The ATLANTIC WORLD *and* VIRGINIA, 1550–1624

EDITED BY PETER C. MANCALL

The Omohundro Institute of
Early American History and Culture
is sponsored jointly by the
College of William and Mary and the
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
On November 15, 1996, the Institute adopted
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from Malvern H. Omohundro, Jr.

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Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
The Atlantic world and Virginia, 1550–1624 / edited by Peter C. Mancall.
p. cm.
Essays from an international conference entitled The Atlantic world and
Virginia, 1550–1624, held in Williamsburg, Va., Mar. 4–7, 2004
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-8078-3159-5 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN-13: 978-0-8078-5848-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Virginia—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600–1775—Congresses.
2. America—History—To 1810—Congresses. 3. Great Britain—Colonies—
America—History—16th century—Congresses. 4. Great Britain—Colonies—
America—History—17th century—Congresses. 5. Europe—Colonies—America—
History—Congresses. 6. Acculturation—America—History—Congresses.
7. Virginia—Ethnic relations—History—16th century—Congresses. 8. Virginia—
Ethnic relations—History—17th century—Congresses. 9. America—Ethnic
relations—History—16th century—Congresses. 10 America—Ethnic relations—
History—17th century—Congresses. I. Mancall, Peter C. II. Omohundro
Institute of Early American History & Culture.
F229.A875 2007
975.5'02—dc22 2007000103

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and
durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity
of the Council on Library Resources.

This volume received indirect support from an
unrestricted book publications grant awarded to the Institute by the
L. J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation of Oakland, California.

cloth 11 10 09 08 07 5 4 3 2 1
paper 11 10 09 08 07 5 4 3 2 1

James H. Sweet

AFRICAN IDENTITY AND SLAVE RESISTANCE IN THE PORTUGUESE ATLANTIC

Every good historian of early English North America is familiar with the story of the "20. and odd Negroes" that arrived in Jamestown in 1619, purchased from a Dutch "man of Warr" by English settlers who themselves arrived in the Chesapeake only some twelve years earlier. We now know that this Dutch ship arrived at Point Comfort from the Caribbean, where it teamed up with the English corsair *Treasurer* to commandeer the Portuguese slave ship *São João Bautista*. The *São João Bautista* was on its way to Veracruz, Mexico, directly from the Angolan port of Luanda, where it collected a cargo of enslaved Africans, most likely from the Kingdom of Ndongo, about two hundred miles into Central Africa.[1]

Despite the almost certain Central African provenance of the pirated "20. and odd Negroes," some scholars have embraced the idea that these Africans, along with the hundreds who followed them over the next generation, were "Atlantic Creoles." Atlantic Creoles originated in coastal Africa and were intimate with European sociocultural norms. They were multilingual, culturally flexible, and socially agile. According to at least one proponent of this argument, these enslaved Africans "found the settlements around

I would like to thank John Coombes, Neil Kodesh, and Jessica Krug for commenting on early drafts of this essay. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their insightful suggestions.

1. Engel Sluiter, "New Light on the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia, August 1619," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., LIV (1997), 395-399; John Thornton, "The African Experience of the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia in 1619," ibid., LV (1998), 421-434. These were not the first Africans in the Virginia colony. William Thorndale has demonstrated that, in the March 1619 census, thirty-two Afro-Virginians were already in the colony. See Thorndale, "The Virginia Census of 1619," *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, XXXIII (1995), 155-170.

Chesapeake Bay little different from those they had left along the Atlantic rim . . . [and were] very much at home in the new environment."[2]

Several distinguished American historians have criticized the exaggeration of the Atlantic Creoles argument; yet the idea remains salient, not only in university classrooms but also in the realm of public history, through PBS documentaries like *Slavery and the Making of America*.[3] Debates over the character of North America's "charter generation" of African slaves likely will not cease anytime soon. Nevertheless, everyone seems to agree that the identities of the enslaved were forged through various cultural dialogues that encompass the breadth of the Atlantic world. Nowhere is this more suggestive than in the case of those enslaved Central Africans who passed from Imbangala, to Portuguese, to Dutch, and, finally, to English settlers' hands in Jamestown in 1619.[4]

This essay attempts to contextualize the "Creole" identities of Virginia's charter generation of African slaves, especially those "20. and odd" who arrived in the Americas on board a Portuguese vessel. Comparing and contrasting three different Portuguese Atlantic settings between 1550 and 1624 will demonstrate the historical contingencies of identity formation and suggest some of the variables that shaped the identities of runaway Africans in the early Portuguese Atlantic world. In Portugal, "Jolof" slaves used their Islamic identity to forge connections with "Turks" and "Moors," with whom they plotted to run away to North Africa. Kinship ties between ethnic Jolofs remained important, but the conditions of enslavement necessitated newer, broader alliances. In São Tomé and Brazil, enslaved Africans did not have the option of escaping back to their homelands; thus, they formed runaway communities in their new environments. Throughout history, these runaway communities have been characterized as essentially "Angolan." Closer examination reveals the complex and mixed ethnic heritage of runaway communities in both São Tomé and Brazil, particularly in their early years.

