the Portuguese had sought control of the rock salt from Ndemba that functioned as currency throughout the region. They used this Kisama-produced and controlled commodity to both purchase bondsmen and women and to pay their own soldiers. Expelling independent salt merchants from Kisama from the markets at Lembo was a logical strategy for Portuguese authorities who were constantly pre-

²¹³ It was only in the 1730s that Luso-African residents of Massangano were able to take control of the trade out of the hands of independent merchants from Kisama. See Miller, *Way of Death*, 255, 560. In addition to its many economic functions, Cavazzi reports that Kisama rock salt was also “very useful for domestic uses and in medicine, as it is diuretic. Thus, it is sold in the markets in large quantities.” Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, I: 22.

²¹⁴ According to Heintze, *cassuea* is a term whose “origin and exact meaning [she has] not succeeded in clarifying, [and] appears various times in sources on Angola of the seventeenth century to mean a type of punishment, undefined [...] Perhaps it also designates a certain type of slave. It is also applied in a figurative sense [...] meaning ‘rebel.’” Heintze, ed. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, I: 116.

²¹⁵ Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-1X-20, f. 264 v. – f. 265.

occupied with usurping the independent production and circulation of this saline currency.

No less than salt, however, maize, manioc, and millet were essential elements of the economy of war- and slavery-ravaged seventeenth-century Angola. These American crops compelled a true agricultural revolution throughout Africa, changing everything from gender and seasonal labor patterns to population densities to relationships between rulers and dependents to epidemiology to regional power dynamics.²¹⁶ Miller emphasizes the role of manioc cultivation in particular in promoting population growth in previously marginal and relatively arid regions with sandy soils and the role of such increased production in “nourish[ing] children, captives, and slaves to ages at which they could be sold profitably to Europeans” as well as the vital role of manioc flour – either locally produced or imported from Brazil – in (barely) sustaining the bondsmen and women aboard the slave ships that left from Angola to the Americas.²¹⁷ While many communities throughout the region added to or replaced earlier agricultural repertoires based on sorghum, millet, beans, and plantains with the introduced manioc and maize (and, by the nineteenth century, sweet potatoes) for domestic consumption, in the seventeenth century, the commercial production of manioc and manioc flour was limited to African and Luso-African plantations with one exception. Drawing from Cadornega, Vansina notes that just as bondsmen and women grew manioc and processed it into flour for consumption by the Portuguese and Luso-African communities along the Kwanza,

²¹⁶ For a comprehensive examination of the life of maize in Africa, see James McCann, *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500-2000* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

²¹⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 103. For more on the importance of manioc to the seventeenth-century slave trade, see Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes: formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul* (São Paulo: Companhia Das Letras, 2000), 251-6.

Lukala and Bengo Rivers and for sale in Luanda, so too did bondsmen and women grow and process manioc in plantation in Kisama.²¹⁸

According to Olfert Dapper, who likely drew from sources dating to the Dutch occupation, Kisama was “a land fertile in millet & in manioc.”²¹⁹ This fertility supported not only the local population, but also a class of highly active merchants because of whom Dapper argued, “the Quisames must be of better extraction than the other Blacks, they do not work themselves into the ground. They just carry salt & millet to the market, where the people of the Northern bank of the Quasa [Kwanza] come to exchange [the salt and millet of Kisama] for slaves.”²²⁰ These Kisama merchants not only participated in regular markets, but also took advantage of sporadic droughts and famines in other parts of the region. Dapper contrasts the diligent cultivators and merchants of Kisama with the

²¹⁸ Vansina, "Histoire du manioc en Afrique centrale avant 1850," 260. While here I focus on the uniqueness of Kisama's early commercial cultivation of manioc and maize, it is important to consider that in Kisama and in other parts of West and West Central Africa, these crops may have helped sustain fugitive communities as part of a strategy of what James C. Scott calls “escape agriculture.” Scott writes that, “[t]he logic of escape agriculture and the friction of appropriation apply not only to a technical complex as a whole, such as shifting cultivation, but to particular crops as well. Of course, the overall resistance of swiddening to state appropriation lies both in its hilly location and dispersal and in the very botanical diversity it represents.” For Scott, crops like sweet potatoes, maize, and especially manioc stand in contrast to the padi-cultivated rice favored by states in Southeast Asia; they require far less labor to cultivate, can be intercropped successfully, and, in the case of sweet potatoes and manioc, can be left underground and can thus both be abandoned and then returned to and also are resistant to enemy burning or seizure. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 195-207. While in the case of Kisama and in other parts of West Central Africa, the possibility of leaving manioc untended for up to two years in the ground certainly made it an attractive crop for those who had to flee and return, maize, manioc, and sweet potatoes did not come to replace a grain like rice as a staple, but rather intersected with yams, plantains, and millet as the major subsistence crops. In other words, because of the pre-existing agricultural repertoires and strategies throughout the region, which overall favored shifting cultivation, the labor regimes involved in growing these American cultigens may have represented less of a change than they did in Southeast Asia.

²¹⁹ See Adam Jones, "Decompiling Dapper: A Preliminary Search for Evidence," *History in Africa* 17(1990): 171-209, Olfert Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique ... Avec des cartes & des figures en taille-douce ... Traduite du Flamand. [A translation of "Naukeurige beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche gewesten van Egypten" and "Naukeurige beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche eilanden." by two separate translators.]* (Amsterdam: Wolfgang, &c., 1686), 374. Here, millet could mean either millet (*eleusine coracana*) or maize (*zea mays*), as seventeenth-century sources are notoriously poor at distinguishing between the two.

²²⁰ Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, 374.

putatively lazy people of the regions directly surrounding Luanda, who were reduced to hunger by poor harvests and were forced to sell vulnerable members of their communities to the people of Kisama in exchange for food.²²¹ This type of market exchange stands in great contrast to the situation described by André Velho da Fonseca in 1612, when Kafuxi Ambari, Langere, Kapakasa, and others refused to trade with the Portuguese and their African merchants at all.²²² Mobilizing salt and agricultural products into a capacity to procure more dependents represents a different approach to building political power than the attraction of fugitives through military power, but these strategies could well have been a complimentary tool within the arsenal of Kisama's fugitive modernities.

The presence of bondsmen and women in Kisama who were acquired through commodity and currency exchange throws into sharp relief the contingent nature of fugitive modernities. It would be wrong to assume that Kisama's opposition to participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade meant an ideological opposition to social inequality in general; Kisama's opposition to strategies of the state does not equate to a romantic, idealized notion of primitive equality. As we have already seen, fugitives often found themselves in the position of dependency to powerful leaders like Kafuxi Ambari, who represented their best – and often only – hope for defense from Portuguese predations and the threat of capture and sale across the Atlantic. From the perspective of those facing starvation and repeated Portuguese and Imbangala predations around Luanda, Kisama may simply have been the least oppressive alternative among several crushing possibilities that were never really choices. However, it is also possible to view

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 366.

²²² “Carta de André Velho da Fonseca a El-Rei,” 28 February 1612, in *MMA* VI: 65.

inequality within Kisama as the social and intellectual opposite of the practice of slavery on Portuguese-run plantations in Angola and in all of its varied forms throughout the Atlantic islands and in the Americas. While enslaved Africans and their descendents forged new cultures through their enduring struggles against the threat of social death in these contexts, social inequality within Kisama itself was part of the process of social life. Purchased bondsmen and women were not the social equals of those who had purchased them in Kisama, but neither were they alien others. Instead, they were integral to the social life of Kisama and the political practices that emerged to defend it.

Adding purchased captives to the growing flood of fugitives who fled to the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers allowed for these capitalizing merchants to initiate something of a positive feedback loop. The purchased bondsmen and women could produce more maize, millet, and manioc, as well as being important assets in the defense of these communities. These communities could support not only the growing population but also generate a more salt and crops for sale in markets like Lembo, where they were exchanged for more bondsmen and women. While the exchange of salt and crops for people in seventeenth-century markets contributed to the development of unique social and political forms in Kisama, where these dependents helped build a new society renowned throughout the region for the ferocity and bellicosity of its members, these economic transactions also helped Kisama society on a much more rudimentary level. While manioc supported the growth of populations in areas that had previously been entirely marginal due to aridity and poor soil quality, the tubers alone are nutritionally poor, providing an abundance of carbohydrates with limited protein, fat, or other nutrients. Though consuming the leaves of the plant together with the tubers adds

vitamins, including iron, and protein, a near-exclusive reliance on manioc can lead to serious health concerns due to malnutrition. Those Kisama merchants who traded salt and wild-gathered honey and wax -- and possibly those who traded manioc, millet, and maize as well – exchanged their goods for “oil, vegetables, flour, and other things necessary for their survival.”²²³ These market-procured items would have proven an essential supplement to carbohydrate-heavy and nutrient-poor diets comprised largely of manioc, millet, and maize. Thus, though the people of Kisama faced significant environmental challenges, their reliance on hunting and fishing, the collection of wild honey, the cultivation of manioc, millet, and maize, and the exchange of both salt and agricultural products in the market allowed for those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers to experience a certain degree of food security and nutritional adequacy before the war.²²⁴ Aridity and sporadic rainfall were certainly enduring features of Kisama’s natural environment. Even Dapper mentions the characteristic *imbondeiro*-tree cisterns used by those living far from rivers to trap rainfall for the dry season and the crucial invocation of spirits designed to protect these reservoirs from discovery by outsiders.²²⁵ However, *famine* in Kisama was neither natural nor inevitable, but rather was politically and socially produced through the violence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Food and food procurement played a central role in the conflict of 1655-1658, and the Portuguese were driven as much by the quest to secure enough nourishment for their

²²³ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, I: 22.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, I: 22.

²²⁵ Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, 374.

troops as by any strategic vision. Sousa Chicorro complained repeatedly of the difficulties his troops experienced for lack of food. For example, marching through the lands of *Soba* Kimbambala, Sousa Chicorro noted that the people of the principle village had fled, taking all of their crops with them deep into the forests save a few houses where his troops found small amounts of millet; Sousa Chicorro distinguished between the scarcity of the millet left behind and the larger quantity of maize that the residents of *Soba* Kimbambala had taken to the forests. Instead of being able to subsist through plunder of the crops of Kimbambala's people, the Portuguese were left with only this small amount of millet and the palm tree groves on the lands of *Soba* Langere from which the *imbare* of the Portuguese plundered hearts of palm and palm oil.²²⁶ When the Portuguese marched on the fertile lowland mentioned above, it was in pursuit of its "abundant maize and some manioc, of which there was news of its ripeness" as much as it was to take captives for sale or to punish those who attacked the Portuguese.²²⁷ When they reached this oasis, the people there "resisted some but because they were assaulted by our war, they avoided any involvement, the foot [soldiers] like wind passing through their woods." Both the white and black Portuguese soldiers capitalized on the flight of the local residents by "roast[ing] corn cobs, making them taste like they were Chestnuts."²²⁸

Just as the residents of this once-fertile lowland learned that the presence of the Portuguese army meant utter devastation and fled to protect themselves, so too did other

²²⁶ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 95-6.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, II: 110.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, II: 111.

people within Kisama seek to avoid the violence of the Portuguese campaign. By June of 1656, Sousa Chicorro remarked that the *sobas* who pledged obedience to him did so because of the “hunger that they suffer because [of the war] they are not cultivating [crops].”²²⁹ One month later, Sousa Chicorro noted more explicitly that “hunger was the worst ill,” suffered by the people of Kisama, and attributed their hunger to the fact that the war was depriving the people of Kisama of the “slaves that they force to cultivate” crops.²³⁰ Those whom the Portuguese understood as slaves were either those whom merchants had purchased in exchange for either salt or crops, or those who had been enslaved by the Portuguese and had fled to Kisama, and whose status within Kisama, while not equal, was certainly not the same as a racialized and permanently bonded class. Their capture or murder by the Portuguese undermined a critical element of the food production system within Kisama. The human toll of the war combined with the drastic impact of Portuguese depredations on the land compelled *Soba* Langere to attempt to negotiate with the Portuguese after a particularly fierce battle with many casualties. Langere claimed that “he wanted to be [a] Vassal of the King of Portugal, who would not destroy their lands and Palm Groves, from which they sustain themselves; that the Sheep could not leave before the Wolf, [so] that he would go back to his Quilombo, that within three days he would come in obedience to recognize the vassalage.”²³¹ With this deft diplomacy, Langere was able to save his lands and people from total devastation. Other *sobas* in Kisama, “fearing the war that was at their door, said through their Ambassadors

²²⁹ AHU, Caixa 6, Document 54, letter by Governor Sousa Chicorro to the King of Portugal, Luanda, 19 June 1656.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 102-3.

or Envoys that they were the sons of Mueno Puto [the king of Portugal] and they wanted peace and friendship with his vassal Portuguese and to turn over the Slaves that were in the lands that belonged to them.”²³² The *sobas* who made such deals with the Portuguese bought their tenuous peace with the lives and freedom of those who had fled to their lands for safety. The threat of devastation forced them to define clearly who was and was not a full member of their society. By offering to return these fugitives, these *sobas* revealed the boundaries of membership in their societies and the contingency of social integration during times of intense conflict.²³³

Not all communities within Kisama, however, were willing to sacrifice some or all of their most vulnerable members in exchange for the fleeting promise of safety and security of the others, as the Portuguese learned when their cavalry and *imbare* along with their leaders entered a part of Kisama that Sousa Chicorro and Cadornega do not specifically name. There, the people of Kisama fought ardently, resisting the Portuguese cavalry and auxiliary infantry with all of their might. According to Cadornega, the Portuguese forces returned during the night with

some prizes of people, mostly women, that we captured from the woods where they had run as fugitives; because these Heathens resisted so much that they were all weakened [to the point of death], the Husbands having first laid down their lives in their defense, they are very zealous about their Consorts, more than any other People in these Kingdoms.

After another battle the following morning, the Portuguese captured more than one hundred women – Cadornega notes this as a record for any forces fighting in Kisama –

²³² *Ibid.*, II: 90.

²³³ According to Cadornega, however, the envoys who had been sent to negotiate peace with the Portuguese and who had agreed to these terms never returned. He speculates that the envoys were intended only to postpone the Portuguese invasion of their territories. *Ibid.*

and set the village and its fields and crops on fire, decapitated all of the fugitives they could identify, and feasted on the chicken and cattle they took from the devastated village.²³⁴

One of the most poignant scenes in all of Cadornega's description of the war of 1655-1658, this episode encapsulates the relationship between food production and security, female labor, and warfare. The crops that sustained this nameless village were undoubtedly produced by the same one hundred and women who were captured by the Portuguese and almost certainly sold into trans-Atlantic slavery from Luanda, if they survived the harrowing journey to the coast. Through warfare and fire, the Portuguese devastated this community in which women worked rich lands and tended cattle and chickens and had woven relationships with men whom even the Portuguese identified as their husbands (*maridos*). For the one hundred women who were taken as captives, the memory of the land of Kisama as a refuge wherein the re-construction of family and reciprocal relationships with other members of the community was possible, and the violation of this asylum by the Portuguese troops must have profoundly shaped their understanding of their place in the violent trans-Atlantic world.

Conclusions

By the late 1620s, thousands of men and women, attracted by the compelling reputation of Kafuxi Ambari and, by extension, Kisama, as the bastion of resistance against the Portuguese fled slavery and sought refuge in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. There, they found no centralized states, but rather autonomous communities within which they fugitives could play important roles as hunters, fishers,

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, II: 113-4.

farmers, and warriors. Just like the bondsmen and women whom Kisama merchants purchased, these fugitives found the fragmented political terrain foreign, perhaps, but not alien; they did not lose their social identities here, and could, and in fact did, re-forge political identities. While those fugitives who had formal military backgrounds (*imbare*) were essential in the training of those who would defend the vulnerable within Kisama -- as shown by the transference of the name *imbare* from the soldiers themselves to the fortified, supplied pits so vital to Kisama's defense -- the people of Kisama continued to identify and understand themselves through reciprocal social relationships. Despite the fact that much of Kisama was on nearly constant war footing throughout the seventeenth century, unlike in Imbangala society, where diverse and unrelated outsiders were assimilated into a society that cohered exclusively around a warrior ethos, life in Kisama centered more on forging reciprocal social bonds and the politics and economics of cultivation. Those who fled to Kisama might be fishermen who attacked Portuguese slave boats on the Kwanza River to procure supplies, or they might be former *imbare* who taught their peers how to use firearms and construct defensive pits, or they might be women who farmed manioc and maize on fertile lowland soils. Those who fled to Kisama may have initially been *ijiko*, but even *ijiko* asserted sufficient political agency to reject a *soba* who attempted to impose an unacceptable form of political dependency on his people.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, then, fugitive politics informed all aspects of life between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. By the early 1630s, different constituencies within the lands of Langere rejected first one *soba* whom they deemed unsuitable, and then another whose alliance with the Portuguese rendered his claim to

political legitimacy illegitimate. During the war of 1655-1658, some *sobas* within Kisama negotiated with the Portuguese and acceded to handing over new fugitives; such a decision ultimately only weakened these leaders, who, in dealing with the Portuguese, lost not only the very dependents who made them powerful, but also their claim to political legitimacy. These *sobas*, however, confronted the cold reality that even a compromised legitimacy was preferable to the ultimate annihilation of people and land – the very consequence faced by those who refused to compromise the integrity of their communities by fighting to the end to preserve themselves.

While the martial aptitude of many *sobas* within Kisama and the reputation their skill engendered did in fact protect its people for much of the early seventeenth century, during the war of 1655-1658, Sousa Chicorro set out to prove himself capable of what no other Portuguese or African commander had yet accomplished: conquering the lands of Kisama. Like those before him, Sousa Chicorro, too, failed. He did not conquer the territory of Kisama, but his war devastated many of the communities where fugitive and fugitive-descended men, women, and children sought security, peace, and networks of kinship and reciprocal relations from which they had previously been severed. For those who found even a few years of security in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, the reputation of Kisama as a land where martial skill and spiritual acumen provided the conditions necessary to form relationships based not on idioms of warfare but rather on those of community and kinship would have dramatically informed their notions of what was possible in the Americas.

Chapter Four: (Mis)Taken Identities: Kisama and the Politics of Naming in the

Palenque Limón, New Grenada, c. 1570-1634

However, the violent domination of slavery generated political action; it was not antithetical to it. If one sees power as productive and the fear of social death not as incapacity but as a generative force – a peril that motivated enslaved activity – a different image of slavery slides into view, one in which the object of slave politics is not simply the power of slaveholders, but the very terms and conditions of social existence.
- Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery"²³⁵

In 1633, Perico Quisama and his companion Malemba fled from the farm of Francisco Martin Garruchena outside of Cartagena de Indias, New Grenada (present-day Colombia) to Limón, a *palenque* (maroon community) located in the mountainous forested region approximately fifty miles outside of the city.²³⁶ There, they told the leader of the community, Queen Leonor, and other authorities that their master had accepted silver from the government in Cartagena in order to pay the people of the indigenous community of Chambacú to attack the *palenque*. Queen Leonor decided that "it would be better if the [...] Indians didn't come to their land [Limón,] but that the *palenqueros* [maroons] should go to their pueblo and burn it and kill [them]." The queen mobilized several Limoneses to attack Chambacú, including *palenque*-born and fugitive men identified as Malemba, as well as Upper Guinea- and West Central Africa-identified *palenqueros*. Perico guided them to Chambacú, stopping first at the farm of his erstwhile master, Francisco Martin Garruchena, in order to kill several pigs. Not only did those

²³⁵ Brown, "Social Death and Political Life," 1244.

²³⁶ Here, I use Kathryn McKnight's calculation of distance. Kathryn McKnight, "Confronted Rituals: Spanish Colonial and Angolan 'Maroon' Executions in Cartagena de Indias (1634)," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 5(2004). While I later dispute some of McKnight's interpretations of evidence from Limón, her narrative in this article and in later work of the ritual killings is excellent. I am further indebted to McKnight for providing me with her exemplary transcriptions of the massive collection of testimonies and evidence concerning the *palenque* Limón. See also McKnight and Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices*.

who had lived in Limón for some time participate in this attack, but also those whom the Limoneses had recently freed from bondage during a raid on Diego Marquez's farm. Most of the men and women brought along their bows, arrows, and machetes, though Francisco de la Fuente and Captain Francisco availed themselves of their shotguns and munitions.²³⁷

All of the captured *palenqueros* who testified about the attacks on the farm of Francisco Martin Garruchena and the *pueblo* Chambacú describe Perico Quisama and his companion Malemba as the instigators. Indeed, the testimonies on this topic are remarkably congruent on the details of what Perico and Malemba said and how leaders in Limón reacted to their news. Even the Spanish who testified about their role in the attack on Limón recounted a nearly identical narrative. However, despite the obvious importance of Perico and Malemba's flight and the intelligence that they brought to Limón, those who related these events in their testimonies did not concur on one critical detail: Perico Quisama's name.

While all who testified agreed that Perico's less-*ladino* (Iberian-acculturated) companion was named Malemba, not all even called Perico *Perico*. Sergeant Miguel Antunes, who led the Spanish attack on Limón, and neighboring Spanish farmers Francisco Julián de Piña and Juan Ortíz, both of whom likewise participated in the assault on the *palenque*, all name the man who fled Garruchena's farm and brought news of the

²³⁷ Archivo General de Indias, Patronato 234, ramo 7, "Papeles tocantes a la Alteracion de los Negros Zimarrones, y Castigos que en ellos hizo el Governador de Cartagena causados en el Año de 1634", bloque 2. All testimonies hereafter come from this same *legajo*, which will be abbreviated as AGI 234/7, after which I will note the name of witness or witnesses who testified. Gaspar Angola, Juan Criollo de la Margarita, and Sebastian Angola.

impending government-sponsored campaign against Limón as *Perico Quisama*.²³⁸ Juan Criollo de la Margarita, a leader within Limón, and two *palenquera* women, Catalina Angola and Francisca Criolla, call the same man *Perico Angola*.²³⁹ *Palenque* leaders Francisco de la Fuente and Juan de la Mar refer to him simply as *Perico*.²⁴⁰ Four Angola-identified men – Gaspar, Lázaro, Jacinto, and Juan – use the name *Pedro Angola* to describe the same figure who fled from Garruchena’s farm with Malemba, brought news of the impending assaults to the *palenque* leaders, and then lead the attack on Chambacú.²⁴¹ Perico himself testifies as *Pedro Angola*, and it is under this appellation that the Spanish judge sentenced him to hang in the gallows until he died, at which point they quartered him, decapitated him, and displayed his dismembered body publically in Cartagena.²⁴²

It is not only Perico Quisama, however, who appears through the records by more than one name. The two other Kisama-identified men about whom we have the most information, Lázaro and Manuel, are also named inconsistently throughout the testimonies. To regard these inconsistencies as capricious errors, however, would be to lose sight of the vital texture that transforms these names into a map of the social and political topographies of the community that generated them and as an important peephole into the dynamic ideological processes that flourished in resistance to the threat

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, Sargento Miguel Antunes, Francisco Julian de Piña, and Juan Ortíz.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, Juan Criollo de la Margarita, Catalina Angola, and Francisca Criolla.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Francisco de la Fuente and Juan de la Mar.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Gaspar Angola, Lázaro Angola, Jacinto Angola, and Juan Angola.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Pedro Angola (testimony) and Pedro Angola (sentence).

of physical and social death in Africa and in the Americas during the mid-seventeenth century. The testimony that these captured *palenqueros* offered, often as a brief interlude between their torture by Spanish captors and their eventual murder and dismemberment, the terms by which they described themselves and other members of their community, both within and without the *palenque*, help illuminate the political tensions and competing ideologies that operated within this maroon community.

In this chapter, I take seriously the words of contemporary observer of mid-seventeenth-century Angola, António de Oliveira de Cadornega, who described the resistance of Kisama to the Portuguese and to its existence as a seventeenth-century maroon society in Angola as revolutionary.²⁴³ While in the previous two chapters, I have focused on the impact of Kisama's evolving fugitive politics both on social and political practices between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers and on regional politics in Angola, in this chapter, I follow these ideologies across the Atlantic. In Kisama, fugitives eschewed both the bondage that many of them had endured either on Portuguese plantations or as *imbare* and also the morally repugnant response of the Imbangala to the Portuguese violence. Refusing both the institutionalized warrior-centered social ethos of the Imbangala and the tenuous promise of safety in centralized states like Kongo or Ndongo, those who forged new political forms in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers instead consciously disavowed any but the most fleeting alliances to non-local political authority. This political ideology enabled *sobas*, *jinganga*, *imbare*, other fugitives, and bondsmen and women, and their descendents to create a multiplicity of political forms

²⁴³ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 381.

and practices in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, united only by their aversion to incorporation within or vassalage to states.

By investigating the trial records from Limón, we understand aspects of Kisama's past that no Angolan sources can reveal. In the century and a half from Kisama's first appearance in archival records (1535) to the end of Sousa Chicorro's war in 1658, the meaning of the term "Kisama" changed for Africans both within and without Kisama's porous, nebulous boundaries and for Europeans as well. After Kafuxi Ambari's dramatic defeat of the Portuguese in 1594, the primary significance of "Kisama" shifted from geographical to political. While the residents of Kisama remained infamous within the region and beyond for their intractability from the late sixteenth century on, this reputation paradoxically emphasized the politically, socially, and culturally fragmented nature of life between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. During the mid-seventeenth century, Cavazzi described the residents of Kisama as "glorify[ing] in a certain independence," and by 1825, Portuguese governor Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco complained that Kisama's "many inhabitants, and proliferating rulers, who have the title of soba, profess a reciprocal rage against each other."²⁴⁴ The renown of the notoriously autonomous people of Kisama for resistance helped attract thousands of diverse fugitives, who, by the early 1630s, themselves participated in re-configuring the notion of Kisama identities in Angola. The enduring challenge of telling such stories, of course, is to find a critical mass of sources that allow for a glimpse – however mediated, distorted, and patchy – of

²⁴⁴ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, I: 22. AHU, Caixa 149 A, Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco, "Ofício do Governador de Angola," 19 October 1825.

changes in and contestations about the practice and conception of political authority, violence, and community over time.

In the case of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kisama, it is possible to weave together fragmented sources generated by imperial and slaving interests and neighboring kingdoms, oral histories and local etymologies, and linguistics to reconstruct a political, intellectual, cultural, and social historical narrative. However, in Angola, these sources do not reveal much about the histories of named individuals, aside from *sobas*. Kafuxi Ambari emerges clearly from both oral and written accounts, but the equally vital histories of all of those who fought by his side, who tended the crops he consumed, and who accepted or contested his authority are all but invisible. Kings and queens of Kongo, Ndongo, and Matamba, Portuguese military officers, colonial officials, and European missionaries named only those with whom they interacted on a macro-political scale, and all other men, women, and children appear in aggregate, if at all. It is difficult enough to access the histories of subaltern people within states during this period; finding insight into the lives of everyday fugitives and common people outside of the boundaries of states is far more challenging. Historians working in all corners of the world who seek to craft less elite-centered histories of the pre-nineteenth-century world face similar challenges.

However, what if it is possible to find answers to some of the more complex questions about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kisama history outside of Angola? Do sources from the Americas allow us to glimpse otherwise inaccessible fragments of early modern African histories? Can an interrogation of the way that other local African histories intersect with Kisama histories in the Americas help illuminate dynamics of

Kisama history that would otherwise remain obscure? Throughout the seventeenth century, Kisama identities in Angola were forged largely within and among communities formed by thousands of individually weak, vulnerable fugitives from a broad region of West Central Africa. Thus, those living far beyond the Kwanza and Longa Rivers knew of Kisama's reputation and of the prospect for shelter from the raids of the Portuguese and their allies and the prospect of capture, sale, forced labor, and possible transport across the Atlantic. However, not all who yearned for the relative safety that a life in Kisama represented were able to flee there successfully; even for those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, the prospect of capture in the endless wars against the Portuguese and their allies, such as the extended conflict of 1655-1658 discussed in the previous chapter, transport to the coast, and sale to the Americas – or bonded labor in Luanda or on Portuguese-owned plantations in Angola or São Tomé -- was an enduring threat. Even today, those living in Kisama can identify caves along the coast where the Portuguese kept their captives while they waited for the slave ships to take them along their harrowing journey.²⁴⁵ For the most part, those most susceptible to such capture and sale were the very same unnamed, non-elite actors who fled to the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, helped forge new political and social forms, and about whose lives the sources from Angola are the most silent. While records from the Americas contain less information about the lives, experiences, and beliefs of individual enslaved and free Africans and their descendents than we would like, American sources

²⁴⁵ Resident of Cabo Ledo (anonymous by interviewee's request), interview with author, Cacumba, Angola, 16 July 2010. While it is difficult to date these memories, I suspect that they may reflect the realities of smuggling in the post-1836 (Portuguese abolition of the slave trade) world.

nevertheless allow us to understand far more about Kisama society than we can learn from African sources alone.

Scholars have recently begun to recognize the situational nature of expressions of African identities in the pre-twentieth-century world. Building on the scholarship of Mariza de Carvalho Soares and Luis Nicolau Parés, historian James Sweet argues that depending on context, Africans in the Atlantic world could identify in the broadest terms, reflecting region of provenance (like Angola or Mina), in “meta-ethnic” terms (like Bioho or Kisama), or in very specific terms (like Massangano or Savalu). Sweet acknowledges that these choices carried political meanings, particularly in the case of an identity like Mahi, “an ‘ethnic’ identity born in the fires of war, in resistance to the privations wrought by the army of Dahomey.”²⁴⁶ Extending Sweet’s formulation, I argue that examining the relationships between members of the *palenque* Limón and its broader community and the idioms within which they evoked political difference allows us a rare opportunity to more fully grasp the intellectual practices of forging fugitive modernities in seventeenth-century Africa and the African Diaspora. As Kathryn McKnight suggests in her writing about Limón, “thinking about identity can transform long lists of names with brief identifiers into challenging but vital sources of *palenque* thought.”²⁴⁷

Advancing my previous discussion of the nature of political development in mid-seventeenth-century Kisama, I argue that the fugitive modernities constructed and

²⁴⁶ Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*, 16. See also Soares, *Devotos da cor*, Parés, *A formação do candomblé*. Parés’s construction of ethnicity and meta-ethnicity derives from the formulation of Jesús Guanche Pérez, “Contribución al estudio del poblamiento africano en Cuba,” *África: Revista do centro de estudos africanos* 18-19(1996), who himself borrows the idea from the Soviet theorist Yulián Vladimirovich Bromlei, *Etnografía teórica* (Moscow: Editorial Nauka, 1986).

²⁴⁷ McKnight and Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices*, 67.

contested by maroons between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers constituted a revolutionary current with global implications. Here, I do not mean that Kisama ideologies were revolutionary in the sense that they were concerted efforts to overturn an existing order and to replace or even re-populate the machinery of state. Rather, I mean that Kisama's deliberately fractured, non-state political forms and overall rejection of an economic and political order centered on the capture, commodification, and sale of human beings represented not only an important counter-ideology, but also a highly mobile, adaptable set of practices that could be employed or evoked in lands far beyond the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. Since at least the late sixteenth century, resistance against the Portuguese by Kafuxi Ambari and other *sobas* in Kisama not only inspired revolt among neighboring people, but it also encouraged the vulnerable and enslaved from other parts of the region to flee to and become Kisama.²⁴⁸ By the 1620s and 1630s, these fugitives had woven a new social order and demarcated their own boundaries of political legitimacy within Kisama. Not only did these actions influence regional political histories within Angola, but they also shaped the practice of politics in maroon societies throughout the Americas. While this particular revolutionary current did not lead to the establishment of liberal democracy or republican governance – it has no obvious teleological link to the present – it was no less transformative for the relationships between state and non-state actors in Angola and between the enslaved and the enslavers in the Americas.

In this chapter, I follow the discourses about political legitimacy, community, and violence in Kisama to through its articulations in the *palenque* Limón outside of

²⁴⁸ Rodrigues, "História," 566-75, Lopès de Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessoes portuguezas na Africa occidental e oriental, na Asia occidental, na China e na Oceania escriptos de ordem do governo de S. M.D. Maria II*, XXI.

Cartagena. Our information about the events within and around Limón comes from the nearly thousand pages of documentation generated by the 1634 trial of nineteen maroons captured by the Spanish.²⁴⁹ Limón was far from the only *palenque* community troubling the Spanish settlements in and around Cartagena at the time. Juan de Sotomayor, a Spaniard who owned a farm worked by enslaved Africans outside of Cartagena, testified to the existence of at least one larger *palenque* (led by Maria Angola), three of equal size, three smaller, and four smaller yet, of which three were indigenous communities and one African.²⁵⁰ Because of Limón's recently adopted policy of overt aggression towards the Spanish, however – in effect, popularizing to the still-enslaved Africans and their descendents in and around Cartagena that Spanish power was fragile -- the colonial government prioritized attacking Limón and killing or capturing its residents. Like many colonial raids of communities of fugitive Africans and indigenous people, this one was not particularly successful; most of the *palenqueros* escaped, including the (in)famous Queen Leonor and many of the other leaders of the community. In fact, the queen was one of the principal targets of the Spanish raid. The Spanish were interested in capturing the queen not only because of her leadership role within the *palenque*, but also because of her putative participation in the ritual killings of several Spaniards and indigenous people.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Of those who testified, thirteen were executed by the Spanish: Antón Angola, Gaspar Angola, Francisco Angola, Pedro Angola, Juan Criollo de la Margarita, Lorenzo Criollo, Sebastián Anchico, Domingo Anchico, Juan Angola, Francisco de la Fuente, Lázaro Angola, Juan de la Mar, and Sebastián de Angola Cachorro. The six others, Juan Carabalí, Jacinto Angola, Juan Angola, two different women named Catalina Angola, and Francisca Criolla, were sentenced to exile.

²⁵⁰ AGI 234/7, Juan de Sotomayor.

²⁵¹ For a detailed discussion of these killings, see McKnight, "Confronted Rituals."

Queen Leonor was undoubtedly instrumental in a political shift within the Limón community, which had existed since at least the 1570s and had apparently remained relatively peaceful while the Spanish were pre-occupied with the raiding activities of other maroon communities, including the notable *palenque* of King Domingo Bioho. Those who founded Limón were both African- and American-born fugitives from slavery; after some years, their numbers were augmented not only by a perpetual trickle of runaways and those who were ostensibly “captured” from Spanish farms, but also by a substantial cohort of free-born children and grandchildren who knew no life outside of the community. In the years leading up to the 1634 Spanish assault on the *palenque* Limón, members of the community attacked the Spanish slave-holding farms of Diego Márquez, Francisco Martin Garruchena, Gomes Hernandez, Francisco Julian de Piña, and Alonso Martin Hidalgo, as well as the indigenous community of Chambacú.

While the maroons of Limón had lived in the area outside of Cartagena for several decades and had co-existed with the neighboring Spanish landowners and indigenous communities, in the 1620s and 1630s, just as fugitives in Kisama began to profoundly reshape the political contours of their communities, newer arrivals in Limón likewise began to re-orient the politics of the *palenque*.²⁵² Leaders of the larger Limón attacked the smaller neighboring *palenque* of Polín and compelled all of those whom they captured to join them, albeit in subservient or servile roles.²⁵³ The *palenqueros* whom the Spaniards caught claimed that their attacks on the white farms and the indigenous community were

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ AGI 234/7, Sebastian Anchico. Sebastian Anchico claimed that this attack was motivated by romantic jealousy.

motivated by self-defense; they had learned that the Spaniards planned to pay the indigenous residents of Chambacú to attack them while they were negotiating a peace treaty with the government.²⁵⁴ Tautologically, the Spanish claimed justification for attacking the *palenque* because of the attacks on the farms of Garruchena and Márquez as well as Chambacú.

The *palenqueros* who testified themselves identified a relatively recent change within Limón, and they connected these developments to Queen Leonor and a newly-arrived cohort of Malemba-identified men. Sebastián Angola argued that “the palenque residents were peaceful until Cristóbal Malemba, Francisco Malemba, Moriungo Malemba, Gaspar Malemba and Pedro Buila stirred up the queen with herbs.”²⁵⁵ Who was Leonor, and how was she “stirred up”? What kind of political change did this spiritual coronation initiate, and what were the intellectual, social, and cultural topographies of the communities within which this new politics operated? How can understanding the dynamic political situation of a seventeenth-century maroon community outside of Cartagena help illuminate the history of Kisama, and what can Kisama tell us about this *palenque*?

While the rich documentary record of Limón is certainly compelling in its own right, intriguingly, prior to the nineteenth century, the richest written historical source of information about the lives of individual Kisama-identified people comes not from Angola, but rather from the nearly one thousand pages of records generated through the

²⁵⁴ McKnight, "Confronted Rituals."

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

trial of the captured Limoneses.²⁵⁶ Of these seven Kisama-identified members of the community, only one – Perico -- testified; all others besides he and Luis Quisama evaded capture by the Spanish.²⁵⁷ No one who testified *self*-identified as Kisama, and Perico Quisama, who testified as Pedro Angola, was called “Quisama” only by the Spanish. However, in the case of the others, their fellow *palenqueros* – African- and American-born alike -- did name seven individuals in total whom they identified as Kisama; besides Perico, Lázaro, Manuel, and Luis they also named another Manuel (from Matute), Juan, and Maria.²⁵⁸ While those who testified only mentioned some, like Luis, Manuel from Matute, Maria, and Juan in passing, they discussed others who appear to have played a prominent role in the political, cultural, and social life of the community, like Perico, Lázaro, and Manuel who had fled from the farm of Garruchena in some detail. From these testimonies, we can ascertain important dimensions of the ways in which Kisama political identities functioned in a fugitive community in early seventeenth-century New Grenada. And while these Kisama-identified individuals do not themselves speak,

²⁵⁶ This is all contained in AGI 234/7.

²⁵⁷ Perico Quisama testified under the name *Pedro Angola*. I will discuss his testimony and the meaning of the various, inconsistent ways in which he is named, below. Throughout the Americas, European claims to have “destroyed” maroon communities were rarely true. In most cases, including in the (in)famous supposed destruction of Palmares in Brazil in 1695, “the survivors did what other maroons before and after had done when required to – they melted into the hinterlands to coalesce into new and more remote settlements and begin their free lives anew.” See Jane Landers, “Leadership and Authority in Maroon Settlements in Spanish America and Brazil,” in *Africa and the Americas: Interconnections During the Slave Trade*, ed. José Curto and Renée Soudre-La France (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 181. Juan de la Mar notes that, at the time of his testimony, Luis Quisama was in jail. AGI 234/7, Juan de la Mar.

²⁵⁸ In addition to these seven who are described as “Kisama” by their peers, there is one man whom Lázaro Angola intriguingly calls “Kafuxi” (rendered “Capuche” and “Capiche”). According to Lázaro Angola, Kafuxi participated in an attack against a Spanish farm as well as against the indigenous community at Chambacú. Kafuxi had fled from his master, Captain Baquesel. Unfortunately, these are all of the details that we have about this tantalizingly-named resident of Limón, who is never described outright as “Kisama.” *Ibid.*, Lázaro Angola.

through the narrative about life within the *palenque* that it is possible to piece together through these documents, we can discern parallel discourses and debates to those in Kisama, linking changes in Limón to a more widespread Age of Revolution originating in the fugitive modernities of Kisama.

In this chapter, I explore how political ideologies and practices forged in Kisama and similar communities in West and West Central Africa informed the nature of maroon communities in the Americas through an examination of the rich documentary record from Limón. I argue that approaching the history of Limón from the perspective of Kisama history – and using Limón to help understand Kisama -- reveals the interconnected, contiguous nature of these seventeenth-century spaces and demonstrates the flows of fugitive ideology through them. Indeed, just as the world of Kisama extended far beyond the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, as reputation and rumor drew fugitives from throughout the region and the news of each successful repudiation of Portuguese military incursions increased Kisama's renown, so too did the world of Limón reach far beyond the *palenque's* boundaries. As a close reading of these documents reveals, Limoneses imagined themselves as part of a community that included not only the diverse men, women, and children who lived inside the *palenque*, but also an extensive network of bondsmen and women in the surrounding region, neighboring indigenous peoples, and also spirits from Africa. They also linked themselves, both through direct interaction and through discursive mobilization, to other maroon communities in the region, both contemporary and historical. To truly understand the political shift in Limón in the years leading up to 1634 – and the vital role of Kisama-

identified people and Kisama-oriented politics within that shift – requires an African-rooted, processual approach sensitive to local histories in the Americas as well.



Map of Seventeenth-Century *Palenques* in New Grenada²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Hélène Vignaux, "Palenque de Limón: ¿subversión o sumisión?: un case de cimarronaje en el Nuevo Reino de Granada en el siglo XVII," *Revista Memoria* (2000): 32.

Cimarronaje in Panamá and New Grenada Before Limón

In shaping the political and social contours of their *palenque*, Limoneses drew from experiences and discourses not only from Africa, but also from the political traditions of maroonage in the region. Indeed, such geographical terms obscure the fact that violence and social rupture were the lingua franca in many parts of Africa and the Americas in the seventeenth century, and many of those who fled enslavement in New Grenada to try to re-form autonomous communities were likely not doing so for the first time in their lives.²⁶⁰ As the African population of New Grenada shifted from being dominated by men and women from Upper Guinea to West Central Africa in the second decade of the seventeenth century, enslaved and self-liberated people incorporated new political ideologies and historical precedents into their concepts of freedom.²⁶¹ Locally, however, there was also a deep tradition of maroonage, stretching back for over a century. Long before fugitives founded the community that would become Limón, enslaved Africans throughout the region of Panamá and New Grenada fled both urban-, plantation-, and mine-based bondage and founded free societies. Maroon communities predate Spanish settlements in present-day Colombia; even before Pedro de Heredia officially founded the colonial city of Cartagena da Indias on June 1, 1532, Africans fleeing enslavement in Panamá and surrounding regions had formed maroon settlements near the indigenous town of Tofeme. This settlement expanded after 1532 and the

²⁶⁰ For a stimulating discussion of the continuities of rupture in the Atlantic world, see Sidbury and Cañizares-Esguerra, "Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic," 181-208. and the responses, especially James Sweet, "The Quiet Violence of Ethnogenesis," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2011): 209-14.

²⁶¹ David Wheat, "The First Great Waves: African Provenance Zones for the Transatlantic Slave Trade to Cartagena de Indias, 1570-1640," *The Journal of African History* 52, no. 01 (2011): 1-22.

subsequent influx of Africans into the city.²⁶² By 1540, less than a decade after the Spanish founded the colonial city and port of Cartagena, a decree of the Counsel of the Indies forecasted that “many blacks flee into the mountains, where they do much damage to the Indians who live there: this has not been and cannot be remedied unless blacks are pardoned.”²⁶³ These words would prove prophetic in the years to follow.

In neighboring Panamá, thousands of enslaved Africans fled to the mountains and jungles in the isthmus’s interior in the mid-sixteenth century,” and the fugitives who comprised the *palenques* of sixteenth-century Panama developed a variety of political forms, drawing from diverse African intellectual traditions.²⁶⁴ Rather than staying in remote, interior locales – a stereotype of maroon societies which has always contradicted the evidence -- these fugitives moved between the mountains and the coast, targeting the mule trains that moved Peruvian silver from Panama City on the Pacific coast to the port of Nombre de Dios on the Atlantic coast and sent Spanish imports back in return. In 1573, the Spanish factor at Nombre de Dios wrote to the king that:

This place is so alarmed and in such need ... of people to garrison it against the numerous cimarrones, and other negroes who run away to join them daily, that, unless the situation be remedied, they can readily enter it...[O]n the twenty-ninth of the month of January they went so far as the Venta de Chagre, and burned it, and in it killed four soldiers of the guard

²⁶² AGI, Patronato 27, “Carta de Miguel Diez de Armendáriz al Rey,” 24 July 1545, in María del Carmen Borrego Plá, *Cartagena de Indias en el siglo XVI* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1983), 430-1.

²⁶³ “Cedula que manda que no se proceda contra los negros que de su voluntad bolvieren de paz, y a servir a sus amos, estando alçados,” 7 September 1540, in *Cedulario indiano*, ed. Diego de Encinas and Alfonso García Gallo (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1946), 394.

²⁶⁴ For a review of maroonage in Panamá throughout the sixteenth century, see Ruth Pike, “Black Rebels: The Cimarrons of Sixteenth-Century Panama,” *The Americas* 64, no. 2 (2007): 243-66, Jean-Pierre Tardieu, *Cimarrones de Panamá: la forja de una identidad afroamericana en el siglo XVI* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2009). For a discussion of their relationship with pirates, see Kris E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

of the mule-train. They took a pack-train coming from Panama, and stole the silver it was carrying, killed some mules, and badly wounded a friar.²⁶⁵

In May of the same year, a group of fifty maroons and thirty French and English pirates attacked yet another pack train, seizing “30,000 [*pesos*] and ... all the gold and some bars.”²⁶⁶ These raids not only enriched the English and French pirates, but they also greatly benefitted the maroons, who negotiated their relationships with the corsairs from a relative position of power, setting the terms under which they would be willing to help those attempting to cross from Atlantic to Pacific. Despite the differences in cultural and political backgrounds, these maroons and pirates shared a fundamentally non-state ethos.

By the 1570s, Panamanian maroons already had a trans-Atlantic, trans-national reputation. When the Spanish captured the English pirate John Oxenham in 1577, he testified at length about the relationship between his men and the maroons in Panama, claiming

that Captain Francis [Sir Francis Drake], Englishman, who sailed along these coasts of the Indies with another captain, a Frenchman, and returned to England, to the port of Plymouth ... told deponent [Oxenham] that in this Vallano there were *cimarrones* rich in gold and silver, and he described the country, and said that he could barter to them whatever he might bring; and it was about two years ago that he told him this; And deponent came with the intention of bartering to the said negroes much merchandize which he brought from England – cloths, hatchets, *machetes* and other things of different sorts – which he intended to barter for gold and silver, and so return rich to his own country.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Ortega Valencia to the King Nombre de Dios, 22 February 1573, AGI, Panama 11, in *Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Spanish Main, 1569-1580*, ed. Irene Aloha Wright (London: Haklyut Society, 1932), 46-7.

²⁶⁶ Cristóbal Monte, Nombre de Dios, May 1573, AGI, Patronato 267, in *ibid.*, 60.

²⁶⁷ John Oxenham, deposition made at Ronconcholon, 20 October 1577, AGI, Panama 41, in *ibid.*, 170-7.

From Oxenham's deposition, it is clear that the leader of Vallano, King Domingo Congo, ruled over a large number of people who inhabited not only the primary village at Rincóncholon, but also many affiliated villages. While this kind of settled life permitted the *palenqueros* to practice agriculture, planting banana groves and maize fields, they were mobile enough to have a well-developed plan for flight.²⁶⁸ Such social organization required not only an intimate familiarity with the land and both martial and subsistence strategies suited to the location, but also the ability to use and distribute the machetes, hatchets, iron, cloth, and other goods that those in 1570s Plymouth knew the maroons desired. These events also indicate a well-developed political system that, while hierarchical, enabled individual communities to respond to potential threats.

Domingo Congo, king of this *palenque* society, governed a community with a well-established system of relative local autonomy within a broader political structure. When, after years of flight and battle, he sought to negotiate peace terms with the Spanish, he sent fourteen captains to Panama City to negotiate with them in his name. Among these delegates was Antón Mandinga, a man both trusted by Domingo Congo and conversant in Spanish language and culture, whom the other captains relied on to convey much of their message to the Spanish, as well as "Juan Jolofo, captain of the Piñas River and Vicente Sape, captain of the Manta River and Gaspar Bran, captain of the Gallinasas River."²⁶⁹ King Domingo Congo appears to have been familiar with Kongo court culture,

²⁶⁸ Oxenham testifies that after the conflict with the Spanish, the maroon "leaders ordered them [the other maroons] to give them nothing...They lived on bananas which they picked in the groves, and occasionally a kind-hearted negro gave them a little maize." *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁶⁹ "Carta escrita por Pedro de Ortega, general de Bayano [Vallano] a su mejestad, y a esta real audiencia," Panama, 30 August 1580, in *Indios y negros en Panamá en los siglos XVI y XVII: selecciones de los documentos del Archivo General de Indias*, ed. Carol F. Jopling (South Woodstock, VT: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies, 1994), 359.

negotiating absolution for his sins and for those of his followers. Indeed, the ways in which his captains were tied to particular regions is reminiscent of the political structure of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Kingdom of Kongo, where the king delegated control of formerly independent provinces to family members and supporters, thus ensuring their loyalty.²⁷⁰ However, his captains were not fellow BaKongo, nor were they even West Central Africans. Instead, they were Mandinga, Jolof, Zape, and Bran – identities that point to geographical origins in present-day Senegambia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau. These maroons appear to have adapted a very particular political culture from Kongo to their new social environment, using the tools and language of state to forge their own particular society outside of the limits of state.

Maroons in Panamá attacked Spanish caravans crossing from the Pacific to the Atlantic side of the isthmus and allied with English and French pirates intent on capturing wealth from Peruvian silver mines as well as the cargoes of Portuguese slave ships. In New Grenada, however, much as was the case in turn-of-the-century Kisama, maroons began to incorporate assaults on Spanish riverine trade into their strategies. Coinciding with what historian Enriqueta Vila Vilar calls “the first great wave of Africans to come to the Spanish Indies,” in the 1570s, maroons living along the Magdalena River began to attack the Spanish settlement at Barranca de Malambo, four days distant from Cartagena by mule, which served as the primary customs, mercantile storehouse, and lodging point for those bringing goods from the interior.²⁷¹ Between occupying the mountainous

²⁷⁰ Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 58.

²⁷¹ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, “The Large-Scale Introduction of Africans into Veracruz and Cartagena,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies*, ed. Vera D. Rubin and Arthur Tuden (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1977), 276.

territory in between Barranca de Malambo and Cartagena and mounting these effective attacks, in combination with the omnipresent threat from pirates along the coast, maroons ensured that Cartageneros lived under a virtual blockade, cut off from supplies from both the interior and the sea.²⁷² By 1575, a Spanish doctor passing through Cartagena on his way to Santa Fe de Bogotá wrote to the king that the situation was so desperate that he did not recommend “that any more blacks come to Cartagena until there is a remedy for the maroons in the mountains.”²⁷³ In the midst of the turbulent situation in Panama, it must have seemed to the Spanish that New Grenada could also soon be embroiled in a costly, drawn-out conflict with self-liberated Africans.²⁷⁴

The king of Spain did not officially respond to the doctor’s recommendations. However, the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* has no record of any slave ships landing in Cartagena between 1576 and 1584.²⁷⁵ Of course, there are many gaps in the data, and a lack of records does not indicate that all human traffic to Cartagena ceased during these nine years. However, once records resume in 1585, the number of Africans who arrived – 762 -- more than doubled the number who arrived in from 1575 (289). For the remainder of the sixteenth century, the trend continued toward a dramatic increase in Africans arriving in Cartagena, so that by 1600, three to four thousand enslaved Africans

²⁷² Borrego Plá, *Cartagena de Indias*, 432.

²⁷³ AGI, Santa Fe, 187, “Carta de Licenciado Mejía al Rey,” 4 August 1575.

²⁷⁴ For a perspective on the financial impact of the continued conflicts with maroon groups in the seventeenth century, see Enriqueta Vila Vilar, “Cimarronaje en Panamá y Cartagena: el costo de una guerrilla en el siglo XVII,” *Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien* 49(1987): 77-92.

²⁷⁵ “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.”

regularly disembarked each year.²⁷⁶ Until 1590, the overwhelming majority of those who arrived in Cartagena were from Upper Guinea; while bondsmen and women from other regions continued to arrive in Cartagena, it was only after 1617 that Angolans comprised the majority of all newly arrived captives, and by 1626, two out of every three Africans disembarking in Cartagena had left Africa from Angola.²⁷⁷ For the political life of Limón, the fact that the “Angolan wave” of bondmen and women began arriving in Cartagena just as fugitive politics began to emerge as a revolutionary current in Kisama is significant.

Even after the dire cautions of Spanish observers in the 1570s, Africans continued to flee captivity in Cartagena and neighboring areas, and the Spanish had little success in enforcing draconian legislation intended to prevent maroonage.²⁷⁸ By the turn of the seventeenth century, Spanish officials throughout the circum-Caribbean were terrified that the multitude of fugitive Africans throughout Tierra Firme (present-day Venezuela), Panamá, and New Grenada would unite in an armed struggle against the Spanish. Just as the Portuguese feared Kafuxi Ambari’s martial skill and charisma, so, too, did the Spanish in the Americas focus their anxieties on a series of charismatic maroon leaders who appear to have organized hundreds or even thousands of fugitives in *palenque* communities that, in many cases, pre-dated their leadership. By the early 1600s, while those in Limón lived in relative peace with their Spanish and indigenous neighbors, the Spanish governor in Cartagena described a dire plot in which Domingo Bioho, a fugitive

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ Wheat, "The First Great Waves," 4.

²⁷⁸ For a discussion of this legislation, see Vila Vilar, "Cimarronaje."

from the Spanish king's galleys and the king of yet another large *palenque* community outside of Cartagena, would unite

a large quantity of blacks and go to Monopox [a town] and from there they could unite with [the revolted African miners in] Zaragoza and take it and with the remainder and with the blacks from the mines that they could raise to take this city [Cartagena] and do harm and Pass to Panama with more maroons."²⁷⁹

This type of collective action and political unity among disparate groups of fugitives seemed possible to the Spanish because throughout the sixteenth century, this was how *palenque* communities operated. Time and time again, small groups of people would flee from a single farm, or master in the city, or particular mine, run to the mountains, and join with other such groups of people to form a viable community. I do not mean to imply here that all fugitives inherently identified with a common cause, or that fugitive politics of different groups of maroons, or maroons and pirates, were intrinsically congruent. In Limón, as in Kisama, political conflicts between various fugitive constituencies could at times drive armed confrontations; while all who lived in Limón certainly escaped the literally lethal life of slavery and the threat of imminent social death, not all *palenqueros* enjoyed the benefits of that liberty in the same way. Just as in Kisama, Limón was a society marked by social inequality. However, in spite of these inequalities, as we will see in the case of Limón, often times those who identified with a common political identity or who had common experiences of enslavement by the same master would return to free their companions.

²⁷⁹ "Carta de Gerónimo de Suazo al Rey," 16 February 1603, in Roberto Arrazola, *Palenque: primer pueblo libre de América* (Cartagena: Ediciones Hernández, 1970), 35. For the revolt and subsequent maroonage of Africans enslaved in the gold mines of Zaragoza, see María Cristina Navarrete, "Cimarrones y palenques en las provincias al norte del Nuevo Reino de Grenada, siglo XVII," *Fronteras de la historia* 6(2001): 97-122.. Vila Vilar identifies "Acla cove[,] between Portobelo and Cartagena[, as the] place where...the maroons from both places would meet." Vila Vilar, "Cimarronaje," 82.

Shaping Community in Limón

Perhaps no individual within Limón's life story better illustrates the social ties that bound *palenqueros* and those still enslaved together than that of Francisco de la Fuente, called "el Morisco" ("the Moor") by both his fellow Limoneses and the Spanish. De la Fuente, like Domingo Bioho before him, came to Cartagena on a galley ship, marked with the distinctive facial brands of those enslaved by the king.²⁸⁰ After he discovered another bondsman speaking with his beloved, he killed his rival. Fearful of the consequences of his rash actions, he fled first to the indigenous community at Chambacú and then by boat to Bahayre, and, after another boat ride and foot journey, he made contact with those enslaved the farm of Piña, where he remained for more than fourteen months. After Francisco "the Hunchback" Criollo, who was enslaved on the neighboring farm of Juan de Sotomayor, notified de la Fuente that other Spanish in the area were going to capture him, he helped him escape to an indigenous community where he waited for men from the *palenque* Limón. Francisco Criollo contacted the *palenqueros*, who claimed that they were desperate for more soldiers and would treat de la Fuente well; they escorted him to the *palenque*, where he appears to have rapidly ascended to a position of power. When the Spanish later captured him in the wake of the Limoneses' attacks on neighboring farms, they seized him from Bañón's hut on

²⁸⁰ De la Fuente testified that he could not hope to avoid detection by the Spanish after he fled because his facial brands made his identity obvious. See AGI 234/7, Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco). Although in sixteenth-century Seville, slavemasters frequently branded the faces of those whom they owned, enslaved Moors more commonly suffered this violence than did enslaved Africans. See Ruth Pike, "Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century: Slaves and Freedmen," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 47, no. 3 (1967): 244-59. The branding marks on the faces of royal galley slaves, however, were distinctive and readily recognizable. See David Wheat, "Mediterranean Slavery, New World Transformations: Galley Slaves in the Spanish Caribbean, 1578-1635," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 31, no. 3 (2010): 327-44.

Ortencio's farm.²⁸¹ Not only did de la Fuente's personal relationships with these two men transcend the divide between enslaved and maroon, but Bañon and Criollo had enduring connections with others in the *palenque* as well.

Indeed, Francisco Criollo seems to have facilitated contact between many who wished to escape slavery or who had to flee suddenly to evade punishment, like de la Fuente, and the *palenqueros* of Limón. Juan de la Mar, born into captivity in Cartagena, testified that he worked for his master transporting maize by boat. One day, he found that he was lacking some of the maize that he was supposed to bring to the city, and he had no way of compensating his master for the loss. He told Francisco Criollo what had happened, and then, "out of fear of his [de la Mar's] master," Juan de la Mar fled with Francisco Criollo to the farm of his master, Juan de Sotomayor, where he stayed for "seven months without the said [D]on Juan seeing him." Then, five Limoneses – one of the Chale brothers (Domingo or Gonzalo), Simon, Juan Angola, Nicolas who was born in the *palenque*, and Tunba Criollo – came to Francisco Criollo on Sotomayor's farm to bring de la Mar to Limón, where he had lived for the two and half years preceding the Spanish attack and his capture. De la Mar claimed that "only the aforementioned Francisco Criollo the Hunchback and his friends and the Indians of [A]lferez Piña were there the two days when the maroons were on the farm of the aforementioned [D]on Juan and no one else," suggesting that, as in the case of Francisco de la Fuente, Criollo and Bañon were adept at hiding fugitives from their masters.²⁸² De la Mar confirms that Francisco Criollo and Francisco Bañon brought de la Fuente to the *palenque*, along with

²⁸¹ AGI 234/7, Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco).

²⁸² *Ibid.*, Juan de la Mar.

others, including “Juan Criollo[, who was enslaved by] Francisco Lopez Nieto[,] and also another black[,] Garcia Angola [who was enslaved by] Pedro Destrada.”²⁸³

Juan Criollo de la Margarita, whom de la Mar named, also escaped from the brutal treatment he received as a bondman on the farm of Francisco Lopez Nieto with the help of Francisco Criollo. He may have attempted to run before, as he testified that Lopez kept him in shackles. While still shackled, however, he managed to flee to Juan de Sotomayor’s farm, where he stayed in a hut belonging to the elderly Manuel Angola with Francisco Criollo, and

other Anchicos and a Malemba who was in the palenque of [P]olin [who] helped him remove the iron ring that he had on his foot[,] and as the blacks of the palenque of Limón [...] communicated with the people on the farm of the said [D]on Juan [de Sotomayor] and they saw the declarant [Juan Criollo de la Margarita] .. Francisco Criollo took him to a Criollo from there [the *palenque*] named Gonçalo Chale took him to the palenque of Limon.²⁸⁴

Francisco Criollo and Francisco Bañón’s regular roles in facilitating the flight of enslaved Cartageneros to *palenque* Limón demonstrate how they occupied vital positions in the political and social life of the community, even while living outside of it. Their knowledge about the activities of the *palenqueros* and their intimate relationship with its leadership over the course of many years meant that they were trusted members of the community. In fact, their remaining on the farms of Juan de Sotomayor and Andres Ortencio conferred distinct advantages to the *palenqueros* in terms of access to supplies – including gunpowder and bullets -- a never-ending stream of those wishing to join their

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Juan Criollo de la Margarita.

community, and also vital intelligence.²⁸⁵ The Limones leadership acknowledged the importance of Criollo and Bañon's relationship with the *palenque* in the wake of their attack on Diego Marquez's farm, when Queen Leonor mandated that the *palenqueros* share the pigs they captured with these two allies.²⁸⁶ Criollo, Bañon, and others like them cemented the solid links between the political life inside the *palenque* and the lived experiences of individual bondsmen and women in Cartagena and surrounding areas. The relationship of Criollo and Bañon to the *palenque* parallels the situation in eighteenth-century Angola, where bondsmen and women who had served Portuguese masters in Luanda "found a particular welcome among the lords of Kisama, who used them as spies who could return undetected to the city, dressed like its other African residents, and report back on Portuguese military capacities and intentions."²⁸⁷

Even as they remained enslaved, Francisco Criollo and Francisco Bañon appear to have represented and participated in one type of political response to their enslavement by regularly helping those who wished to flee bondage make contact with the *palenqueros* and by shaping both the discourse and population of the community itself. They seem to have advocated a more direct confrontation with the Spanish than the leadership in Limón prior to the 1620s supported. In a conversation with de la Fuente, they inquired why the people of Limón had been, "very quiet[,] and why didn't they go out and rob and kill people like Domingo Bioho and his soldiers did[?]" This inquiry came in the context of a warning about an impending attack by the Spanish on the

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco).

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 386.

palenque in the coming summer. Since an attack by the Spanish was inevitable, Criollo and Bañon argued, it made sense to gather as many people together as possible to inflict the greatest possible damage against them.²⁸⁸

Referencing Domingo Bioho as an idiom for a particular kind of political action drew upon the reputation of a leader whose fame was widespread in early seventeenth-century New Grenada. While the *palenque* Limón certainly existed while Bioho was at the height of his power, it is unclear the degree of contact that community members had with this other leader; none of the *palenqueros* themselves directly mention Bioho in their testimony, aside from de la Fuente recalling Francisco Criollo and Francisco Bañon's question. Nearly all of the Spanish who testified, however, compare the threat of Limón to that of Bioho, indicating that for many, Bioho may have served as a revolutionary archetype. Bioho, like Kafuxi Ambari, became a charismatic symbol of aggressive and effective martial resistance against slavery.

Whatever political divisions existed within Limón in the sixteenth century and the first few decades of the seventeenth century, it appears that those advocating a more conciliatory approach to the Spanish prevailed. However, in the 1620s and 1630s, the arrival of a new group of West Central Africans in the *palenque* and the rising prominence of a cohort of Malemba-identified men within Limón along with an influential group of Kisama-identified men both within and without the *palenque*, would push the community in an entirely new direction. It is certainly no coincidence that just as political shifts within West Central Africa dramatically reconfigured the social landscape of the region, as waves of fugitives to Kisama asserted their own notions of

²⁸⁸ AGI 234/7, Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco).

political legitimacy and the previously nomadic bands of Imbangala consolidated their power into the Kingdom of Kasanje, West Central Africans in the Americas, too, promoted political changes. The men and women driving these changes not only bridged the still-enslaved/self-liberated divide, but their political repertoires also stretched across the Atlantic and the boundaries between the world of the living and the world of the dead to place royal authority inside the body of a young woman born in Limón, Leonor Criolla. By examining the spiritual and military articulations of this new political orientation within the *palenque* and the critical role that Kisama-identified people played within this change, it is possible to trace how the language of identity served as an idiom political orientation in the early modern Africa and in African communities in the Americas.

Ritual, Politics, and Power in the *Palenque*

By the time of the 1634 trial of the captured Limoneses, there were clear divisions within the *palenque* between those who advocated more a more aggressive policy towards the Spanish -- and who controlled the ritual practices necessary to successfully sustain these attacks -- and those who advocated a more conciliatory approach. As we have already seen, such political divides transcended the physical boundaries of the *palenque*, and many who remained enslaved on farms surrounding Cartagena were central to the transformation of Limón's politics. Francisco Criollo and Francisco Bañon certainly advocated Bioho-like militarism. However, the attacks on the neighboring *palenque* Polín, the farms of Diego Márquez and Francisco Martin Garruchena, as well as on Chambacú, were prompted by the growing support both within the *palenque* and its extended community for increased aggression. These *palenqueros* and their allies used

politico-ritual identities to articulate their common membership in a broad community that connected bondsmen and women to maroons, Americans to Africans, and the living to the dead. Queen Leonor's rule was the nexus of this shift, and through her and those connected to her, it is possible to discern the contours of these changing identities.

Remarkably, Leonor herself was almost certainly born in the *palenque*. Sebastian Angola identifies Leonor's father, Domingo, as a "*criollo del palenque*." Leonor's sons Marcos and Cristóbal then represented at least the third generation of this family living within Limón.²⁸⁹ None of those who testify name Leonor's mother, while they identify Leonor's father, Domingo, as both Domingo Angola and Domingo Bondondo, a name that may link him to certain ritual powers.²⁹⁰ While Domingo's names suggest that he

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Juan de la Mar.

²⁹⁰ Juan Angola refers to Queen Leonor's father as both "Angola" and "Bondondo." Sebastian Angola also refers to him as "Bondondo." Francisca Criolla calls him Domingo Angola exclusively. *Ibid.*, Juan Angola, Sebastian Angola, and Francisco Criolla. I have been unable to conclusively trace the meaning of "Bondondo." Following traditional approaches to Diaspora scholarship would suggest that it is best to look for places in Angola named "Bondondo" and to connect Domingo to one of these locations. There are, in fact, a number of towns in Angola called Ndondo – including one in the present-day province of Kwanza Norte and one in present-day Uige -- that could easily suffice as putative points of origin for Domingo. However, this descriptor appears nowhere else in any of the documents connected to Limón, nor in any of other sources that scholars typically use to discern patterns relating to African identities in the Americas with which I am familiar, including Sandoval's writings, plantation records and the baptism, marriage, and death records kept by the Catholic church throughout the Iberian-colonized world. In the absence of other evidence that would link this surname to a place, I suggest that "Bondondo" might instead be a kind of nickname. If we understand Bondondo as bu(prefix)- ndondo, then Domingo's name could have a number of other, more individual meanings. Bondondo could simply have referred to the fact that Domingo was a particularly dark-skinned person, as one of the meanings of ndondo in Kimbundu is dark or very black. However, many of the other glosses of ndondo in Kimbundu are connected to the natural world: seasonally submersed land, a plant with black roots, or a small rat. It is possible that Domingo was called Bondondo because of a semantic link between watered land, plants, and particular kinds of medicine used by powerful *jimbanda* in Angola – as in the case of Kafuxi Ambari's ritual practitioner who attempted to end the drought in Kisama in 1588 -- and throughout its Diasporas. While spiritual power was not strictly hereditary, other *palenqueros* widely regarded Domingo's daughter Leonor as a powerful ritual practitioner, and it is probable that Domingo also had some type of spiritual power. Lastly, the small rat called ndondo is the subject of some important proverbs in Kimbundu focusing on the role of the vulnerable: "The 'Ndondo', who doesn't have a father or mother, doesn't think: let's make an alliance!" It is of course impossible to say conclusively which, if any, of these possible meanings the Bondondo attached to Domingo's name carried. The most compelling possibilities – that Bondondo meant either the small rat of the Kimbundu proverbs or the potential ritual connotations of plants and rain-covered land – invite

was born in Africa, and that his daughter was born in the Americas and probably within Limón, both participated actively in the ritual practices that emerge from the problematic transcripts of the trial as the decisive marker of their new, more radical political orientation.

While the Spanish were prone to conflating all African and indigenous practices as “witchcraft,” it is clear from the records that those within the extended community of Limón categorized ritual practice according to moral and political valence. Indeed, Limoneses articulated the emergent political tensions within their community through the

speculation as to the idioms through palenqueros and both their free and bonded contemporaries throughout the Americas understood and negotiated with the violence and rupture that were their constant companions. If Bondondo meant the rat, then Domingo may have adopted that surname (or others may have begun calling him by that label) as a sign that he acted on the lesson of the proverb. Though if he was indeed born in the palenque he may well have known one or both of his parents for much of his life, the palenqueros were well aware of the alienation from kin and community that formed the backdrop for their presence in the Americas. Unlike those in the palenque who preferred to accommodate the Spanish, Domingo Bondondo may well have believed that it was unwise to make alliances from a position of vulnerability. Conversely, if Bondondo was meant to convey an association with ritual power, and perhaps a rain-specific medicine, then Domingo’s presence in the palenque and his relationship to the queen point to ways in which the increasingly aggressive politics that Queen Leonor promoted and the ritual murders in which she participated may have been intended to heal some of the damage wrought by violence and slavery and restore fertility to the community. See João Albino Alves Manso, *Dicionário etimológico Bundo-Português: ilustrado com muitos milhares de exemplos, entre os quais 2.000 provérbios indígenas* (Lisbon: Tipografia Silvas, 1951), 873-4. For a discussion of Angolan healing and ritual practices in the Diaspora, see James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). Manso, *Dicionário etimológico Bundo-Português*, 874. McKnight, “Confronted Rituals.” Unfortunately, the meaning of Bondondo remains unclear, and I cannot discern why Juan Angola called Domingo both Angola and Bondondo while Sebastian Angola called him only Bondondo and Francisca Criolla called him only Angola. Of the three, Sebastian Angola spent the longest period in the *palenque* at six years, and knew Domingo from the time he was taken from Piña’s farm. It is entirely possible, and even probable, that he knew Domingo before his capture, as well. Juan Angola had spent less than a year inside the *palenque*, as he had only joined in the aftermath of the Limoneses’ destruction of Diego Marquez’s farm, where he had been enslaved. However, as we shall see, it is likely that he, too was familiar with many of residents of Limón, since the enslaved residents of Marquez’s farm had a particularly intimate relationship with Limón. Whether or not Juan Angola knew Domingo before his arrival in Limón, however, is impossible to say. Francisca Criolla, too, had been in Limón for only a short time since the *palenqueros* had taken her from the farm of Gomez Hernandez de Rivera, where she was enslaved. Since arriving in Limón, however, she had worked as a cook in the home of Magdalena, the *palenque*-born sister-in-law of Queen Leonor. As a member of the household of Leonor’s extended family, it is likely that she knew Domingo well, at least since her arrival in Limón. AGI 234/7, Gaspar Angola, Lázaro Angola, Jacinto Angola, Juan Angola, Juan de la Mar, Sebastian Angola, and Francisca Criolla.

idiom of witchcraft. Gaspar Angola identifies Leonor as a “*mohana*.” This word appears only one other time in all of the documents, when Juan de la Mar notes that Captain Francisco’s elderly, Angola-identified mother “was said [to be a] Mohongo.”²⁹¹ The Limoneses understood the practice of *mohans* and witches as occupying two separate moral and political universes. Queen Leonor and Francisco’s elderly mother were both *mohan* whose practices supported and were supported by the increasingly powerful constituency within Limón that advocated direct action against the Spanish. Because their ritual practices – however abhorrent they may have appeared to the Spanish – were perceived by the dominant segments of Limón as promoting the community’s welfare, community members described them with terminology that appears, at the very least, neutral. Given the growing tensions between different elements within Limón’s extended community, however, those in power within the community did not condone all ritual practices. Though each claimed to know about the event only second-hand, through rumours that they heard within the *palenque*, Juan Criollo de la Margarita and Lorenzo

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Gaspar Angola and Juan de la Mar. McKnight remarks that Gaspar Angola, “uses the Amerindian (Chibcha) word *mohana*, which means shaman, to name Queen Leonor, suggesting a transculturation that allows him to recognize a similarity between local political-spiritual practices and those he may have known in Angola.” Because Chibcha was spoken in the central highlands region surrounding present-day Bogotá, it is unlikely that those who lived near the Caribbean coast would have adopted a term from this language. The term does appear broadly in seventeenth-century Spanish legal documents from the Americas, meaning that it is possible that the Spanish simply adopted it from Chibcha or another indigenous language and applied it broadly. For example, in 1651, the Inquisitors making a case against Mateo Arará in Cartagena defined a *mohan* as “the same as a witch and the master of them, because they operate through words and herbs and a pact with the devil.” In other words, it is conceivable that *mohan* represents a Spanish conceptual category articulated through an indigenous word, rather than a meaningful category for the Limoneses. It is also possible, however, that the Spanish mis-appropriated an African term for a particular kind of ritual practitioner. In the transcription of Juan de la Mar’s testimony, *mohan* is spelled as *mohongo*, offering an insight into the potential etymology of the term. If we understand *mohongo* as *mu-hongo*, then *mohan* could be derived from a Kimbundu name for sacred objects used to bring wealth to its owners. See McKnight, “Confronted Rituals.” McKnight mistakenly attributes this use of *mohan* to Anton Angola, when it in fact comes from the testimony of Gaspar Angola. Pablo Gomez, personal communication, 7 May 2012. Inquisition case against Mateo Arará, cited in Luz Adriana May Restrepo, “Botánica y medicina africanas en la Nueva Granada, siglo XVII,” *Historia crítica* 19(2000): 37. Manso, *Dicionário etimológico Bundo-Português*, 1: 170.

Criollo both recounted a case in which Limoneses had killed an Arará-identified man.²⁹²

According to Juan Criollo de la Margarita, they burned him because “they said he was a witch [*bruxo*],” while Lorenzo Criollo recounted that “they burned after killing an

[A]rará man because he was an herbalist [*yerbatero*] and he wanted to kill the children.”

Juan says that the Arará man was with Tunba, another name for Francisco Criollo (not

“the Hunchback”, who was still enslaved, but another man by the same name), a

powerful leader within Limón, and that he was killed outside of Limón as those who

attacked Chambacú returned.²⁹³ However, from the sparse description of the events, it is

impossible to determine if this Arará is the same Arará, Francisco, who went back to the

farm of Piña where he had been enslaved and helped carry off Sebastian Angola, or if he

was indeed an outsider to the extended community of Limón.²⁹⁴ Knowing whether or not

this particular Arará-identified man had previously lived in Limón or not, however,

would not ultimately clarify his insider/outsider status. As Leonor became queen and the

palenqueros adopted a more aggressive stance towards their Spanish and indigenous

neighbors, they increasingly articulated political tensions in language that could be

construed as “ethnic.”²⁹⁵ However, those who used ostensibly “ethnic” language did so,

²⁹² Arará-identified people are normally associated with Allada, an inland kingdom in present-day Benin. Allada was a powerful kingdom in the region throughout the seventeenth century until it was defeated by Dahomey in 1724. See Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port', 1727-1892* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), 105.

²⁹³ AGI 234/7, Juan Criollo de la Margarita and Lorenzo Criollo. For Tunba, see Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco) and Juan Carabalí.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Sebastian Angola.

²⁹⁵ For an excellent discussion of community, morality, civic virtue, and ethnic identities, see Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, 2 vols. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1992).

as ever, as shorthand for political ideology and moral practice, commenting on the growing tensions within the community.

Juan de la Mar, the Cartagena-born man whom Francisco Criollo had helped escape slavery and join Limón, testified that in

truth [...] the criollos del palenque were peaceful when the declarant [Juan de la Mar] arrived and for a long time afterwards[,] without doing harm or ill to anyone[,] and the declarant swears that it went well until the Malembas of Juan Ramos and Sebastian Congo [their] companion who stirred them up and later others came from the palenque of Polín[,] and Marques's negro named Lasaro who came from the same [palenque] and those of Alonso Martin Hidalgo [...] who declared that [the palenqueros should no longer] work for [the Spanish] nor [trade for] blankets[,] they wanted to teach the criollos del palenque to weave.²⁹⁶

The antagonism here was not between so-called *criollos* and West Central African *bozales*. Indeed, the fact that Queen Leonor was herself a *criolla* who was probably born in the *palenque* and whom the Malembas ceremonially invested with the spiritual essence of a queen means that such terms have limited value in describing the social and political dynamics of Limón and African societies in the Americas during the seventeenth century. The discord in Limón stemmed not from different origins or essential cultural incompatibilities, but rather from antithetical political ideologies that were often articulated through terms of ideology. A fugitive *imbare* from Kisama and a citizen of Mbanza Kongo (the Kingdom of Kongo) might both be captured in war and shipped to the Americas from Luanda. In most records, that would render them both “Angola.” These two captives, perhaps shackled together below the decks of a slave ship, may have come to understand each other. They would likely not, however, share the same political

²⁹⁶ AGI 234/7, Juan de la Mar.

ideologies. While political tensions emerged from local circumstances, people understood them through the kaleidoscopic lenses of their prior political ideologies and knowledge.

In the situation Juan de la Mar describes, the Malemba-identified men, Sebastian Congo, and others from Polín advocated economic activities that would afford Limón greater autonomy from the Spanish. Weaving textiles would help free the Limoneses from the need to work for and trade with their neighbors – a political and economic policy reminiscent of the approach adopted some twenty years earlier by the *sobas* Kapakasa, Langere, and Kafuxi Ambari in Kisama, who refused to trade with the Portuguese.²⁹⁷ Given that the *palenqueros* had long worked for and traded with Garruchena and Marquez, two of the Spanish whose farms they ultimately attacked, this effort to increase local production was prudent. However, not all in Limón were receptive to the ideas of those from Polín, which was a far smaller *palenque* than that of Limón; by de la Fuente's account, only eight or ten men and perhaps four or five women lived there.²⁹⁸ That such a small group of people would have a distinct, separate identity from the larger *palenque* of Limón – at least until the Limoneses attacked Polín and compelled its residents to join them in subservient roles, performing agricultural labor and carting wood and water – suggests that there were important political differences between the two *palenques*.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ “Carta de André Velho da Fonseca a El-Rei,” 28 February 1612, in MMA VI: 65.

²⁹⁸ AGI 234/7, Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco).

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Sebastian Anchico and Domingo Anchico. However, Manuel Angola, Lorenzo Angola who had fled from Alonso Martin, and Lorenzo Angola and Anton Angola from Monopox, former residents of Polín did participate in the attack on Diego Marquez's farm. See *Ibid.*, Juan de la Mar. In the past it seems that the two communities had more congenial relationships despite any underlying political differences, as several

Continuing his description of the riven political climate within Limón, Juan de la Mar explains that

the men [who had been enslaved by] Alonso Martin [Hidalgo] and Lasaro [who had been enslaved by] Marques insisted that they [Limoneses] go to burn the farms of their masters and to rob them and to carry off some of the people [still enslaved there who were from] Angola[.] They asked why they didn't want to carry off the people from the rivers [of Guinea; Upper Guinea, and they responded] that they had bad intentions[.] And thus they went and did all of the evil and damages that they had said they were going to do, but the declarant [Juan de La Mar] doesn't know what they had attempted, because he lived apart from the Malembas and Angolas with the Criollo people who were in the Chale band.³⁰⁰

In the period leading up to the attacks on the neighboring farms and the *pueblo* Chambacú, there were apparently at least two distinct residential divisions within Limón, reflecting differing political ideologies, as demonstrated in Juan de la Mar's description. He lived with the "Chale band", ostensibly so named because it was headed by the leader Captain Diego Chale and/or his brother Gonzalo, who were palenque-born children of Pedro Biafara, a name that indicates origins in Upper Guinea.³⁰¹ While Diego Chale still exercised some degree of authority within Limón as a recognized captain, it is clear that this group was losing power relative to Queen Leonor and the Malemba-, Angola- and,

high-ranking members of Limón mention amicable interactions with Polín. It is impossible to say for certain what precisely prompted the Limoneses to attack their neighbors. Both of the Anchico men mention that the goal of the raid was to obtain either more women in general or a particular woman who was the object of Juan Criollo's desires, though Francisco de la Fuente also remarks that Francisco "the Hunchback" Criollo, Manuel Congo, and Jarangongo, all of whom were enslaved by Juan de Sotomayor, told the Limoneses that the people of Polín engaged in acts of anthropophagy. *Ibid.*, Sebastian Anchico, Domingo Anchico, Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco).

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Juan de la Mar.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Sebastian Angola. According to Sandoval, "Biafaras" came from the same region as Brans and Balantas in coast Upper Guinea (present-day Guinea-Biassau). Alonso de Sandoval, *De instauranda aethiopum salute: el mundo de la esclavitud negra en America* (Bogota: Biblioteca de la Presidencia de Colombia, 1956), 61. Just as with Leonor, the trial documents contain no information about Diego and Gozanlo's mother, nor any contextual clues that might help us unpack the meaning of "Chale."

ultimately, Kisama-identified constituency that had begun to change the orientation of the community, even opposing the likewise Malemba-, Angola-, and Congo-identified members of the neighboring community of Polín. They targeted the farms of their former masters not simply out of revenge, but also in order to free particular people to whom they felt connected and whose political inclinations supported the new authority within Limón.

These complex politics were far from natural outgrowths of straightforward antagonism between people from different regions; indeed, those who were gaining power in Limón were, like those in the *palenque* Polín whom they attacked, mostly of West Central African origins. It is important to remember that not only are names like Angola broad, but that they encompassed individuals whose presence in the Americas could be traced to conflicts with each other. There was no natural affinity among “Angolas” or “Criollos” any more than those from Upper Guinea enjoyed solidarity with each other and a political inclination towards accommodation with the Spanish ostensibly shared by the American- and palenque-born. Indeed, it is significant that the name Domingo Bioho itself -- which connoted the same type of aggressive political orientation that both the still-enslaved, American born Francisco Criollo and the West Central African-born maroon Malembas and Angolas advocated in Limón -- indicated origins in Upper Guinea. Upper Guineans and the American-born were not essential pacifists, nor were they inherent enemies of West Central Africans; the sixteenth-century Panamanian maroon leader Domingo Congo’s trusted captains, after all, were all Upper Guinea-identified. Instead, these claims reflected growing political divisions within Limón and the degree to which the exercise of particular forms of violence defined membership in

the community. The political ideologies articulated as Malemba and Kisama identities best illustrate the contours of these political divisions and their connections to seventeenth-century African fugitive modernities.

The Politics of Naming: Lemba, Kisama and Community in Limón

Just as so-called ethnicity cannot be deracinated from politics, neither can we understand the “politics of practical behavior” without considering “people’s strategies for using cultural practices to fulfill a variety of pressing needs in difficult and dangerous circumstances.”³⁰² Limoneses used terms like “Angola” and “rivers of Guinea” to articulate very concrete political differences, and they distinguished between various forms of ritual behavior not by their points of origin in Africa, but rather by their role in supporting the increasingly militarized agenda of the *palenque*. Differences in the choreography and provenance of ritual seem to have mattered far less than the relationship between its practitioner and the political will of the community at large. *Mohans* became queens and respected elders; *brujos* and *yerbateros* were killed and burned. Throughout the extensive trial documents, the term of identity that *palenqueros* most often evoked in connection with ritual practice was Malemba. But what did Malemba mean, how did it relate to Kisama, and what can these terms and the multiple and often contradictory ways in which they are deployed tell us about life in Limón and in the seventeenth-century worlds of Africa and the Americas?

³⁰² Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 7-8. For a provocative analysis of the relationship between the language of ethnicity, morality, and politics, see Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*.

Malemba-identified individuals appear fairly frequently in these documents, most often in conjunction with the radical political changes inside the *palenque*. Sebastián Angola argued that “the palenque residents were peaceful until Cristóbal Malemba, Francisco Malemba, Moriungo Malemba, Gaspar Malemba and Pedro Buila stirred up the queen with herbs.”³⁰³ According to *palenque* leader Juan de la Mar:

When they arrived, Juan Ramos's black men put some devil in Leonor's head, because from then on she began to command. And all obeyed her, even the captain and commander, because something happened to her in the head that made her walk as if crazy, falling down and hitting herself before she spoke. And when she came back to her senses, she made a thousand wild statements and in effect everyone feared her and obeyed her as queen.³⁰⁴

McKnight argues that the change in Limón’s political orientation followed the arrival of the Malemba men and their installation of potent spiritual forces inside of the American-born Leonor’s head – a contention well supported by the evidence. Our divergent interpretations of the same materials stem from an epistemological disagreement.

McKnight, like the majority of scholars of Africans in the Americas until very recently, interprets claims of identity as straightforward attributions of original African provenance. For McKnight, “Malemba”, like “Angola,” is a place. Citing Sandoval’s connection of “Malembas” from east of the Kwanza River to those who were often taken from Luanda, McKnight claims that it is more likely that those whom other *palenqueros* identify as “Malemba” (no self-identified Malemba testified) hailed from east of the Kwanza River Valley rather than the port north of the Congo River bearing that name.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ McKnight, "Confronted Rituals."

³⁰⁴ Juan de la Mar, translated in *ibid.*

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

However, it is unclear why we should assume the basis for African identity in the Americas is primarily or exclusively geographical. If McKnight favors Sandoval's explanation, then why would the other *palenqueros* identify these men specifically as "Malemba" rather than "Angola," as those who left from Luanda supposedly normally did? While it is certainly possible that these men came from either of the Malembas McKnight cites, the role of these particular Malemba-identified men in altering the ritual and political practices of Limón and in initiating a new form of leadership indicate that in Limón, Malemba, like Kisama, is yet another African identity better understood through the lens of (ritual-) politics rather than of origins; place and region provide the matrix within which these ritual and political practices were performed, contested, and re-shaped. Cristóbal, Francisco, Moriungo, and Gaspar, and the other Malembas of Limón may have been from nearly anywhere in West Central Africa. Their actions in New Grenada, however, suggest that they were familiar with *Lemba*.

Lemba -- "a medicine of the village"; 'a medicine of family and its perpetuation'; fertility medicine'; 'the sacred medicine of governing' [...]; 'the government of multiplication and reproduction' [...] and 'sacred medicine integrating people, villages, and markets'" -- proliferated throughout the northern Congo region from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries as elites across decentralized societies sought to mediate and manage the unprecedented moral crisis of increasing danger and social stratification ushered in by the trans-Atlantic slave trade.³⁰⁶ In John Janzen's seminal study of this widespread "drum of affliction," he found that *Lemba* not only transcended ethnic, linguistic, and political boundaries throughout Central Africa, but that it also crossed the

³⁰⁶ Janzen, *Lemba*, 3-4.

Atlantic, where he finds extensive evidence of the practice of *Lemba* ritual and the prominence of *Lemba* identities in both Haiti and Brazil. In Haitian Vodoun practitioners associate *Lemba* with particularly volatile spirits and, according to Jean Price-Mars, it is the only rite “celebrated secretly, deep in the forest, rather than in the village or town.”³⁰⁷ Janzen further identifies continuities between Price-Mars’s account of the role of pig blood and sacrifice in the Haitian *Lemba* rite with communal *Lemba* practices in the northernmost regions of its practice in the Congo.³⁰⁸ It is perhaps not coincidental, then, that of the many important articulations of Leonor’s new, Malemba-vested authority, one of the most prominent was an attack on Diego Márquez’s pig farm. As we have already seen, the *palenqueros* did not simply slaughter, smoke, and consume the pig meat within their own community, as we would expect from those whose material survival was always perilous, but they also shared some pig meat – and no other provisions that they captured --with Francisco Criollo and Francisco Bañon. As was the case in Congo, Haiti, and Brazil, the slaughtered pigs helped delineate the boundaries and nature of the ritual-political community of Limón.

As a rituo-political identity, however, Malemba was neither singular nor monolithic; Limoneses situated Malemba within a West Central African political context by connecting and conflating it time and time again with “Angola.” While those who testified named Perico Quissama in four separate but interrelated ways, his companion was always described simply as Malemba -- none offer any details about his background, his ties to any save Perico, or his fate. He remains virtually unfathomable save through

³⁰⁷ Cited in *ibid.*, 279.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 291.

his connection to the ritual politics of Malemba and his role in promoting targeted militarized activism within Limón. His constant association with Perico Quisama suggests that within the general regional category of Angola, those who identified as Malemba and Kisama occupied adjacent and overlapping spaces – both concretely, as evident in the testimony of Juan de la Mar, but also ideologically. Indeed, as in the case of the Limones leader Manuel, sometimes Kisamas *were* Malembas.

Nearly all of the *palenqueros* who testified named Manuel Quisama as one of the most important figures in Limón. He was instrumental in leading the attacks on the smaller *palenque* Polín and in bringing enslaved Africans from neighboring farms into Limón. Juan Criollo de la Margarita characterizes him as the overall, “leader of the people of Guinea [those born in Africa],” sharing authority with Queen Leonor, Francisco de la Fuente, Juan de la Mar, Captain Francisco Criollo, Tunba, and Lorenzo.³⁰⁹ Gaspar Angola describes him as one of two “executioners” in Limón.³¹⁰ It was likely in this capacity that he participated in the ritual killing of the Spanish overseer and the indigenous worker whom the *palenqueros* captured at Márquez’s farm.

The description of his participation in this ritual killing, however, reveals an important ambiguity in the trial records. In his account of these events, Juan Criollo de la Margarita describes Manuel Quisama as “a black Malemba that was called Quisama.”³¹¹ If Malemba indeed meant a place, rather than a political or ritual identity, however, how could a “Malemba” be “called Quisama”? Why was he called Quisama only when he

³⁰⁹ AGI 234/7 , Juan Criollo de la Margarita.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Gaspar Angola.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, Juan Criollo de la Margarita.

was acting in a capacity that foregrounded the social domestication of violence? In the context of late 1620s and early 1630s Limón and its extended community, *palenqueros* appear to have understood and articulated the political valences of Malemba through ritual idioms and military action. Not only did the Malembas in Limón dramatically alter the leadership structure of the community by ceremonially elevating Leonor to the level of a queen, but they also promoted both an increasingly assertive military approach to relations with neighboring communities – Spanish, indigenous, and African alike – and also an increasingly radical ritual articulation of these politics. By all accounts, Manuel participated actively in these practices, leading raids and serving in a ritually-sanctioned role as the community’s executioner. He was thus a Malemba in practice. While it is certainly possible that Manuel was “called Quisama” because he claimed origins between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, it is impossible to deracinate these putative geographic origins from the dynamic political climate of early seventeenth-century Kisama. Whether Manuel was “from” Kisama, or claimed Kisama, or had a Kisama identity imposed upon him by other members of the community, in the charged and increasingly West Central African-dominated world of Limón, being a “Malemba called Quisama” combined multiple strains of ritual power and the politics of resistance. The existence of such concatenated identities in a maroon community in the Americas reveals the durability of fugitive politics in parallel but distinct political spheres. In a post-Bioho period in Limón, “Malemba” and “Kisama” represented two distinct but synergistic political ideologies that those who advocated a more direct confrontation with the colonial state could mobilize.

In seventeenth-century Angola, Kisama and Imbangala exemplified two radically different forms of fugitive modernities, drawing on diametrically opposed ideologies of political legitimacy and social organization in response to the pervasive chaos and proliferation of violence that characterized the period. For those fortunate enough to survive the murder of their family members, the capture and sale of their children, and the destruction of their homes, fields, and sacred spaces by the Portuguese and their allies, fleeing to an ostensibly more secure space was often their only option.³¹² Those who crossed the Kwanza River from the north or the Longa River from the south, or the mountains from the east, joined a society whose political culture emphasized idioms of kinship and eschewed the institutionalization of violence, if not its necessary and highly effective practice in defense of the community. The thousands of vulnerable fugitives who comprised the backbone of seventeenth-century Kisama society valued martial skill to the extent that it kept them safe from outside predation, but they did not make it the defining idiom of social organization. Kafuxi Ambari – the only named “warrior” who persists in oral tradition and historical memory in the region – and the pseudonymous, eponymous “Kisamunu” figure, who is likely the same person – are remembered as dangerous, powerful outsiders whose martial skills helped forge Kisama society even as they defined these figures outside of its social boundaries.³¹³ By contrast, Imbangala society placed violence and warrior identities at the very core of their political and cultural life. By disavowing kinship and settled agrarian life as organizing idioms for

³¹² See Heintze, *Asilo ameaçado*.

³¹³ Heintze, "Historical Notes on the Kisama of Angola," 412-4, Ferreira, "La Kisama", 88-9, Brandão, "Diário da marcha do chefe do Concelho de Libolo, tenente Paes Brandão, a região de Quibala," 407-8.

society and instead promoting rootless, pillaging war camps, the Imbangala *kilombos* were lenses that refracted and concentrated the extremity of African life in the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.³¹⁴ Even after 1630, when the Imbangala formed the state of Kasanje, violence remained at the core of their social practices and slave raiding and trading the root of their economy.

In most respects, Limones society was far closer to the Kisama end of the spectrum of responses to violence and dislocation than the Imbangala pole. Nearly all who testified mentioned familial connections within the *palenque*, from Queen Leonor's relationship with her father Domingo, her husband Manuel, and her sons Marcos and Cristóbal to Pedro Biafara's sons Diego and Gonçalo Chale, to the extensive list of grandparents, parents, and children that Juan de la Mar offers.³¹⁵ Even the contours of who was "carried off" in the attacks against the Spanish farms seem to reveal the power of the very social relations and sense of kinship that the Imbangala rejected. Those who fled often returned to help free those still in bondage on the farms where they had served. For example, Lázaro Quisama, who had fled Márquez's pig farm for the *palenque* two years prior to the Spanish attacks, "asked...[the Queen] Leonor to go and burn the farm of his master because he treated his blacks badly and he had threatened the people of Limon."³¹⁶ After attacking and burning Márquez's farm, Lázaro Quisama and the others

³¹⁴ See Chapter 3.

³¹⁵ AGI 234/7, Juan de la Mar.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Jacinto Angola, Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco).

palenqueros brought several of those enslaved by Márquez back to Limón, among them Juan Quisama.³¹⁷

Like Perico and Manuel, Lázaro was yet another Kisama-identified man who is identified in multiple ways through the testimonies. Indeed, of all who mention Lázaro, it is only Jacinto Angola who calls him *Lázaro Quisama*, though he also calls *him Lázaro Angola*. Otherwise, Lázaro Angola (not the same person), Juan Carabali, Juan Angola, Catalina Angola, Juan de la Mar, and Sebastian Angola call him *Lázaro Angola* exclusively.³¹⁸ Like Lázaro, Jacinto Angola had been enslaved on the farm of Diego Marquez, and Jacinto clearly remembered Lázaro from their time together on Marquez's farm. He testifies that "it had been more than two years already since he [Lázaro] had left and went to the said *palenque*," and describes how Lázaro participated in carrying off he, Miguel Bran, Juan Carabali, Juan Quisama, and Gaspar Congo. It is within the context of this recollection that Jacinto calls him *Lázaro Quisama*. However, when reporting generally on Lázaro's participation in the raid on Marquez's farm, he refers to him as *Lázaro Angola*.³¹⁹ For Jacinto, then, the term *Quisama* appears to have carried a more familiar connotation than did *Angola*. He had lived and worked with Lázaro Quisama before he fled two years earlier, and this familiar man returned to bring not only him, but another Kisama-identified man (Juan) to freedom.

The kind of familiarity Jacinto's use of the appellation Kisama seems to connote in the case of Lázaro helps underscore Limón's political proximity to the range of

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Jacinto Angola.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Jacinto Angola, Lázaro Angola, Juan Carabali, Juan Angola, Catalina Angola, Juan de la Mar, and Sebastian Angola.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Jacinto Angola.

fugitive modernities developing at that time in Kisama and distance from Imbangala fugitive modernities. This similarity reveals less about some ostensible “retention” of essential ethnic characteristics between Africa and the Americas and more about the kinds of practices conducive to the establishment of socially and politically sustainable communities. In critiquing the continuing insistence of scholars writing about Palmares and other maroon societies in Brazil and the Americas in general of regarding Imbangala *kilombos* as their antecedents, Thornton writes that the states of Kongo, Ndongo and Matamba “or smaller political entities in the [West Central African] region” were far more likely models.³²⁰ Indeed, the fugitive nature of Kisama politics makes it a prime candidate for a model of political practice, ideology, and culture in maroon communities throughout the Americas. Accounts from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, from North America through the Caribbean and Latin America, concur: when and wherever possible, fugitives endeavoured to establish settled, agrarian communities and family systems – practices that were anathema to the Imbangala social model. However, just as I argue that in spite of Kisama’s static reputation and representation across five centuries, the nature and meaning of Kisama identity was always changing – as one might expect from an endemically non-state society whose survival was predicated on attracting and incorporating ever-expanding numbers of diverse fugitives – so, too was Limones politics always in flux.

The convergence of radical shifts in the political orientation of communities both between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers and outside of Cartagena in the late 1620s and early 1630s, however, suggests that this was a resonant moment of political

³²⁰ Thornton, “Angola e as origens de Palmares,” 55.

transformation in the non-state societies of West Central Africa and in Limón. While the experiences of violence, rupture, and dislocation were common in seventeenth-century Africa and the Americas, the local histories of maroonage and the different African intellectual, political, social and cultural strands woven through life in Limón ensured that those living within and connected to its community – however much they drew on the reputation of Kisama or actual experience within it – created a distinct, though related, fugitive modernity. Influenced by earlier maroon societies in the region such as those led by Domingo Congo and Domingo Bioho, as well as by the political cultures of Upper Guinea, Kongo and Ndongo, when Limoneses shifted their political orientation, they did so through the idiom of sacred royalty. By placing a particular African spirit into Leonor’s head, the Malemba-identified men ensured that political authority in Limón would remain intimately connected to particular African ritual and spiritual discourses designed to abrogate the social and moral ills of slavery.

Still, it is only from the trial of the Limoneses that we can hear any form, however distorted, of direct testimony from a non-elite, Kisama-identified actor in the seventeenth century. So, we return finally to *Perico Quisama*, who is identified as *Pedro Angola* in his own testimony. Just as was the case with Francisco Bañon and Francisco Criollo, Perico’s testimony reveals that when he and Malemba brought news of the impending attack to Limón, they were not entering a community of strangers. Perico and other bondsmen and women knew many of the Limoneses because they worked on their master Garruchena’s farm. In exchange for general agricultural labor and help with the maize harvest in particular, Garruchena gave the maroons “salt and tobacco and catiba de

mangle to cure those who had sores.”³²¹ In direct contradiction to every other deponent’s account of the raid on Garruchena’s farm and Chambacú – in which Perico and Malemba hasten to Limón to bring news of an impending attack – Perico claims in his own testimony that he ran to Limón in an attempt to recover the “two [pairs of] pants and three head cloths and one cloth that is worn on the belly and three bars of soap” that the previously amicable *palenqueros* supposedly stole from his hut. According to Perico, once he arrived in Limón, he complained to Captain Francisco about the theft and was kept waiting for several days. Juan de la Mar asked him if he wished to return to his master, and he said yes. De la Mar responded that they would not allow him to return, since he “already knew the way to the palenque and would teach it to the whites.” After three days, Queen Leonor and other soldiers told Perico that they were “angry with his master Francisco Martin [Garruchena] because they had come to work on his farm and brought sticks to make his huts[, and] he had sent them a box of salt filled with straw.”³²² This is not the only time that the box of salt filled with straw that Perico represents as the source of the *palenqueros*’s anger towards Garruchena appears in the testimonies, however. According to Lázaro Angola, when the Captain Francisco and others returned to Limón bearing a box of salt from Garruchena, Perico, who had just arrived with his

³²¹ AGI 234/7, Pedro Angola. *Catiba de mangle*, or *cativo de mangle*, according to the 1869 *American Journal of Pharmacy*, “is used in this country [Panamá] for catching flies...It is also used as a coating for the bottoms of canoes and small vessels, being boiled with quick lime and applied warm.” John M. Maisch, “On Some Panama Drugs,” *American Journal of Pharmacy* 61, no. 18 (1869): 236-7. Though a wild-gathered product, it was apparently valuable enough for Spanish landowners in the early seventeenth century to keep a supply and for *palenqueros* to work in exchange for it, as it apparently was an effective balm for troubling and infected sores.

³²² AGI 234/7, Pedro Angola.

news of the impending assault on Limón, told the *palenqueros* that “in the said salt there were lethal herbs and no one [should] eat it.”³²³

The key to understanding Perico’s multiple identifications and the elaborate and apparent lie that he told during his trial may come from a careful consideration of the role of this box of salt. Of course, by describing himself as the dual victim of theft and essential kidnapping, Perico sought to portray himself as less culpable in the eyes of the Spanish trying him, and in response to the consistent testimony by all others that he and Malemba had instigated the attack on Garruchena’s farm; he did not succeed, and the Spanish indeed executed him. When Perico characterizes the outrage in Limón over the box of salt as resulting from Garruchena’s deception of those who had performed hard labor on his farm and expected compensation – valuable salt, rather than worthless straw – he depicts a world populated by those driven by economic self-interest. Especially given the role of rock salt, and rock salt from Ndemba in Kisama in particular, as currency in the regional economies of West Central Africa, Perico’s claim has *prima facie* credibility. Salt was just as valuable for Africans, indigenous people, and Europeans alike in seventeenth-century New Grenada and the Caribbean world, where colonial powers fought to control salt production on various islands and contraband in salt trading led to repeated, unsuccessful attempts by the Spanish crown to establish monopolistic control over its production and trade.³²⁴ However, Lázaro Angola’s account moves the box of salt from the realm of the purely economic to that of the rituo-

³²³ *Ibid.*, Lázaro Angola.

³²⁴ See José María Oliva Melgar and Carlos Martínez Shaw, *Sistema atlántico español : siglos XVII-XIX* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, Ediciones de Historia, 2005).

political. Lázaro portrays Perico as saving the leadership of Limón from assassination through the consumption of poisoned salt.

Throughout Africa and the Americas, Africans articulated many of their critiques of the direct and indirect violence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade through discourses about the powers of salt. In West Central Africa, salt not only carried economic value, but it also has the capacity to protect from malevolent witchcraft. The Haitian zombi – a chilling figure whose existence as a dead captive labourer whose soul is controlled by a powerful priest – “if they happen to taste salt, they drop their crushed attitude, raise their heads and look their tormentor in the eyes. They even recover the strength to escape.”³²⁵ Whereas salt is a liberatory force in Haiti, in Jamaica, those who consume salt in life were unable to return to Africa after death; for this reason, Rastafarians traditionally abstain from cooking with it.³²⁶ When Perico Quisama warned the Limoneses about the peril of consuming the adulterated salt, he evoked powerful discourses about malevolent power and liberty. While such beliefs about salt were indeed widespread throughout Africa and the Americas, Perico’s role in revealing that what could be powerful medicine or wealth in one context had been transformed into an instrument of destruction by Garruchena lends further credence to his association with Kisama. The lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers were such an appealing refuge for vulnerable people from throughout West Central Africa because of the reputation of its leaders for martial and spiritual efficacy and staunch defence of fugitives; Kisama’s appeal to powerful outsiders, by

³²⁵ Alfred Métraux, "The Concept of Soul in Haitian Vodou," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (1946): 87.

³²⁶ Maureen Warner-Lewis, "African Continuities in the Rastafari Belief System," *Caribbean Quarterly* 39, no. 3-4 (1993): 115.

contrast, was linked primarily to the allure of the rock salt mines of Ndemba. By warning the Limoneses that the salt was adulterated, Perico not only saved the *palenqueros* from poisoning, but also evoked a prescient warning about the perils of resource wealth. In his actions in New Grenada, Perico travelled a parallel path to many in Kisama, like the *imbare* who fled from violence, brought important knowledge to the communities between the Kwanza and Longa River, and were then instrumental in helping fight their former masters.

The social and political underpinnings of Perico's ascribed identity seem the diametric opposite of Lázaro's. In Lázaro's case, he is called Kisama by the deponent who knew him best, who remembered him from their shared experience of enslavement on Diego Marquez's farm, and who owed his fleeting freedom to him. In Perico's case, however, it is only Sargento Miguel Auntunes, Captain Francisco Julian de Pina, and Juan Ortiz -- the Spanish officials responsible for his capture -- who call him *Perico Quisama*. According to Piña, when he captured Perico in the *palenque*, Perico told him that he had fled to Limón and reported that his master had received money to pay the people of Chambacú to kill them. When Piña asked him "why he said this lie[, he] responded that the devil had deceived him and that what he said happened and that the majority of the blacks that he [Piña] caught said that they were determined to burn all of the farms in [the mountains of] Maria."³²⁷

Perico directly rebuked Piña's accusation that he lied; more importantly, however, he linked the "devil [who] had deceived him" to the political practices and resistance of those whom the Spanish captured and, by implication, the many more whom they did not.

³²⁷ AGI 234/7, Francisco Julián de Piña.

Was Perico's "devil" the same as that which the Malemba-identified men has put in Leonor's head to make her queen? We can only speculate that this might be the case. However, regardless of whether Perico meant to describe the same spirit or a distinct one, the meaning was the same. In the words of Gaspar Angola, who had fled from captivity on the farm of Alonso Martin Hidalgo because the overseer Gregorio Lonva repeatedly beat and whipped him, and threatened him with castration: the attacks on the Spanish farms and the *pueblo* and the ritual sacrifice of captives was intended as "a warning from Guinea."³²⁸

This warning from Guinea was articulated less through speech and more through the actions of those in the extended community of Limón, who responded to their individual and collective experiences of violence and alienation by forming their own viable society. Their close relationships with those still enslaved ensured the *palenqueros* access not only valuable resources and intelligence, but it also helped combat the threat of imminent social death that slavery represented. Clearly, the Limoneses who lived, worked, and raised multiple generations of children in the mountains outside of Cartagena were far from socially dead; Francisco Bañón and Francisco Criollo, though still enslaved, were equally socially alive. Limón was riven by political and social cleavages, often articulated through terms that scholars understand as ethnic. To the Limoneses, however, it seems more likely that this was a language of politics, not of apolitical provenance. Domingo Bioho represented a particular kind of militarism diametrically opposed to the ostensible passivity of those in the Chale band with whom he shared a region of provenance in Upper Guinea. Those who identified as

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, Gaspar Angola and Francisco de la Fuente (el Morisco).

Malemba did so through their use of ritual to advance a particular vision for Limón. Fragments of ideologies that can be connected to early seventeenth-century Kisama politics appear in the testimonies of the Limoneses, who strove to use martial and spiritual practices to maintain the integrity of a community where idioms of kinship prevailed. This combination of practices and radical strategies for incorporating outsiders into the fabric of a settled community nevertheless forced to survive through aggressive military actions bears more than a coincidental similarity to parallel processes in Kisama during the same period.

Thus, the late 1620s and early 1630s indeed constituted an important historical node in the practice of fugitive modernities on either side of the Atlantic. If the purpose of fugitive politics as practiced in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers was to help alienated, dispossessed individual re-establish a meaningful form of personhood through forging stable communities and re-drawing the structures of kinship, then the multi-generational family structures within Limón attest to the resonant power of such practices. In the next chapter, I will consider the relationship of the fugitive ideology forged in Kisama to the most famous of all maroon communities, the *quilombo* of Palmares in seventeenth-century Brazil, and to the nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century discourses of nationalism in both Angola and Brazil.

Chapter Five: The Kisama Meme: Fugitive Angola and the Politics of Angola and Brazil

Following the Brazilian declaration of independence in 1822, the Portuguese became obsessed with a putative conspiracy amongst elite slave traders in Benguela to throw off the Portuguese imperial yoke and join Brazil. Much has been written about the trans-national, almost preternaturally corporate nature of the slave traders and their connection to early nationalist movements, and many of the most prominent slave merchants in the nineteenth-century South Atlantic, like Ana Joaquina dos Santos e Silva, had property and residences in both Angola and Brazil.³²⁹ However, it was not only or even primarily the affinities of urban elites with Brazilian independence that concerned Portuguese colonial officials in Angola. A mere two years after Brazilian independence, the Portuguese governor of Angola, Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco, reported that, “[a]lready Your Majesty knows that seditious communication have passed to Benguella, and Angola [Luanda], and that the Expeditionary Battalion of Portugal has been expelled by different Forts, and Camps, and that the residents of the most important areas of this City [Luanda] are in a state of opposition to the Government.” After complaining at length about the deterioration of many of the physical features and social institutions of Portuguese colonialism throughout Angola, however, Castelo Branco did not focus on the

³²⁹ See, for example, Miller, *Way of Death*, José C. Curto, *Enslaving Spirits: The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol Trade at Luanda and its Hinterland, c. 1550-1830* (Boston: Brill, 2004), Roquinaldo Ferreira, "Atlantic Microhistories: Mobility, Personal Ties, and Slaving in the Black Atlantic World (Angola and Brazil)," in *Cultures of the Lusophone Black Atlantic*, ed. Nancy Priscilla Naro, Dave Treece, and Roger Sansi-Roca (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), Mariana P. Candido, "Merchants and the Business of the Slave Trade at Benguela, 1750-1850," *African Economic History*, no. 35 (2007): 1-30, Jacopo Corrado, *The Creole Elite and the Rise of Angolan Protonationalism: 1870-1920* (Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2008).

potential danger of the circulation of “seditious communications” amongst the literate and literary elite in Luanda and Benguela. Instead, he wrote:

With these examples from the Authorities you can well see what must become the dominant principals of the morality of a people comprised for the most part of factionalists, and slaves, and anarchy, and the art that is needed to contain them, when already the ashes of revolutionary fires burn hot. The subversive ideas of Demagogues have arrived from all parts of the world influencing those individuals whom they inspire. In this region, this has been a time of the most disobedience, and the most force by the vassal Sovas of Dembos to resist the violence of the [Portuguese local troops], and even the blacks under Government rule have less respect, and pay less attention to our Authorities because they can sense the weakening of Royal Power, like that of the Governors, because of the revolution [Brazilian independence]. *It is believed that principally the Quissama people of the left bank of the Quanza River are rising up, those who because of their proximity create the most inconvenience for this Government, because there with the greatest ease they collect the fugitive slaves, and because they persist in not permitting communication with Novo Redondo.*³³⁰

Surely Castelo Branco was aware that those living south of the Kwanza River had harbored fugitives since the early seventeenth century, and that the fractured, intractable political practices of Kisama had long been a barrier to communication between Luanda and other parts of Angola. Indeed, Kisama’s resistance to the Portuguese was largely responsible for the near autonomy of Benguela merchants from Portuguese colonial rule from Luanda from the early seventeenth century well into the twentieth century.³³¹

Because of the strong Benguela current, it was far easier and faster for ships to travel from Portugal or Brazil first to Benguela, and then Luanda; the journey from Luanda to

³³⁰ AHNA, Ofícios para o reino, caixa 11, n. 14, f. 19, Nicolau Abreu de Castelo Branco, 4 September 1824. Emphasis my own.

³³¹ Compare Castelo Branco’s complaints to those of Portuguese governor in Luanda Sousa Chicorro in 1655, as discussed in Chapter 3. See Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino, “Exame das cartas do Governador de Angola acerca do estado da Provincia, guerra da Quiçama e do Congo,” 13 July 1655, in *MMA XI*: 498-9. See also Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*.

Benguela by sea was difficult, and yet it was the only workable route for Portuguese traders, given the danger of attempting a passage through Kisama.³³² Beyond the standard ways in which colonial officials in Africa and the Americas forever attributed any kind of resistance to the malign influence of dangerous “outsiders,” how can we understand Castelo Branco’s perception that Kisama’s enduring resistance was the most fervent example of revolutionary ideology? Furthermore, if this connection between Brazilian and Angolan nationalism and the practical politics of rebelliousness in Kisama was clear to a contemporary observer, why then has Kisama remained largely absent from nationalist narratives on both sides of the Atlantic?

I argue that because Kisama’s politics and fugitive modernities are inherently unfathomable within a statist ontology, centralized states as diverse as the seventeenth-century Kingdoms of Ndongo and Matamba, the Portuguese imperial state in both Angola and Brazil from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, imperial Brazil, republican Portugal, and finally independent Angola have been unable to fold Kisama’s complicated history into a teleology of state. If the motto of modern nation-states is, “Out of many, one people,” then Kisama’s fragmentary political culture represents a threat to this aspiration and illusion. In Angola, contradictory aspects of Kisama’s history have been silenced and suppressed both from within and from without. For a society forged by thousands of fugitives and shaped in fundamentally unequal ways, historical memories that emphasize the fragmented and contested aspects of history – like social inequality, or internal conflict – after generations give way to more unifying mytho-politics. From the outside, Kisama’s existence and enduring defiance of state

³³² Candido, “Enslaving Frontiers”, 4, 23, Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 35.

power disrupts the fundamental logic through which statist thinkers organize the world. Thus, both those within and without Kisama had their own logics for developing and supporting the existence of what I call *the Kisama meme*: a remarkably abiding discourse across time and space in which Kisama is characterized through 1) the importance and universal desirability of the rock salt mines at Ndemba; 2) the fundamentally obdurate and martially and spiritually potent nature of its inhabitants, especially the *soba* Kafuxi Ambari; and 3) the dedication with which the people of Kisama welcomed maroons and fugitives, harbored them, and fought to defend them.

In this chapter, I trace the deployment of the Kisama meme across four centuries and two continents, investigating why a discourse that was already firmly established by the early seventeenth century persisted through so many changes locally in Kisama, regionally in Angola, and globally as well. Kisama's first appearance in the written record, in King Mbemba a Nzinga of the Kongo's 1535 letter to the pope, is a tacit evocation of the importance of the salt mines of Ndemba.³³³ After Paulo Dias de Novais formally began colonizing Angola (the lands south of the Kingdom of Kongo) in 1575, the salt of Ndemba gained even greater importance, as the Portuguese recognized its value for purchasing bondsmen and women and provisions throughout the region. In the 1590s, after the Portuguese believed that they controlled Ndemba, they sought to defeat the most powerful *soba* in the region at the time, Kafuxi Ambari. Not only did Kafuxi Ambari rout the Portuguese and their allies, but he also briefly joined forces with the *soba* of Ndemba to reclaim control of the salt mines. This defeat of the Portuguese in 1594 formed the basis for Kisama's reputation for the next four centuries. Kafuxi

³³³ "Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo III," 21 February 1535, cited in *MMA* II: 38.

Ambari's victory inspired other leaders in the region to likewise rebel, and also encouraged those fleeing from captivity and violence to seek refuge in Kisama. By the second decade of the seventeenth century, fugitives from throughout the region were living in the lands of Kafuxi Ambari and other *sobas* in Kisama.

Thus, all three elements of the Kisama meme had developed by the early seventeenth century. However, even before the transformative war of 1655-1658, this meme belied the tensions within and between communities in Kisama and the changes in each over time. For example, *soba* Kamona Kasonga, father-in-law and oracle to the King of Ndongo, became a vassal of Paulo Dias de Novais in 1582, largely as a strategy to secure Portuguese aid in his enduring conflicts with a neighboring *soba* in Kisama, Muxima. However, only nine years later, Kamona Kasonga again attacked the Portuguese. *Soba* Langere, who in 1601 allied with the Imbangala Kalandula's band against Kafuxi Ambari, became a staunch ally of Kafuxi Ambari by 1612. By the early 1630s, there were multiple pretender *soba* Langere, and the succession struggles within his land illustrate the complex political changes wrought by fugitives in Kisama. During the war of 1655-1658, even the redoubtable Kafuxi Ambari allied with the Imbangala, and, by the end of the seventeenth century, Kafuxi Ambari petitioned the Portuguese governor to become his vassal.³³⁴

It was not only European missionaries, travelers, ethnographers and colonial officials and ethno-nationalist activists in Angola who relied on the Kisama meme and the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century actions of Kafuxi Ambari to occupy a particular political and cultural niche, however. This meme and Kafuxi Ambari also travelled

³³⁴ See Chapters 2 and 3 and Heintze, "Historical Notes on the Kisama of Angola," 411.

across the Atlantic. In particular, the Kisama meme has woven itself subtly into the scholarly and popular literature on Palmares, a large *quilombo* community comprised of several settlements on the border of present-day Alagoas and Pernambuco that endured for the entire seventeenth century and beyond.³³⁵ After discussing the development of the Kisama meme in Angola over the past four centuries and the complex relationship between local events, political imperatives, and historical memories, I turn to a discussion of the role of the Kisama meme in the scholarship on Palmares. As I argued in the previous chapter, the Atlantic Ocean and the profound dislocation of the Middle Passage and of enslavement in the Americas was no barrier to the continuation of a fugitive politics already deeply rooted in multiple experiences of rupture in Africa. For seventeenth-century West Central Africans, Kisama was not only a place. More significantly, it was a set of political practices and ideologies rooted in the fugitive politics that emerged in the late 1620s and 1630s. Thus, rather than viewing Kisama as a putative point of origin for the people of Palmares, I instead regard it as a source of political logics. By re-interrogating the political structure of Palmares from the standpoint of Kisama, I am able to offer a new perspective of the political ideologies that operated within this famous maroon community.

The Kisama Meme and the Long Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

In the eighteenth century and nineteenth centuries, Kafuxi Ambari – the central figure around whom all elements of the Kisama meme cohere – nearly disappears from

³³⁵ The scholarship on Palmares is vast and continues to expand. For an overview of the scholarly literature, see Robert Nelson Anderson, "The Quilombo of Palmares: A New Overview of a Maroon State in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 03 (1996): 545-66, Pedro Paulo Funari and Aline Vieira de Carvalho, *Palmares, ontem e hoje* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2005).

the archival record. His absence from the formulaic complaints about the “rebellious *sobas* of Kisama” in which he featured so regularly throughout the seventeenth century is particularly noticeable. For example, a 1735 letter to the Portuguese governor of Angola mentions the ongoing riverine raids on Portuguese traffic on the Kwanza River as well as the perpetual issue of fugitives; eleven years later, another letter from the interior to Luanda discusses the rebellions of *sobas* Kizua and Muxima. Neither of the authors of these reports mentions Kafuxi Ambari. In 1762, the Portuguese governor António de Vasconcellos complained of nine *sobas* of Kisama who notoriously harbored fugitives from slavery; Kafuxi Ambari was not among them.³³⁶ When Kafuxi Ambari does appear in eighteenth-century Portuguese materials, he no longer the same leader whom Cadornega vividly described as the “powerful sova *Cafuchi Camabri*, whose lands stretch from the hinterlands to the sea, with abundant land and many people, who judge him to be the most powerful, as the king of this province, after the kings of Angola, to here, [and] whom all the sovas recognize and to whom they pay tribute as their king and lord.”³³⁷ Instead, he is but one of many *sobas* in the governor’s list of mid-eighteenth-century rulers whose sovereignty had been abrogated by the Imbangala state of Kasanje.³³⁸

Kafuxi Ambari’s inclusion in this eighteenth-century account of the role of the Kingdom of Kasanje in reconfiguring the political geography of the Angolan interior is

³³⁶ “Carta régia para o governador geral de Angola,” 23 November 1735. AHU, cod. 546, fls. 92v-93, “Carta régia para o governador geral de Angola,” 27 November 1746. AHU, cod. 546, fl. 153, “Carta de João Jacques de Magalhães a el rei,” AHU, cx. 35, doc. 125, 3 August 1747. “Carta de António de Vasconcelhos a el rei,” AHU, cx. 45, d 44, 12 June 1762.

³³⁷ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, III: 248-9.

³³⁸ “Carta de António Álvares da Cunha a el rei,” AHU cx. 39, doc. 89, 4 December 1754.

the key to understanding why the Kisama meme developed as it did. In the same critical moment in the 1620s and 1630s, when the changing political culture between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers shaped maroon communities in both Angola and the Americas, another community of fugitive political practices in Angola – that of the Imbangala – was likewise shifting. During this period, groups of Imbangala renounced their nomadic ways and founded the Kingdom of Kasanje in the Kwango River valley. Just like the Imbangala bands, this polity remained dependent on controlling the acquisition and sale of captives to the Portuguese for its survival; indeed, after the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the mid-nineteenth century, Kasanje collapsed. However, Kasanje's consolidation in the 1620s and 1630s meant that for those seeking to avoid the predations of state, one major alternative had transformed itself into a threat.³³⁹

The eighteenth century, according to Miller, was the classical age of power and political stability in Kasanje.³⁴⁰ The rulers of Kasanje, who had diplomatic relations with the Portuguese, presided over a number of *feiras*, or fairs, where merchants from the coast exchanged goods for the men, women, and children whom the state had procured through raiding.³⁴¹ Kasanje's power depended not only on their ability to militarily subdue their enemies, but also on the regional reputation of the efficacy of the *ndua* judgment. Normally, the king of Kasanje officiated at an *ndua* ceremony, though an *nganga* could also preside. The officiant would prepare a poisonous beverage from plant roots, which the litigants would each drink in equal measures. The innocent party would

³³⁹ See Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, Miller, *Way of Death*.

³⁴⁰ Joseph C. Miller, "Kings, Lists, and History in Kasanje," *History in Africa* 6(1979): 53.

³⁴¹ Daniel Barros Domingues da Silva, "Crossroads: Slave Frontiers of Angola, c. 1780-1867" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2011), 81.

vomit the poison first, and the guilty part would be forced to drink increasingly poisonous substances.³⁴² Not only was *ndua* a means for reinforcing power within the state of Kasanje, but, according to one mid-eighteenth-century Portuguese traveler, *ndua* had become the most prominent judicial process for those, “from the Libolo nation, from Quissama, from the Dembos, and from the kingdoms of Congo.”³⁴³

Kasanje’s virtual monopoly on martial and spiritual power in eighteenth-century Angola did indeed re-configure the political geography of the region. In the mid-seventeenth century, according to Cavazzi, *jinganga* controlling *navieza* and *cassumba* medicines in Kisama and Libollo controlled important healing medicine sought by those from across the region.³⁴⁴ During the same period, Kafuxi Ambari was renowned for his ability to command allegiance not only through his martial skill, but also through his ability to strike down enemies, African and Portuguese alike, with illness.³⁴⁵ While it is unclear how Kafuxi Ambari’s particular powers were connected to those of *navieza* and *cassumba*, if at all, these examples of regionally-eminent healing medicines centered in seventeenth-century Kisama illustrate the semantic contours of political power during that period. One hundred years later, however, these more diffuse spiritual powers relating to healing and illness had waned in importance throughout the region in comparison to the *ndua* oracle and its relationship to the centralized slaving state of

³⁴² “Memória dos Usos, Ritos e Costumes dos Sobas e mais Povos desta Jurisdição” in 1820, IHGB, lata 347, pasta 30, cited in Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 197.

³⁴³ Evá Sebestyén, Jan Vansina, and Manoel Correia Leitão, "Angola's Eastern Hinterland in the 1750s: A Text Edition and Translation of Manoel Correia Leitão's 'Voyage' (1755-1756)," *History in Africa* 26(1999): 339.

³⁴⁴ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, II: 210.

³⁴⁵ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, I: 70.

Kasanje.³⁴⁶ While Kisama remained vitally important as a refuge for those fleeing the ever-mounting threats from state-sponsored violence, its power declined in the eighteenth century. Though *sobas* in Kisama continued to resist the Portuguese and their newly-centralized neighbors in Kasanje, the political currents in eighteenth-century Kisama were far more inwardly focused. Thus, while Kafuxi Ambari was still a *soba* in southern Kisama, he did not represent the same kind of threat to the Portuguese, who were content with the efficiency of Kasanje in producing captives for sale.

Thus, the only time that eighteenth-century observers render Kafuxi Ambari as a powerful, feared leader is when they are evoking the seventeenth-century Kafuxi Ambari, rather than their contemporary. Other than the Portuguese governor who listed Kafuxi Ambari among other *sobas* controlled by Kasanje, Portuguese Colonel Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda's "Notícias das regiões e povos de Quisama e do Mussulo, 1798" is the only eighteenth-century source I have been able to locate who even mentions Kafuxi Ambari. Lacerda describes

the great population of Cafuxe cambari, where there is a tradition, that in ancient times an Army of Portuguese were lost there in a Trap that this Barbarian set, in which all died including the leader [of the Portuguese]. All of these [*sobas* of Kisama] that I have named, and even this Cafuxe, were warriors, and were destroyed by an army under my command in 1784.³⁴⁷

Though Lacerda claims to have definitely subjugated Kafuxi Ambari and all of the other *sobas* of Kisama – a claim that appears as false as those of Manuel Cerveira Pereira and Luís Martins de Sousa Chicorro in the seventeenth century, given that Kisama continued

³⁴⁶ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, II: 210.

³⁴⁷ Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda, "Notícias das regiões e povos de Quisama e do Mussulo, 1798," *Annaes Marítimos e Coloniaes* 6, no. 4 (1846): 126.

to function as a haven for fugitives and as a political space independent of Portuguese or other state rule -- he does not connect the late-eighteenth-century Kafuxi Ambari against whom he supposedly fought to any contemporary actions. Rather, he prides himself on his 1784 defeat of the Kafuxi Ambari of 1594 legend. Similarly, José Ignacio de Sousa Andrade's 1885 transcription of an account of the 1594 battle to substantiate his claim "that more than imprudent, [it is] mad to penetrate Quissama to make a war there, with the goal of conquering territory," begs the question: with accounts of fugitives in Kisama as late as the 1850s, were there no more clear and present threats from Kisama, either in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, that carried the same rhetorical power as Kafuxi Ambari's legendary 1594 victory?³⁴⁸

The European and Euro-American missionaries, travelers, and explorer/geographers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose accounts of the African interior were read with great interest globally, adopted the Kisama meme and the fixation on Kafuxi Ambari of 1594. In particular, a string of popular English-language writers, working in the standardized ethnographic genre of the time, popularized Kisama to a broader audience.³⁴⁹ The first of these was the Scottish Missionary David Livingstone, who traveled through Angola's interior in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Portuguese still complained of Kisama's role in harboring fugitives from Luanda. Livingstone never crossed the Kwanza River himself; instead, he

³⁴⁸ Report of José Ignácio de Sousa Andrade, AHU, Sala 1L, caixa 6/790, document 227, 13/01/1885, "Apontamento de Antônio José de Seixas," 13 December 1856, AHU, papéis de Sá da Bandeira, maço 827, quoted in Roquinaldo Ferreira, "Slave Flights and Runaway Communities in Angola During the Era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade," unpublished manuscript.

³⁴⁹ For an analysis of the ethnographic account as genre, see Jan Vansina, "The Ethnographic Account as a Genre in Central Africa," in *European Sources for Sub-Saharan Africa Before 1900: Use and Abuse*, ed. Beatrix Heintze and Adam Jones (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1987), 433-44.

based his comments about Kisama on his interactions with salt traders who came to Massangano. After mentioning that “the Quisamas (Kisamas) [are] an independent tribe, which the Portuguese have not been able to subdue,” Livingstone remarks that, “[t]he few who came under my observation possessed much of the Bushman or Hottentot features.”³⁵⁰ Livingstone’s juxtaposition of these two observations suggests that the fact of being “an independent tribe” and of resembling those whom the European colonizers labeled Bushmen or Hottentots were intimately connected. Colonizers and colonial anthropologists long linked “Bushman,” and their supposed essential love of liberty to a more primitive stage of human social and political development.³⁵¹ Despite the fact that the people from Kisama with whom Livingstone interacted were obviously engaged in commercial trade with the Portuguese and with Africans living north of the Kwanza River – just as those living in the Kalahari have long traded with Tswana speakers and other neighbors -- their independence invited him to make this comparison with the quintessential example of primitiveness in the colonial lexicon.

Next, he describes Kafuxi Ambari’s defeat of the Portuguese, conflating the events of 1594 with the strategies relating to water from the war of 1655-1658.³⁵² It seems likely that Livingstone’s amalgamation of two conflicts separated by six decades

³⁵⁰ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa*, 440.

³⁵¹ Even recently, anthropologists have vigorously debated whether or not the Khoisan-speaking people living in the Kalahari desert are remnants of ancient subsistence practices marginalized by “invading” Bantu-speaking agrarian people, or whether the Khoi and San identities were forged in relation to and in reaction against the violence, rupture, theft, and slavery associated with colonialism. See Edwin N. Wilmsen et al., “Paradigmatic History of San-Speaking Peoples and Current Attempts at Revision (and Comments and Replies),” *Current Anthropology* 31, no. 5 (1990): 489-524.

³⁵² See chapter three.

derives from his dependence on oral histories circulating among the Portuguese soldiers at Massangano, many of whom were Brazilian or children of local women. These soldiers would have been those most directly involved in the perennial efforts to compel the *sobas* of Kisama to submit to Portuguese authority and, most importantly, to cease harboring maroons. Nevertheless, even with direct experience of armed conflict with Kisama, these soldiers and colonial officials depicted the threat of Kisama through reference to same formulaic account of Kafuxi Ambari that had been prominent since the late sixteenth century. If those who provided Livingstone with his information about Kisama were stuck in the seventeenth century, it is no wonder that the traveler perceived the people of Kisama as timeless primitives.

Later in the nineteenth century, European travelers would employ the emerging “ethnographic present” approach to accounts of Kisama that were nevertheless embedded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Price, who delivered a paper at a meeting of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland based on the notes and observations of Charles Hamilton entitled “A Description of the Quissama Tribe,” evokes both the salt and the ferocity components of the Kisama meme. Perhaps because his approach was ethnographic and not historical, he did not discuss the presence of fugitives from slavery in Kisama. However, he remarks that

[t]he Quissamas are very proud towards other tribes, and the traveler never observed a Quissama deign to address an Ambonda [non-Kisama Kimbundu speaker]. The latter would say to him, Why don't you speak to me? The Quissama man would reply: I cannot, you have masters, and slaves are beneath us. They even refuse to trade with them.³⁵³

³⁵³ F. G. H. Price, "A Description of the Quissama Tribe," *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 1(1872): 190.

While this appears to be an instance of imagined dialog, Hamilton/Price nevertheless drew from a pervasive discourse employed by those both within and without Kisama to distinguish themselves from their neighbors. Given the historical and demographic realities of life between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers, Hamilton/Price's imagined speaker was himself likely only a generation or two removed from slavery. However, this discourse is reminiscent of the ways in which maroon groups throughout the Americas often explicitly and deliberately distinguish themselves from their non-maroon African-descended neighbors by commenting on their own status as self-liberated.³⁵⁴ By becoming Kisama, even through the conditions of social inequality that existed at least in the early seventeenth century, a fugitive could distance him or herself from the status of slave.

The essential structure of accounts of Kisama thus remained grounded in the three-part meme established by the early seventeenth century, even in the face of massive political, social, and cultural movement both within Kisama and the region and globally. If these European travelers remained oblivious to locally-driven changes, they were certainly aware of broader global shifts, such as the more rigorous suppression of the trans-Atlantic slave trade or the introduction of steamships to the Kwanza River in the middle of the century and its impact on trade in the interior.³⁵⁵ They did not mention

³⁵⁴ Kenneth Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005). Anecdotally, when I was working in Jamaica during the summer of 2004, I happened to arrive in the Maroon village of Accompong on Emancipation Day (August 1). While the rest of the island marked the day with festivals and celebrations, in Accompong, people remarked with disdain that they had nothing to celebrate, as they had emancipated themselves and had not waited for the British to do it.

³⁵⁵ Monteiro even remarks upon the introduction of steamships. J. J. Monteiro, "On the Quissama Tribe of Angola," *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 5(1876): 198. See also Achim von Oppen and Beatrix Heintze, eds., *Angola on the Move: Transport Routes, Communications and History* (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 2008).

these changes because the genre conventions of travel writing and ethnography mandated a static representation, and because the pre-existing meme prevailed both in the previous accounts to which they had access, such as Battell, Cavazzi, and Cadornega, and within local oral traditions, both among Africans and Portuguese. However, even those Portuguese military figures who directly fought against leaders from Kisama in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, like Lacerda and Andrade – even after the Berlin Conference – continued to articulate the essential danger of Kisama by reference to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

As I have argued, the Kisama meme and its focus on the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries endured through eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Angola because of the relative degree to which its power waned in relation to the Kingdom of Kasanje. However, with the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the mid-nineteenth century, Kasanje's power began to decline, and, almost like a see-saw, Kisama began to rise to greater prominence within the region. While the centralized Kasanje had been in a better position to benefit from an economy centered on the slave trade, the fragmented polities of Kisama were more suited to participate in the nineteenth-century trade in ivory, wax, and rubber. Thus, around the beginning of the twentieth century, a Kafuxi Ambari not completely bound to the seventeenth century once again emerges from the Portuguese archival record, and, for nearly the first time since the seventeenth century, Portuguese military officers were apparently able to identify the immediate dimensions of their conflict with Kafuxi Ambari.

In 1910, two years into an ineffective campaign to “pacify” Kisama, Portuguese Lieutenant Alberto da Silva Pais wrote of the continued mortality that he faced in his

attempts to subjugate Kafuxi Ambari. Frustrated by the ways in which Kafuxi Ambari's ongoing success against the Portuguese inspired his neighbors to revolt, Pais recommended an "intuitive and radical solution, leaving open the path to passive defense, [as the land is] unimportant and absolutely sterile from the point of view of colonization. What will follow will flow naturally from our [Portuguese] attitude. Faithful villages will return to us definitively." Here, Pais broke from the Kisama meme by describing the nature of his conflict with the Kafuxi Ambari with whom he was fighting, rather than the Kafuxi Ambari of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, even Pais's logic for abandoning the attempts to defeat Kafuxi Ambari was at least partially shaped by historical memory of the seventeenth century.

A Fragmented Past, a Monolithic Future: The MPLA and Kisama

Mid-twentieth-century Angolan nationalists affiliated with the MPLA conjured this static Kisama meme to support their contention that fragmentary politics had been and continued to be the greatest threat to victory against the Portuguese and achieving independence. Writing in the bloody milieu of the independence struggle, the MPLA's ethnological and historical working group (Grupo de Trabalho História e Etnologia) published the official *História de Angola* in Algeria in 1965. The authors intended that *História de Angola* function as a critical element of nationalist instruction and consciousness raising, arguing that, "[i]t is necessary that a revolutionary knows the history of his country. Many revolutionaries of our time study the great battles of ancient times in order to learn methods of fighting (tactics) that will be very useful in the revolutionary wars of our time."³⁵⁶ Given this imperative, one would expect that the

³⁵⁶ *História de Angola* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1965), 5.

authors would emphasize the martial strategies that allowed for Kafuxi Ambari to defeat the Portuguese and their allies in 1594. However, the authors of *História de Angola* chose instead to use the Kisama meme to warn about the dangers of political fragmentation.

The authors divide history into three main epochs – pre-history, proto-history, and history – and within the history epoch, they further distinguish between the pre-colonial and colonial ages, along with the post-1940 “contemporary” age of anti-colonial struggle. Within the pre-colonial phase, the authors describe Kisama in the following way:

FREE STATES OF KISSAMA/ South of the Kwanza River was the region of Kissama. In this region there were numerous small sobados or Independent States. They didn't pay tribute to anyone and passed all of their time fighting against Congo, Ndongo and the Portuguese to defend their liberty. In Kisama they mine bars of salt. These bars were a kind of money with which they traded in the Highlands of Bié. Because of the Salt, Kissama was a very important region that all wanted to dominate. These Free States of Kissama never knew how to fight all together or to form a Single State. Because of this they were often defeated, principally by the Portuguese. Only their love of Liberty compelled them to revolt constantly against their oppressors. Some of the Free States of Kissama were the following: MUXIMA, KITANGOMBE, KIZUA, NGOLA KIKAITO, KAFUXE.³⁵⁷

While the authors return to Kisama a few times later in the text, such as mentioning the alliance of some of the *sobas* of Kisama with Queen Njinga, this is their only substantive discussion of Kisama. Kafuxi Ambari is relegated to a list of other *sobas*, and the dynamic history of Kisama is reduced to a cautionary tale about political factionalism. This MPLA passage is jarringly reminiscent of Castelo Branco's assessment of the political dangers emanating from Kisama in the 1820s. However, while Castelo Branco found Kisama politics dangerously subversive, the MPLA characterized them as

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 49. Emphasis in the original.

tragically, but inevitably, doomed to failure. Through this narrative, again, the people of Kisama are endowed with an innate – and unthinking – love of freedom and with a shocking lack of political awareness. Their very lack of statehood made these “Free States of Kisama” unviable candidates for Angolan nationalist mythmaking. Kisama, so far from any models of political modernity employed by African kingdoms, European colonists, or African nationalists, can be laudable only in qualified ways and only in a distant, undemanding, and inherently moribund past.

In many ways, these discourses mimic the twentieth-century appropriations of maroon history by non-maroon nationalists and artists throughout the Americas, and, in particular, in Jamaica. After fighting against first the Spanish and then the British for nearly a century, the two groups of Maroons on the island signed a treaty with the British in 1739. In exchange for their own freedom, they agreed to serve as bounty hunters for other maroons and to aid the British in quelling rebellions. While the terms of the treaty were always a point of contention within Maroon communities, and it is by no means clear that they consistently upheld the bargain, there is nevertheless a pervasive discourse within non-Maroon society in Jamaica that while the pre-1739 Maroons, and in particular the leaders Kojo and Nanny, who is an official Jamaican National Hero, were heroic and admirable, the post-1739 Maroons are traitors.³⁵⁸ As Ken Bilby notes, non-Maroon discourse about the Maroons tend to polarize between admiring pre-treaty Maroon “‘strength’ and ‘spirit’ that allowed the heroic Maroons to resist enslavement and reclaim their freedom and humanity” and disdaining post-treaty “‘primitiveness and

³⁵⁸ See Jessica Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social Remembering: Contested Kromanti Identities, Nationalism, and Obeah, 1675-Present" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007).

backwardness; isolationism...and, most importantly, an apparent inability to seize, and remain faithful to, the larger ideological significance of their struggle.”³⁵⁹ The MPLA narrative functions in just this manner, further omitting even a specific discussion of Kafuxi Ambari’s 1594 victory against the Portuguese and denying him a place in a pantheon of national heroes.

Indeed, MPLA militants and authors were aware of the enduring power of Kafuxi Ambari’s memory in Kisama and beyond, and appear to have perceived it as antithetical to their vision of Angolan nationalism. Perhaps the most famous literary work of the revolutionary period, Pepetela’s *As aventuras de Ngunga*, written in order to raise political consciousness and as promote Portuguese-language literacy on the eastern front, prominently features a Kafuxi figure.³⁶⁰ In Pepetela’s narrative, Kafuxi is a traditional authority, ruling over a number of villages with the permission of the MPLA guerillas, whom he agreed to support with food. Kafuxi initially harbors Ngunga, the peripatetic orphan child hero of the story. However, Ngunga quickly realizes that Kafuxi only adopted him in order to put him to work in his fields to produce an agricultural surplus which he then withholds from the desperate guerillas. The disillusioned Ngunga brings the hidden food to the hungry fighters and then leaves Kafuxi. Later, when he recounts his experiences to his teacher and questions why such a corrupt leader cannot be replaced, União (Union),— the only sympathetic adult in the narrative — explains, “Kafuxi is the elder there...No one has the courage to remove him from the Presidency. Already

³⁵⁹ Bilby, *True-Born Maroons*, 33-4.

³⁶⁰ Dea Drndarska and Ange-Séverin Malanda, *Pepetela et l'écriture du mythe et de l'histoire* (Paris: Harmattan, 2000), 23.

in the time of the tugas [Portuguese] he was the chief of the people. But don't think it is only he [who is corrupt]."³⁶¹ While Pepetela represents all adults save the teacher União as dishonest, none-too-subtly arguing that only the younger generation could build the nation, his choice to use the name Kafuxi to represent the illogic and corruption of "traditional" rule is no coincidence. Though by the time Pepetela wrote the last *soba* named Kafuxi Ambari had been dead for fifty years, the memory of his heroism was still strong enough – and inspirational enough, even far outside of Kisama, near the Zambian border – that using him as a symbol of treacherous, moribund "traditional" authority could still resonate with the young men who were Pepetela's intended audience.

It is not only statist, colonialist, and nationalist in the context of the independence struggle in Angola who find Kafuxi Ambari good to think with, however. Intriguingly, in the last decade, the Kisama meme in general and Kafuxi Ambari in particular have enjoyed a resurgence of popularity among a Protestant- and MPLA-affiliated, missionary-educated segment of the population in the southeastern corner of the region known as Luandos. According to a former resident of Luandos who is now the adjunct administrator of the municipality of Kisama and who belongs to this demographic, Dionísio Gonçalves, Protestant missions in the region after World War II gave children access to literacy and other skills unavailable to those in other parts of Kisama. Thus, many of the people of Kisama who have had professional success since independence have come from Luandos.³⁶² Even today, while the primary school in

³⁶¹ Pepetela, *As aventuras de Ngunga*, 57-8.

³⁶² Dionísio Gonçalves, interview with author, Muxima, 9 July 2010. For a comparison with the Protestant missions the Central Highlands, see Linda M. Heywood, "Towards an Understanding of Modern Political Ideology in Africa: The Case of the Ovimbundu of Angola," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 36, no.

Muxima offers the first four years of schooling – and, controversially, is named after Kafuxi Ambari despite the fact that the school is in *soba* Muxima's land – the school in Luandos has nine grades.

In 2004, a group of such well-connected people from Luandos, many of whom live and work in Luanda, founded CNAL (*Clube dos Nativos e Amigos de Luandos*, or the Club for Natives and Friends of Luandos). It would be misleading to label this a non-governmental organization, since the founders and many of the members are deeply involved with the MPLA. One of CNAL's goals is to promote the "restoration of the traditional popular festivals" of Luandos, which, according to the group, occur on the weekend before the 13th of September each year. According to Serafim Quintino, one of the founders of CNAL, in 2004, as they were working to popularize the festival, the group "discovered the tomb of the King of Kissama...the same Cafuxi to whom Cavazzi refers as the father of 36 children and the priest of a satanic religion."³⁶³

Largely due to the material, social, and political capital of CNAL members, this group has been successful in promoting this festival. People from all over Kisama come to dance, socialize, and compete in soccer tournaments, and CNAL also deliberately popularizes it as an important moment for *muxiluandos* (those who were born in Luandos) to leave their lucrative, if stressful, lives in Luanda and re-connect with their

01 (1998): 139-67, Didier Péclard, "Religion and Politics in Angola: The Church, the Colonial State and the Emergence of Angolan Nationalism, 1940-1961," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 2 (1998): 160-86.

³⁶³ See Serafim Quintino's blog, *Kudisanza*, <http://kudisanza.wordpress.com/2010/05/10/descoberto-tumulo-do-rei-da-kissama/>. For more autobiographical details about Quintino and CNAL, see Development Workshop Angola, Youth Ambassadors of Peace and Citizenship, "Youth Participating in Decision Making: Angola Research Paper," June 2007, <http://www.iapss.org/aac/belgrade2009/literature_english/youth_participation_in_decision-making_in_conflict_and_10.pdf>

homeland. Not coincidentally, CNAL also invites European and American missionaries to attend the festival. Promoting these connections has given CNAL the resources to construct some improved adobe homes (rather than the standard wattle-and-daub) and repair roads in the area.

As has been the case throughout much of Africa, these missionary/charitable connections have encouraged local people to narrate their own past in particular ways, emphasizing powerful rulers of centralized kingdoms. Though Kafuxi Ambari, as a “priest of a satanic religion,” would hardly seem to be the appropriate figure for crafting such a narrative, CNAL’s appeal to Cavazzi’s documentation represents a curious path of historical memory and consciousness. First, despite the fact that there was a Kafuxi Ambari in Luandos until he died in 1916 – within the lifetime of grandparents of people still living in the region – it is the early seventeenth-century Kafuxi Ambari that CNAL evokes.³⁶⁴ Second, CNAL does not represent this seventeenth-century Kafuxi Ambari as a figure who had long endured in oral tradition, but rather as someone who was famous, familiar, or even known through his appearance in the chronicles of a contemporary Italian priest. Third, the sudden appearance of a seventeenth-century grave in a well-trodden area of Luandos at the propitious moment that CNAL members were trying to promote a renaissance of a likely invented tradition places this “discovery” firmly within the discursive framework of Christian miracles.

By suggesting that Kafuxi Ambari’s tomb is of recent vintage and that the “traditional festivals” are a strategic invention, I do not intend to imply that they are

³⁶⁴ “Carta de Frederico Augusto Esteves, Capitania Mor da Quissama, ao Chefe da Secretaria Militar do Distrito do Cuanza,” AHM, 2/2/45/7, Muxima, 1 August 1916.

unimportant or inauthentic. Rather, I argue that the resonance between the static Kisama meme and the epistemologies of state has promoted its endurance through every step of political and social change in Angola. Kisama was, after all, largely formed *through* the Kisama meme, in the sense that the reputation of Kafuxi Ambari and other *sobas* in the early seventeenth century encouraged fugitives to expect sanctuary in the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers. However, the Kisama meme was always the public face of Kisama, and belied its far more complex, and contested, private faces. These same tensions are evident in the ways in which Kisama has been evoked and silenced in Brazil.

The Remarkable Odyssey of the Kisama Meme in Palmares

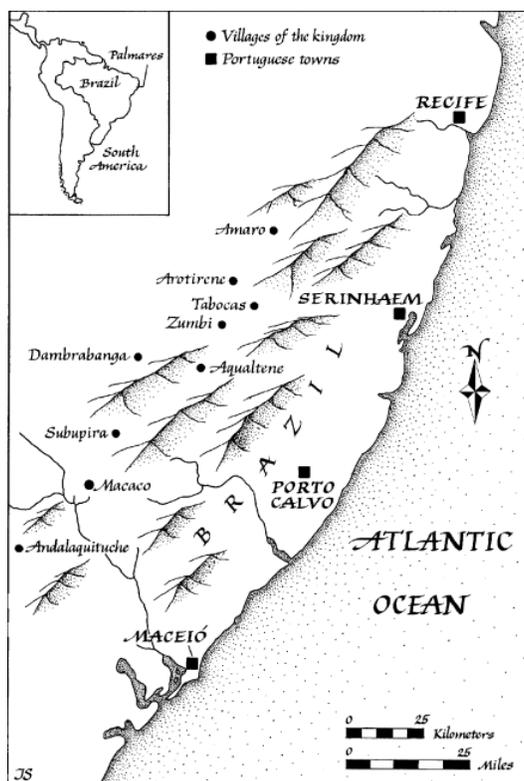
Perhaps the most oft-quoted document generated through the multiple colonial assaults on Palmares throughout the seventeenth century is the anonymous 1678 manuscript “Relação das guerras feitas aos Palmares de Pernambuco no tempo do Governador D. Pedro de Almeida.” Written to glorify the *bandeirante* leader Fernão Carillho’s unprecedented military success against the *quilombo* and to celebrate the negotiation of the peace accords between Nganga Zumba and the colonial government, this document is rich in details and includes the most extensive discussion of the political geography of Palmares found in any of the known contemporary source. The author describes the settlements that comprised the overall *quilombo* as follows:

[I]n the Northwest, the Mocambo of *Zambi*, sixteen leagues from Porto Calvo; to the North of this at five leagues' distance that of *Arotireue*; and next to the East of these two named Mucambos is *Tabocas*; fourteen leagues to the Northwest of these *Dombrabanga*; and eight leagues North of this the village called *Subupira*; and six leagues North of this the Royal Enclave called *Macaco*; five leagues West of it the Mucambo of *Osenga*, and nine leagues Northwest of our [Portuguese] town of Serinhaem the village of *Amaro*; and **twenty leagues Northwest of Alagôas the Palmar of Andalaquituxe; Brother of Zambi**; and between these which are the

largest and most defensible, are others of less consequence, and with fewer people.³⁶⁵

Of all of the place names on the list, Andalaquituxe stands out as somewhat unique. It is the only one of the communities described as a “palmar”; it is the only mocambo other than that of the well-known Zumbi whose leader is named explicitly, and, like Zumbi’s mocambo, the leader’s name and that of the community are the same; the community’s leader is identified through his putative family relation to Zumbi. Thus, it is not surprising that during the proliferation of geographic and historical studies nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Brazil, regionalist scholars like the Alagoans João Severiano da Fonseca and Alfredo Brandão sought to explain the origins of this incongruous name and toponym.

³⁶⁵ "Relação das guerras feitas aos Palmares de Pernambuco no tempo do governador dom Pedro de Almeida de 1675 a 1678 (M. S. oferecido pelo Exm. Sr. Conselheiro Drummond)," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* 22(1859 [1678]): 304. Emphasis in italics in the transcribed text; emphasis in bold mine. The version of the text published in the *Revista* comes from the Biblioteca e Arquivo Distrital de Évora. Two others, found in the Biblioteca Nacional and the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino in Lisbon, are published in Décio Freitas, *República de Palmares: pesquisa e comentários em documentos históricos do século XVII* (Maceió, Alagoas: Edufal: Ideário Comunicação e Cultura, 2004), 19-48. See Thornton, "Angola e as origens de Palmares," 59 n. 9.



The *Mocambos* of Late Seventeenth-Century Palmares³⁶⁶

Even from the first efforts to explain the Andalaquituxe of the document, however, scholars began to subtly distort the material. The doctor and brigadier-general João Severiano da Fonseca, who spent three years studying the Brazilian border with Bolivia in the 1870s and wrote extensively about indigenous communities in Mato Grosso, predictably claimed that “the word Cafuchy comes from tupi – *caa*, forest and *fuchy*, ugly.”³⁶⁷ Writing some forty years later, Brandão contested Severiano’s claim, arguing that

³⁶⁶ Charles Orser and Pedro P. A. Funari, "Archaeology and Slave Resistance and Rebellion," *World Archaeology* 33, no. 1 (2001): 65.

³⁶⁷ Severiano described his investigations along the Bolivian border and throughout Mato Grosso in João Severiano da Fonseca, *Viagem ao redor do Brasil, 1875-1878* (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. de Pinheiro, 1880). His claim about the meaning of Kafuxi, however, is, according to Alfredo Brandão, made in João Severiano da Fonseca, *Origem de alguns nomes patronímicos da provincia das Alagoas* (Maceió 1876). The only copy of this text on record is in the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich, Switzerland, and I have therefore

[t]he word *Andalaquituche* appears altered in the manuscript: it must be *Zalaquituche*, which is comprised of two parts: *Zala* – [a] word from the *kimbund[u]* language of Angola, that signifies residence, house or group of houses[,] and *Quituche* or *Cafuche* – a proper name that must be that of the chief of the mocambo. Furthermore the mountain of Cafuchy can be found northeast of the city of Alagoas, at a distance of more or less 25 leagues, a distance that also concords with the manuscript. [in accompanying footnote] The existence of the word *cafuche* in the *kimbund[u]* language, the name of the mocambo signaled by the manuscript and the additional fact of being verified in an ancient document (see document n. 1) that Cafuchy mountain appears with the name *Caxefe*, a name that appears like an alteration of *Cafuche*, induces me to give this word an African origin.³⁶⁸

The document that Brandão cites is a petition Domingos João Carvalho, the captain of infantry during the final raid on Palmares, written seven to eight years after the destruction of the *quilombo*. In soliciting more compensation, Carvalho describes which leaders directed which elements of the attack and mentions the “mountain of Caxefe.”³⁶⁹ Both Severiano and Brandão correctly parse Andalaquituxe into its appropriate morphemes, “Ndala” and “Kituxi,” though Severiano further divides his interpretation of the latter. While they disagree on whether the word is Tupi or African, both concur that “*quituxe*” is simply a mis-transcribed “*kafuxe*.” Brandão’s justification rests on the existence of *kafuxi* as a word in Kimbundu and for the correlation he makes between this name and the mountain of *Caxefe* in another contemporary document. In other words, “*quituxe*” becomes equivalent to “*caxefe*” because both seem similar to “*kafuxi*,” a word that exists in Kimbundu, an African language with which Brandão was acquainted. Thus,

been unable to consult the original and cannot account for how Severiano glosses the *Andala* portion of the toponym. My knowledge of Severiano’s claim comes from Brandão’s citation. See Alfredo Brandão, *Viçosa de Alagoas: o município e a cidade (notas históricas, geográficas e arqueológicas)* (Recife: Imprensa Industrial, 1914), 25, n. 12. Emphasis in the original.

³⁶⁸ Brandão, *Viçosa de Alagoas*, 24-5.

³⁶⁹ Cited in *ibid.*, 257.

with his 1915 publication, Brandão linked the term Andalaquituxe to Kimbundu, and to the proper name Kafuxi, which he also associates with a mountain named in the original source as *Caxefe*.

Some thirty years later, Edison Carneiro, who called Brandão's scholarship on Palmares "the best, without a doubt...he most approximates the truth, working with the few documents he had," adopted his gloss of the term Andalaquituxe. Carneiro cautions that many of the Bantu-origin names in the 1678 "Relação" were likely rendered incorrectly by the anonymous author, and cites Brandão's analysis of Andalquituxe as an example of this. Carneiro relates:

Alfredo Brandão calculates, for example, that the name Andalquituche must be an alteration of Zala-Quituche or Zala-Cafuche, or, the residence of Cafuche, the name of the chief of the mocambo, -- a hypothesis supported by the location of this mocambo in the Mountains of Cafuchi, again in accord with the manuscript.³⁷⁰

Thus, Carneiro uncritically and fully replicates and endorses Brandão's interpretation of the original material. While both insisted that Andalaquituxe was really Ndala Kafuxi, and that "Kafuxi" was a proper name in Kimbundu, neither attempts to further historicize or contextualize the name.

Indeed, it wasn't until 1965 that an American, R.K. Kent, published an article in *The Journal of African History* in which he famously described Palmares as "an African state in Brazil," that any scholar would establish such a link. Like Severiano, Brandão and Carneiro before him, Kent believed that Andalaquituche was a mis-transcription of Ndala Kafuche. In a long list of connections between individual mocambos and particular places and people in Africa in support of his argument that the majority of

³⁷⁰ Edison Carneiro, *O quilombo do Palmares, 1630-1695* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1947), 82, 182.

Palmarista leadership was not Brazilian-born, Kent links Ndala Kafuche to Kisama on the basis of a personal communication with Jan Vansina. Because Kent's intention is to prove that "Palmares did not spring from a single social structure...[but] was, rather, an African political system which came to govern a plural society and thus give continuity to what could have been at best a group of scattered hideouts," he does not elaborate on what the connection of Andalquituche to Kisama – or any of the other named mocambos to Loango, Benguela, or any of the other places or people in Africa whom he mentions – might signify.³⁷¹ Kent argues rather that the diversity of possible origins of the names of different *mocambos* within Palmares meant that only a non-specific "African" governing system could function. While Kent's article was indeed groundbreaking for its time, anticipating some of the most useful aspects of revisionist scholarship by several decades, the fact that he does not pursue the political histories of the regions of Angola that he cites as the sources for the majority of Palmarinos undermines his larger argument. By drawing on etymology alone to direct his focus in Africa, Kent misses the implications of particular dynamics of political practices within Palmares. In uncritically accepting the transformation of *kituxi* to Kafuxi from earlier sources, Kent merely reproduces the errors of scholars before him. However, despite the fact that Vansina linked Kafuxi to Kisama for Kent, Kent did not interrogate the potential ways in which Kisama political ideology – or the particular political ideologies of any of the other places in West Central Africa – informed the practice of fugitive politics in Palmares, nor did he even reference the

³⁷¹ R. K. Kent, "Palmares: An African State in Brazil," *Journal of African History* 6, no. 2 (1965): 169. Thirty years later, Robert Nelson Anderson deftly illustrated the many instances of Kent mis-translating primary sources and omitting evidence that complicated his conclusions. See Anderson, "The Quilombo of Palmares," 545-66.

widely-circulating Kisama meme to speculate on the role of Kisama politics in Palmares. Neglecting these kinds comparisons allows Kent to see Palmares as “an African political system...transferred to a different continent,” rather than as a case of political logics that were dynamic within both seventeenth-century Africa and the Americas.³⁷²

While he does not, for the most part, cite his sources, Nei Lopes appears to have adopted and amplified Kent’s claim. In his 2004 *Enciclopédia brasileira da diáspora africana*, Lopes includes three Kisama-related entries. First, he describes Andalaquituxe as the seventeenth-century “leader of Palmares killed by Fernão Carrilho in the onslaught on the quilombo of Garahuns.” Next, he locates the mountains of Cafuxi “180 kilometers northeast of the capital of Alagoas, where there was the citadel of Andalaquituxe, leader of Palmares. In pre-colonial Angola, Kafuxi was the name of a region south of the Kwanza River, governed by a soba of the same name.” Finally, Lopes writes that in the sixteenth century [sic], Kisama “[i]n Palmares, [was] the name of a ruler of a quilombo of the same name, located in the mountains of Cafuxi. In ancient Angola, Kisama was a region comprised of the jurisdictions of different leaders, all of whom had the title *Kisama*, and the chief of them was known as *kafuxi*.”³⁷³

Lopes’s first claim, that Andalaquituxe was killed by *bandeirante* Fernão Carrilho, appears to be extrapolation from one or more versions of the anonymous “Relação” which provides no additional information about the *mocambo* or its leader

³⁷² Kent, “Palmares: An African State in Brazil,” 175.

³⁷³ Nei Lopes, *Enciclopédia brasileira da diáspora africana* (São Paulo: Selo Negro Edições, 2004), 58, 152, 553. Emphasis in the original.

beyond that which I cited above.³⁷⁴ Lopes's second entry, about the mountains of Cafuxi, rests on the research of Brandão; he merely converts leagues to kilometers. Likewise, he accepts the contention of all before him that *kituxi* and Kafuxi are equivalent terms.

What Lopes adds here, in his claim that the land south of the Kwanza River was called Kafuxi, rather than Kisama, however, is a simultaneously in harmony with and contradictory to Angolan materials. It is certainly true that, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Portuguese sources in Angola often confounded Kafuxi and Kisama, and seamlessly slipped between defining each as a person, a population, and a place. For example, on 23 February 1693, as the *bandeirantes* attacked Palmares, the Portuguese governor in Luanda responded to a petition from "Sova Dom Pedro da Crux Cafuchy Cambary" for baptism and vassalage for himself and his "principal woman." While he petitioned as an individual, the political and diplomatic culture of the time meant that his baptism served to render all of his subjects Portuguese vassals as well.³⁷⁵ In his affirmative response, the governor repeatedly mentioned Kisama as a territory over which Kafuxi Ambari ruled. However, thirteen months later, an inquiry by the Conselho Ultramarino (Overseas Council) into the diplomatic progress made by the Portuguese following Kafuxi Ambari's baptism referred not to *Soba* Kafuxi Ambari, but rather to "sova Quiçama."³⁷⁶ These sources, which are contemporary with those concerning the destruction of Palmares, reveal that while the Portuguese were aware that Kafuxi Ambari

³⁷⁴ John Thornton confirms that he has not encountered the name Andalaquituche outside of the "Relação." John Thornton, personal communication, 23 March 2011.

³⁷⁵ See Heintze, "The Angolan Vassal Tributes of the 17th Century," 57-78.

³⁷⁶ "Cópia da carta ao Soba Cafuchi, que pede o baptismo," 23 February 1693, AHU, *Angola*, cx. 14, doc. 100, and "Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino sobre o Soba de Quiçama," 13 March 1694, AHU, Cód. 554, fls. 79-79 v., in *MMA XIV*: 279-81, 349-50.

was but one *soba* in the region of Kisama, his power and prestige combined with their imprecision at times led to him appearing in the records as *soba* Kisama. Lopes must be familiar with at least some seventeenth-century Angolan sources, as he cites Cadornega, or rather João Pereira Bastos citing Cadornega, about the seventeenth-century belief throughout the region that the mother of St. Benedict had been enslaved in Kisama as a young girl.³⁷⁷ Though Lopes seems to rely on secondary sources for his information, it is possible that his conflation of and confusion between Kafuxi and Kisama derives from at least an echo of language in primary sources.

Even such a generous interpretation of Lopes's second entry, however, makes his third entry, where he defines Kisama itself, more perplexing. There are simply no known documents or secondary sources that refer to a sixteenth- (or even seventeenth-, eighteenth-, or nineteenth-) century ruler named Kisama in Palmares or elsewhere in Brazil. As I discussed in chapters two and three, while the Portuguese did at times conflate "Kisama" with "Kafuxi Ambari" or, other leaders in the region, neither of these were political titles of rulership. The Portuguese referred to *sobas* such as Langere, Kapakasa, and Kamona Kasonga by name regularly, and while they may have called them *sobas in* or *of* Kisama, the notion that they were all called Kisama is false. There is simply no basis in either Angolan or Brazilian sources for Lopes's entry on Kisama. And while Lopes is not an academic, and does not intend for his work to be critiqued through academic standards, my above assessment is intended to illustrate the ways in which the

³⁷⁷ Lopes, *Enciclopédia brasileira*, 113. Cadornega writes, "Saint Benedict of Palermo, Head of the Kingdom of Sicily, where he flourished in virtue and sanctity; and there is no shortage of Authors who say that he was from Ethiopia, that his mother was from this kingdom of Angola from the province of Quisama, that she was captured while young." Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, III: 27, Bastos, *Angola e Brasil*, 40.

unacknowledged circulation of the Kisama meme has shaped both scholarly and popular notions of the past not only in Angola, but also in Brazil.

To summarize, the simple statement in the anonymous 1678 “Relação” about a *mocambo* and leader named Andalaquituxe was uncritically transformed into Ndala Kafuxi first by Severiano, then by Brandão, the first to discern its African origins and to conflate it with mountains called Caxefe. Carneiro simply echoed Brandão’s claims, while Kent was the first to associate Kafuxi with Kisama in the context of Palmares based on information from Jan Vansina. Kent, however, did not draw from the Kisama meme, or interrogate what the presence of Kisama identities in Palmares might mean. By the early twenty-first century, Lopes extrapolated a narrative for Andalaquituxe’s demise from the “Relação”, conflated Kafuxi with Kisama, and invented a leader named Kisama in Palmares and a political culture within Kisama unsubstantiated by any kind of evidence, though it reflects a distant echo and adaptation of the Kisama meme.

The utility of such an exhaustive discussion of the permutations of scholars’ interpretations of a single term in a single document is twofold. First, as historian Flávio dos Santos Gomes notes, until the last few years, most who wrote about Palmares consulted the archival documents published by Ennes, Carneiro, and Freitas. Some, as late as the 1970s, still defended the story invented by Sebastião de Rocha Pita in the 1720s that Zumbi and his followers committed suicide rather than be captured and re-enslaved or killed. With a more recent interest in pursuing new sources that may well reveal previously unknown dimensions of Palmares’s history, including the extensive documents in the archives at the Universidade de Coimbra that are unavailable in Brazil, and the involvement of scholars like Thornton who can bring an understanding of

Palmares's history from a broader Africanist perspective, there is reason to be hopeful that the next generation of scholarship could avoid merely re-producing the paradigms of past generations of scholars.³⁷⁸

In the case of Andalaquituxe and Palmares, it is possible to step outside of these existing scholarly narratives to find tantalizing hints of a more firmly historical African political logic in the forests of Pernambuco and Alagoas. The key to discerning this layer of Palmares's history – hidden in plain sight – lies in the term Andalaquituxe itself and in the existing evidence on the political development of Palmares, interrogated through the intellectual history of particular African political practices. First, it is important to note that in Angolan materials, from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, Kafuxi is never rendered as *kituxe*. Furthermore, *kituxi* is itself a Kimbundu word that conveys important dimensions of the historical antecedents of Palmares's fugitive politics.

Crime and Punishment, Life and Debt

Far from an obscure term in Kimbundu or in European knowledge of Kimbundu, *kituxi* in fact appears in the first written text in the language. More than thirty years before the anonymous author of the "Relação" described the community and leader Andalaquituxe, two Catholic priests, Francisco Paccónio and António Couto, published the first bilingual text in Portuguese and Kimbundu: a catechism. Intended for the use of priests within long-established and ever-expanding missions in Angola, this tract provides a fascinating glimpse into Kimbundu vocabulary and grammar – and European

³⁷⁸ Flávio dos Santos Gomes, "Apresentação: Palmares, historiografia e fontes," in *Mocambos de Palmares: histórias e fontes (séculos XVI-XIX)*, ed. Flávio dos Santos Gomes (Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras, 2010), 9-10. Thornton and Heywood found the early eighteenth-century recopies of the correspondences of the governor of Pernambuco with the king of Portugal from 1654 to roughly 1720 – sources unavailable in Brazil – the Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra (AUC) in 2006, and Thornton cited some in his 2008 article. They have yet to be more widely utilized, however. Thornton, "Les Etats de l'Angola."

efforts to find a correspondence between the semantic worlds of Kimbundu speakers and the Catholic church -- in the mid-seventeenth century.³⁷⁹ One of the more culturally-laden terms that the priests were compelled to translate was the ever-ubiquitous *sin* and *sinner*. For example, Paccónio and Couto render “original; mortal, and venial sin” as “[c]uim ne amoxi mo agimbululà o *quituxi* quia luvuàlu, ne *quituxi* quia cufuà *quituxi* quialengulucà.”³⁸⁰

In glossing “sin” as “*kituxi*,” the priests appropriated an earlier, general sense of “*kituxi*,” as “crime.” The word carries this meaning in Kimbundu and Umbundu, as well as Cokwe, whose speakers borrowed the term from Kimbundu; Kikongo terms for crime come from different roots.³⁸¹ Broadly speaking, throughout West Central Africa, deeper social notions of criminality are linked to selfishness: criminals act in ways that violate prevailing social norms of reciprocity, and those who behave aberrantly risk being accused of practicing witchcraft.³⁸² In addition to the more mundane forms of

³⁷⁹ It is somewhat misleading to speak of Kimbundu as a singular language in the mid-seventeenth century, when the creation of Kimbundu as a trade-oriented *lingua franca* was an ongoing process through the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries. See Vieira-Martinez, “Building Kimbundu: Language Community Reconsidered in West Central Africa, c. 1500-1750”. These translations were often marked by multiple layers of mutual misunderstandings. See Wyatt MacGaffey, “Dialogues of the Deaf: Europeans on the Atlantic Coast of Africa,” in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart Schwartz (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³⁸⁰ I make use here of the 1661 Capuchin adaptation of the original Jesuit text from 1642. Antonio do Couto and Francisco Pacconio, *Gentilis Angollae fidei mysteriis* (Rome: Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, 1661), 86. Emphasis my own.

³⁸¹ See, for example, Bernardo Maria de Cannecattim, *Diccionario da lingua bunda, ou angolense, explicada na portugueza, e latina* (Lisboa: Impressão Regia, 1804), 221, Maia, *Dicionário complementar*, 154, William H. Sanders and William Edwards Fay, *Vocabulary of the Umbundu Language: Comprising Umbundu-English and English-Umbundu* (Boston: T. Todd, 1885), 10, Barbosa, *Dicionário cokwe-português*, 615.

³⁸² The literature on the politics of witchcraft in Central Africa is vast. See, for example, Janzen, *Lemba*, Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, Wyatt MacGaffey, *Kongo Political Culture: The Conceptual Challenge of the Particular* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

criminality, like theft or overt violence, witches might make another person mentally or physically ill, barren, or suddenly destitute. Utilizing a variety of divination techniques and ordeals, an *nganga* could determine the guilt or innocence of the accused. Witches always succumbed to ordeal or were identified effectively through divination, while the innocent were vindicated, as in the case of the *ndua* poison ordeal in Kasanje discussed above. Cavazzi describes another similar judicial process, the *mbulungo* ordeal, in which the accused was given either snake meat, fruit pulp, or juice made from certain plants, and “after having made his imprecations, becomes dizzy, shakes like a paralytic and can no longer stand. And if someone out of compassion doesn’t give him the countervenom, after a few days he dies or, if he survives, he becomes crazy and incapable of taking care of himself.”³⁸³ Such a response, to those watching the public ordeal, proved the accused’s guilt.

Of course, by the time Cavazzi observed this practice, West Central Africans had lived, died, endured, fled from, and fought against the trans-Atlantic slave trade for more than a century. In response to the new extremes of malevolence, West Central Africans modified and adapted older practices and forged new strategies for mitigating the threats of violence and unequal wealth to their communities’ well-being.³⁸⁴ According to Cadornega, in mid-seventeenth-century Angola, criminality was already linked to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as local leaders adapted earlier oracular and divination practices to procure an ever-expanding network of captives and to extract resources from

³⁸³ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, I: 106.

³⁸⁴ See, for example, Janzen, *Lemba*. For examples from West Africa, see G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*.

those who had access to goods and currency through their engagement in the trade.³⁸⁵

Cavazzi confirms Cadornega's observations about the influence of the trans-Atlantic economy on local judicial institutions, which he characterizes as entirely corrupt and extractive. He describes a case he witnessed in 1660 when two men manipulated the outcome of a poisoning ordeal by paying the *nganga* administering it twelve Roman escudos, "which is no small thing in these regions."³⁸⁶

While the trans-Atlantic slave trade led to an alteration both notions of criminality and strategies for mitigating it, it also encouraged the association of "debt" with "crime." As itinerant traders intensified their presence throughout Angola's interior in the eighteenth century, the (literal and figurative) shackles of debt followed in their wake.³⁸⁷ Indeed, by the nineteenth century, authorities in Luanda complained about the prevalent practice of local men selling themselves and/or their dependents to settle their debts. Even neighbors and associates of debtors were at risk of being captured and sold by those intent on recuperating their losses. Significantly, the Kimbundu term used to signify the debt that had to be repaid, either in currency, goods, or human beings, was *kituxi*. For example, "in 1853 an African woman named Maria 'said she was a free woman who had been given by her uncle Antônio Damião to a black man named Manoel to pay a fine [*quituxi*] in Hari [Ambaca].' According to Maria, Manoel then went on to sell her."³⁸⁸ In

³⁸⁵ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, III: 322.

³⁸⁶ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, I: 106.

³⁸⁷ For a detailed discussion of the commodification of relationships throughout the region, and the role of debt in transforming political and social relationships, see Miller, *Way of Death*.

³⁸⁸ "Ofício do Secretário Geral do Governador de Angola" on November 4, 1853, AHA, cód. 111, fl. 122v., cited in Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 67.

this case, the *kituxi* in question was related to a criminal fine, but other accounts of Portuguese entanglement in local judicial processes in nineteenth-century Angola show the degree to which issues of debt pervaded society and had come to occupy the same semantic field as criminality. While Portuguese colonial observers complained that “no law of civilized people is applicable” to Angolan legal categories, they nevertheless noted how *kituxi*, along with *upanda* (adultery), dominated local court proceedings in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁸⁹

The term *kituxi*, then, serves as a useful index of changing concepts of anti-sociality and power in West Central Africa across three centuries. In the seventeenth century period of extensive political change throughout the region, *kituxi* appears to have referred to crime itself, even as the trans-Atlantic slave trade shaped the contours of perceptions of criminality. By the nineteenth century, however, *kituxi* not only meant “crime,” or the “sin” that European missionaries attempted to conflate with local notions of criminality, but also “debt,” either incurred through criminal activity or debt that then became criminalized. These changes reflect the increasing relevance of material capital in intellectual cultures dominated by notions of social capital, and also reveal the degree to which the slave trade re-oriented judicial and social practices. That this term was borrowed into Cokwe from Kimbundu, too, illustrates the social networks through which these concepts traveled in Angola’s interior. While *kituxi* appears to have still meant only “crime” and not yet “debt” or “fine” in the seventeenth century, because the judicial institutions of Angolan communities were bent and contorted through engagement with

³⁸⁹ See, for example, the cases cited in João de Castro Maia Veiga Figueiredo, “Feitiçaria na Angola oitocentista: razões por detrás de uma suposta maior tolerância administrativa face a crenças locais,” *Revista de Humanidades* 11, no. 29 (2011): 21-51.

the trans-Atlantic slave trade, it is impossible to distinguish between local senses of criminality and the processes that pushed thousands of men, women, and children into captivity and across the Atlantic.³⁹⁰ Andalakituxe, then, is not the “Village of Kafuxi (Ambari)”, but rather “Crime Village” or, more speculatively for the period, “Debt Village.” Why would Palmarinos name this *mocambo* after such terms used to describe social aberration, and why would the brother of Zumbi live in a place marked by such a stigmatizing name? Unfortunately, the 1678 “Relação” does not provide any additional details about this *mocambo* beyond its name, the relation of its leader to Zumbi, and its location. However, given the relationship of judicial practices to the lived experiences of bondsmen and women in the Americas, including those who fled to Palmares, such a name invokes the socio-political roots and routes along which many had traveled.

Historical Memory and Politics in Palmares

Given its prominence as a source for scholars investigating Palmares, it is important to remember that the “Relação” was written in 1678 and does not necessarily reflect the earlier political geography of the area. The period of Dutch occupation, from 1630-54, seems to have been the period of the most dramatic population growth for Palmares, likely due to the synchronicity between revolutionary ideologies circulating throughout West Central Africa and the disruptions to the normal levels of Portuguese

³⁹⁰ There are many examples from Angola and throughout West and West Central Africa of the role of judicial processes in enslavement. Ferreira cites a mid-nineteenth-century process in Bié in southern Angola in which. “[t]he judge would prepare a poisonous drink with herbs, which both accuser and defendant would drink. They would then perform a ceremonial dance until one of them collapsed due to the effect of the drink. If the plaintiff were the first to collapse, he or she would have to pay ‘six slaves, two cows and two goats to the accuser.’ If the defendant collapsed first, ‘he would be left to die, since he would not receive an antidote to the poisonous drink. His assets and properties would then be taken away and his relatives would be sold as slaves.’” Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 198. Perhaps the most well-known example of judicial processes being used to generate captives for sale is the Ibiniukpabi oracle at Arochukwu in the Niger Delta. See Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra*.

surveillance and control due to the conflict with the Dutch.³⁹¹ By 1642, the Palmarinos had already abandoned their primary settlement due to the unhealthy climate of the area in which it was located and had constructed a new Great Palmares, distinguished at that time from Little Palmares, each itself a confederation of a major settlement and other smaller *mocambos*.³⁹² Already, within Great Palmares at least, there is evidence of social inequality among the residents. Not only did those who interacted with the Dutch speak unequivocally of a king, but Blaer also “encountered a black man covered in boubas [skin lesions caused by the infectious disease *Treponema pertenue*, or yaws] accompanied by an elderly brasiliense [an indigenous woman], slave of the daughter of the king.”³⁹³ This type of social inequality reflects not only similar institutions in Angola, including in Kisama, but also parallel practices within Limón.

From the 1630s period until the late 1670s, there certainly seems to have been a strong centralizing political impulse among the Palmarinos; as Anderson notes, it can hardly be considered a “republican” polity, as Kent imagines, given the explicitly monarchical nature of the political system described in the “Relação.”³⁹⁴ The anonymous chronicler describes how, “all acknowledge themselves obedient to one called *Ganga Zumba*, which means Great Lord; he is King and Lord over all the rest[,] those born in Palmares, as well as those from outside; he has a palace, Houses for his family, and is

³⁹¹ Thornton, “Les Etats de l’Angola,” 770.

³⁹² “Journael van de voyagie die Capt Johan Blaer,” in Carneiro, *O quilombo do Palmares*, 234-7.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 237.

³⁹⁴ Anderson, “The Quilombo of Palmares,” 556-7.

attended by guards and officials that Royal Houses usually have.”³⁹⁵ This was the same Nganga Zumba who, as king of Palmares, negotiated a peace treaty with the Portuguese in 1678. As Sílvia Hunold Lara notes, Nganga Zumba and the Portuguese negotiated the treaty according to well-trodden scripts developed over one hundred years of colonialism in West Central Africa. Nganga Zumba and his followers agreed to relocate to Cucaú, where they would be guaranteed their freedom in exchange for refusing to harbor any future maroons.³⁹⁶

The reaction to this treaty within Palmares constitutes one of the most polemical moments in Palmares’s history, and illustrates the degree to which Nganga Zumba’s representation of highly effective centralized power was aspirational rather than reflective of the fragmented political practices of these thousands of fugitives. While Nganga Zumba and his followers relocated, Zumbi continued to fight against the Portuguese. According to the only known contemporary source to comment on the event, the Portuguese staff-sergeant Manuel Lopes, the governor Aires de Souza de Castro ordered him to communicate to Zumbi that, in spite of his refusing the terms of the treaty, he would be (again) pardoned by the Portuguese, if only he would join

his uncle Ganazona to live in the same liberty which all of his family enjoys...[Zumbi’s, and other leaders’] betrayal combined [with the fact] that many of our slaves have been captured and carried off [has caused] a lack of the promised peace for them[. A]ll of this has been discovered by others [who are] more reliable and by Ganazona and for more justification

³⁹⁵ "Relação das guerras feitas aos Palmares de Pernambuco no tempo do governador dom Pedro de Almeida de 1675 a 1678 (M. S. oferecido pelo Exm. Sr. Conselheiro Drummond)," 306.

³⁹⁶ Sílvia Hunold Lara, "Palmares and Cucaú: Political Dimensions of a Maroon Community in Late Seventeenth-Century Brazil," paper presented at 12th Annual Gilda Lehrman International Conference, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 29-30 October 2010.

of this truth they poisoned their king Ganazumba in order to better commit their treachery.³⁹⁷

Many scholars and activists have simply inverted the valence of Lopes's remarks, asserting that it was in fact Nganga Zumba who was the traitor for negotiating with the Portuguese and that Zumbi carried the original revolutionary ideology of Palmares forward.³⁹⁸ It is clear that, in the late 1670s, there was no widespread consensus on the terms of the treaty within the large, diverse Palmares community, given the sizeable faction committed to poisoning the king and, later, to following Zumbi in his continued martial activities against the Portuguese.³⁹⁹ While Lopes obviously had no access to the internal debates and contestations around the meaning of the treaty for different factions within Palmares, given the role of poison in judicial proceedings throughout West Central Africa, it is possible that Nganga Zumba's murder was less a unilateral act of stealth and more a communal equation of illegitimate political authority with witchcraft. Even if we doubt the specificity of Lopes's account and believe instead that Nganga Zumba was murdered by means other than poison, the fact that Zumbi's faction continued to reject the terms of the treaty reveals the depth of this political chasm within Palmares. Just as in the conflicts in the lands of Langere, Palmarinos did not agree on the ways in which alliances with the Portuguese or others impacted political legitimacy. Without details

³⁹⁷ "Bando do sargento-mor Manuel Lopes chamando à obediência o capitão Zumbi dos Palmares (1680), cited in Edison Carneiro, *O quilombo dos Palmares*, 2 ed. (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1958), 247.

³⁹⁸ See, for example, Décio Freitas, *Palmares: a guerra dos escravos* (Porto Alegre: Editora Movimento, 1973). For a critique of the historiographical silence on the treaty and for the polemical interpretations of both its negotiation and Zumbi's rebellion, see Lara, "Palmares and Cucaú."

³⁹⁹ For a parallel discussion of discourses dissent around the terms of a treaty within a Jamaican Maroon community, see Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social Remembering".

about the political institutions that underwrote the decision to poison Nganga Zumba, whose very name suggests a ritual authority whose craft could be interpreted as either pro- or anti-social, given the political winds, we can only speculate about the idioms through which Zumbi and others carried out their judgment. For those who had suffered the devastation wrought by the consolidation of Kasanje in the mid-seventeenth century, monarchy would not have been an attractive option. Instead, non-state politics of the kind practiced in Kisama, where authority was primarily local or only situationally, rather than institutionally, broader, fugitives were welcomed and incorporated into an ever-evolving maroon society, and both defensive and offensive violence was legitimate so long as practiced in protection of the community, would have been a more compelling political model.

I argue that support for my assertion that even with the trappings of state, Palmares was rooted in fugitive modernities deriving from Kisama and elsewhere within the region can be found in a new interpretation of the term *Angola Janga*. Widely cited by scholars and activists as proof of the Angolan nature of Palmares's population and cultural, social, and political institutions, this term also appears in only a single document written three years after the murder of Zumbi, glossed as "little Angola: as they called it."⁴⁰⁰ Because Palmares had always been associated with those who came from Angola, until relatively recently, scholars accepted this interpretation of the late seventeenth-century name for Palmares. Anderson notes that *Angola Janga* probably did not mean

⁴⁰⁰ "Requerim.to que aos pés de VMg.do humildem.to prostrado fás em seu nome, e em aquelle de todos os officiaes e Soldados do terço de Infantr.a São Paulista de que He M.e de campo Domingos George volho, que actualmte serve a VMag.de na guerra dos Palmares, contra os negros rebelados nas capitánias de Pern.co," cited in Ernesto Ennes, *As guerras nos Palmares (subsídios para a sua história)* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1938), 325.

Little Angola, and instead suggests that it may be *ngola iadianga*, Kimbundu for “first Angola.”⁴⁰¹ Thornton disputes this possibility on the basis of grammar, given the lack of noun class concord in Anderson’s construction.⁴⁰²

The most salient possible interpretation of this late title for the fugitive communities is *Angola Yanga*, or *Fugitive Angola*, or possibly *Wary Angola*. In Kimbundu, *yanga* has a variety of meanings connected to apprehension and maroonage, including “from *ya/nga* = to be released (agitated)/[...] To be afraid, be suspicious, hurry up, shake up, worry/[...]From *e/yanga* = place of / to be apprehensive [...]/ ***Village of fugitives, always fearful; refuge of animals in the islets of riverine confluences.***”⁴⁰³ *Yanga*, or *nyanga*, has related meanings in Cokwe: “hunter or fisher (professional or consecrated, person or animal) [...] / Spirit [...] of a deceased hunter (‘embodied’ [...] by] possessing the body of a familiar and tormenting them because they desecrated the cult of their ancestor.”⁴⁰⁴ At its core, then, the term refers to the danger of pursuing and being pursued; the gloss emphasized in the original dictionary, of a village of apprehensive fugitives, is most suggestive about how this term was used by Palmarinos at the end of the seventeenth-century, the single time that it appears in the written record. This is not a name that a confident centralized political authority – even one who aspired to the kind of

⁴⁰¹ Anderson, “The Quilombo of Palmares,” 559.

⁴⁰² Thornton, “Les Etats de l’Angola,” 774. Thornton’s critique of Anderson does not appear in the French version of this article in print, but rather in the English original.

⁴⁰³ Manso, *Dicionário etimológico Bundo-Português*, II: 1712. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁰⁴ Barbosa, *Dicionário cokwe-português*, 385, 707. Note that both the Kimbundu and Cokwe glosses I have provided here are in class concord with “Angola.” It is possible that the Kimbundu and Cokwe terms here reflect two different roots – the Cokwe term relating more directly to the Kimbundu term *nganga* – that, deeper in antiquity, were related. Carolyn Vieira-Martinez, personal communication, 5 August 2012.

power that the kings of Ndongo (Angola) held -- would have used to describe itself. Rather, it evokes the kind of terror of being pursued, always watchful, stranded on a small island watching a rising tide -- the experiences of the vast majority of unnamed Palmarinos who lived under perpetual threat. While the use of "Angola" may well reflect the importance both of Ndongo political culture and Angola as a region of provenance for many Palmarinos, the qualification of Angola with *Janga* reflects both the experiences and strategies of Angola in a strange land. *Angola Janga* is perhaps the most eloquent testimony we can access about the affective reality of fugitive modernities.

Conclusions

In Kisama, the dialogical relationship between insiders invested in promoting a certain vision of Kisama in order to attract more fugitives and outsiders who were both awed by Kafuxi Ambari's power and baffled by the multiplicity of political power between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers helped forge and reinforce the Kisama meme. Largely static since the early seventeenth century, the Kisama meme obscures the conflicts, contestations, and changes within Kisama itself over the course of four centuries. During the eighteenth century, when Kasanje's state power was at its height, Kisama in general, Kafuxi Ambari in particular, and the Kisama meme largely faded from the quotidian set list of the Portuguese colonial lexicon, returning again in the late nineteenth century when skilled warriors in Kisama again plagued Portuguese efforts to control the interior. However, even in the twenty and twenty-first centuries, politically-interested parties both within and without Kisama continue to deploy this meme for their own ends. Within the scholarship on Palmares, the Kisama meme appears in only attenuated form, and only relatively recently. While those who mistakenly interpreted

Andalaquituxe as Ndala Kafuxi may have been aware of the Kisama meme, they did not explicitly write this resistance archetype from Angola into their narratives of Palmares. Much like the MPLA authors of *História de Angola*, these activist/scholars may have found the fragmented political practices of Kisama at best unintelligible and at worst dangerous.

What the complicated dynamics of Kisama's history can help us understand, however, is the ways in which thousands of maroons in northeastern Brazil crafted their own fugitive modernities over more than a century. In spite of never-ending assaults, Palmarinos created at least nine large *mocambos*, and many smaller, that were able to ally with each other during times of need even while maintaining a degree of autonomy. Though Nganga Zumba represented himself as king of all of Palmares, Zumbi's refusal to accept the terms of his accord with the Portuguese and his poisoning of Nganga Zumba shows the depth of political dissent within Palmares. Just as in Kisama, where Kafuxi Ambari at times commanded broad enough power throughout the region that the Portuguese labeled him "king," so too was Nganga Zumba's authority within Palmares subject to the will of the waves of fugitives from whom he derived his power and legitimacy. Such an assertion of political will by fugitives, whether in Angola or in the Americas, represented fugitive ideology and political praxis that the Portuguese were wise to fear in post-Brazilian independence Angola, even as they misunderstood it.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

In the preceding chapters, I have traced the dynamic relationship between the counter-state politics of Kisama, the attraction and incorporation of fugitives into decentralized societies, and the uneven development of of fugitive modernities within Kisama, in dialog not only with the slaving and imperial interests of Kongo, Ndongo, Matamba, Kasanje, the Portuguese, and the Dutch, but also with competing fugitive modernities, such as those of the Imbangala. From Kafuxi Ambari's decisive defeat of the Portuguese in 1594 onward, Kisama's enemies, African and European alike, understood Kisama as a dual threat. While Kisama's resistance materially harmed imperial and slaving interests, and its role as a haven for fugitives was detrimental to the slaving economy, as the Portuguese recognized, perhaps the most significant threat posed by Kisama was the psychological and discursive power of its ongoing victories. From the seventeenth-century Portuguese pre-occupation with the fact that the resistance of Kisama, "publicize[s] to the neighboring nations that the arms of Your Majesty do not conquer, because theirs [those of the people of Kisama] are the strongest," and that the inhabitants of Kisama, "glorify in a certain independence," to the post-Brazilian independence assertion that Kisama was the most dangerous node of resistance in Angola at a time when the "ashes of revolutionary fires burn hot," Kisama represented the enduring possibility of life outside of the increasingly synonymous tyrannies of state and slave-trading powers.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁵ Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino, "Exame das cartas do Governador de Angola acerca do estado da Provincia, guerra da Quiçama e do Congo," 13 July 1655, in *MMA XI*: 498-9, Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica*, I: 22., AHNA, Ofícios para o reino, caixa 11, n. 14, f. 19, Nicolau Abreu de Castelo Branco, 4 September 1824.

Like all of its neighbors to the north, south, and east, Kisama society was marked by divisions between new-comers and old-timers, the powerful and the dependent. What distinguished Kisama from these likewise unequal neighboring societies, however, was the centrality of fugitives in shaping political will. While in contemporary Ndongo, leaders were consolidating their centralized rule by using royal bondsmen and women as agents of their interests, in Kisama, a class of dependent newcomers themselves exercised a decisive role in determining the contours of political legitimacy, rejecting the authority of leaders whose interests seemed inimical to the well-being of fugitives.⁴⁰⁶ Fugitives initially fled to Kisama because Kafuxi Ambari's powerful martial and spiritual skills attracted those who were weak and vulnerable, and sought defense from the predatory raids and actions of centralized states and Imbangala alike. They remained in Kisama and continued to flee there for centuries because the rulers of Kisama defended the interests of their fugitive dependents, to such an extent that Cadornega cited defense of recent fugitives as the, "motive of these powerful Sobas of Quissama to make this revolution."⁴⁰⁷

Not only did this revolutionary reputation spread far beyond the Kwanza and Longa Rivers in Angola, attracting an endless stream of maroons well into the nineteenth century, but it also traveled across the Atlantic in the experiences and imaginations of the millions West Central Africans who arrived in Americas in chains. In particular, the ideology developing within Kisama during the 1620s and 1630s, when fugitives began to assert their political will in shaping the exercise of political authority, had ramifications

⁴⁰⁶ For early seventeenth-century Ndongo, see Thornton, "Legitimacy and Political Power," 29.

⁴⁰⁷ Cadornega, *História geral das guerras angolanas*, II: 381.

far beyond Angola. Indeed, in the testimonies of maroons from the *palenque* Limón outside of Cartagena, New Grenada, it is possible to discern continuities in discourses about the relationship between violence, community, and political legitimacy. While the Limoneses who testified identified some of their comrades as Kisama, we do not have the same name-specificity in our evidence from the Brazilian *quilombo* Palmares.

Nevertheless, the profound disagreement between Nganga Zumba and Zumbi over the legitimacy of an authority marked by accommodation with the Portuguese reflects similar disputes in Kisama, particularly during the war of 1655-1658. Despite the ways in which Kisama political practice was characterized by dissent and dispute on either side of the Atlantic, however, the one-dimensional Kisama meme has dominated both scholarly and popular representations of Kisama. From Portuguese army officers in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries to Angolan nationalist writers of the revolution, discourses about Kisama remained firmly rooted in the salt, war, and the fugitive haven dynamics of the early seventeenth century. By disaggregating Kisama histories from the Kisama meme, however, we draw closer to an understanding of the ways in which fugitive modernities develop, change, and spread across landscapes, oceans, cultures, and time.

Kisama's history has not remained at the margins of both popular and scholarly discourse because it is unimportant. Rather, Kisama's relegation to the margins reflects the very challenge that its existence – as a martially rebellious region, as a politically fragmented and autonomous society, and as a set of political ideologies and tools that traversed both the rugged terrain of Angola's interior and the treacherous waves of the Atlantic Ocean – represents to states and empires. Gilroy usefully reminds us that any

notion of modernity that fails to account for the trans-national practices of black intellectuals navigating the varied terrains of disenfranchisement and violence within and between many different nation states is inadequate. Building on the work of Scott and others, I have argued that any scheme of modernity and political development that fails to account for the intellectual and political dynamism in the diffuse and diverse political entities that rejected institutionalized centralization not only misses more than half of the story, but also distorts the history of states themselves. Why else would the common mythology of state evoke the danger from the barbaric hordes at the border?

The notion of fugitive modernities disrupts the neat teleological arguments of states, and forces us to ask questions that transcend anachronism. By insisting on a view of fugitive modernities in the plural, we can examine important differences between, for example, politics in Kisama and among Imbangala groups in early seventeenth-century Angola on a level deeper than “cultural difference.” While the people who became Kisama and those who became Imbangala may have spoken mutually-intelligible languages and shared broad cosmological notions, they held radically divergent ideologies of political legitimacy and the relationship of violence to just authority. Their languages may have been mutually intelligible, but their organizing social idioms were far less so. Unpredictably, however, the Imbangala transposed their radical rejection of widespread idioms of social reciprocity and kinship onto an emerging state by the mid-seventeenth century. Kasanje thrived from capturing and selling its neighbors, while *sobas* within Kisama expanded their power by attracting and incorporating fugitives.

In the turbulent world of the seventeenth century, those who participated in crafting fugitive modernities – in Kisama, in Limón or Palmares, or in the thousands of

maroon communities across Africa and the Americas, not to mention maritime maroons – responded to the increasingly brutal, dangerous conditions wrought by the cooperation, competition, and contestation between European, African, and indigenous American states by forging viable political alternatives. These fugitive societies at times incorporated technologies and practices of the state, but always in service of defending autonomy. Despite his frequent and shifting alliances within and beyond Kisama and his sporadic subjugation of his neighbors, after all, Kafuxi Ambari never formed a kingdom; indeed, while he was reputed to be in line of succession for leadership of Ndongo, Kafuxi Ambari remained committed to non-state politics in a land dominated by the presence of maroons.

Employing the concept of fugitive modernities for our interrogation of the relationship between African intellectual and political practices and the meaning of such universalizing terms as modernity requires re-imagining the kinds of questions we ask of history. In effect, it challenges us to suspend our assurance in the vectors of human society and instead broaden our notions of what was possible in the past; more importantly, perhaps, it compels us to imagine futures not woven by the inevitable threads of state. Instead of searching for narratives to explain the accretion of power, we can begin to listen to the fragmented ideologies that underwrote what we all too often dismiss as mere survival. Fugitive modernities forge a space for rigorous, trans-local, trans-Atlantic studies of “the aspirations that fueled flight and the yearning for freedom...these shared dreams that might open a common road to a future in which the

longings and disappointed hopes of captives, slaves, and fugitives might be realized.”⁴⁰⁸

While states have shown themselves remarkably adept at appropriating the legacies of resistance, the political developments worldwide over the last year show that hegemony is never absolute, and that even in the twenty-first century, those resisting unjust power do not necessarily aspire to reform or re-staff the state.

⁴⁰⁸ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 234.

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