In the end, this examination may also shed light on the continuing debates over the complexities of identity formation in early British North America. Like the Jolofs in Portugal, the Central Africans who arrived in the Chesapeake in 1619 carried with them ideas and understandings that were deeply etched in their African pasts. Some of these ideas cohered with those that existed in the lands of their enslavement, and Africans capitalized on this confluence as a means to improve their condition. Still, as the São Tomé and Brazil cases will demonstrate, we must be careful not to generalize the early processes of identity formation in the Chesapeake. Enslaved Africans in early-seventeenth-century Virginia did not forge themselves as Atlantic Creoles, but neither were they able to create Ndongo, Angolan, or even Central African communities. Indeed, unlike the situation in other parts of the Atlantic world, the atomization of Africans in early Virginia precluded the creation of slave communities until at least the middle of the seventeenth century.

Portuguese Beginnings

The Atlantic slave trade began, not with the trade to the Americas, but rather with a substantial trade to Portugal and the Atlantic islands. As early as the second decade of the sixteenth century, Portuguese ships carried one thousand African slaves per year to various destinations in Africa, the Atlantic islands, and Portugal itself, making the enslaved the most commonly offered commodity on the African side of the Portuguese-African trade.[5] Such a start to the Atlantic slave trade was a clear expression of the potential for African supply and European demand. By the 1520s, more than 156,000 African slaves had been transported to Portugal and its Atlantic island colonies, roughly a third of the number that would be delivered during the entire 250-year history of the slave trade to the territories that would eventu-

2. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), 40.

3. For critiques of the Atlantic Creoles argument, see "Tapestry of Shame," Peter Kolchin's review of Ira Berlin's *Many Thousands Gone* in *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, Nov. 22, 1998, 12. Also see James Oakes's review ("Slaves without Contexts") in *Journal of the Early Republic*, XIX (1999), 103–109. Finally, see Peter Coclanis's trenchant review of Berlin's more recent work, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, in *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LXI (2004), 544–556. As evidence of the traction of the Atlantic Creole idea, see Edward Countryman, ed., *How Did American Slavery Begin?* (Boston, 1999). The PBS documentary, *Slavery and the Making of America*, premiered on Feb. 9, 2005.

4. Imbangalas were Central African mercenary warriors who were responsible for the enslavement of thousands of Ndongo people between 1618 and 1620. See Thornton, "The African Experience," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LV (1998), 421–434.

5. Ivana Elbl, "The Volume of the Early Atlantic Slave Trade, 1450–1521," *Journal of African History*, XXXVIII (1997), 31–76. Elbl shows that slaves were 60–95 percent of all African exports to Europe during this period. For a further articulation of this argument, see Elbl, "'Slaves Are a Very Risky Business . . .': Supply and Demand in the Early Atlantic Slave Trade," in José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery* (Amherst, N.Y., 2004), 29–55.

ally become the United States. Though the trade to Portugal abated by the 1530s as the export market to the Americas blossomed, by the 1550s African slaves were once again arriving in Portugal in numbers that rivaled those from the earlier period.[6]

The largest concentration of Portugal's slaves resided in and around Lisbon, although significant numbers also lived in the major cities of the north and in the southern region of the country. Sub-Saharan Africans represented the largest contingent of slaves by the middle of the sixteenth century, but North African "Moors," Ottoman "Turks," and East Indians still accounted for a small portion of the country's enslaved population. By 1550, Lisbon had nearly ten thousand slaves, or roughly 10 percent of the city's population. In the southern region, slaves were widely scattered but overall represented around 6 percent of the population. Most urban slaves engaged in tasks that placed them in close contact with their masters—as body servants, apprentices, fishermen, and so forth. In rural areas, slaves worked as herdsmen, grape pickers, and in the production of olive oil.[7]

The level of discomfort in the daily lives of Portugal's African captives varied according to the nature of their work and the attitudes of their masters; some were treated cruelly. Chaining, whipping, and burning with hot wax were not unusual punishments for those accused of being derelict in their duties. Some slaves lacked adequate clothing and food. Africans were also susceptible to European diseases. By law, slaves were prohibited from gathering in groups, and nighttime curfews were also enforced. In short, slaves' lives in sixteenth-century Lisbon were not altogether unlike those of slaves in the urban areas that would later emerge in the Americas.[8]

6. A. C. de C. M. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441–1555* (Cambridge, 1982), 23.

7. Saunders, *Social History,* 50–58, 63–72. On southern Portugal, see Jorge Fonseca, *Escravos no sul de Portugal, séculos XVI–XVII,* Rota do escravo, no. 2 (Lisbon, 2002). Fonseca found that Africans and their descendants represented 83.7 percent of the south's slave population in the sixteenth century, followed by Mouriscos (9.3 percent), East Indians (6.5 percent), and a negligible number of Chinese (29–34). His data reveal that slaves made up only 5.5 percent of the population in southern Portugal in the sixteenth century, with only the Algarve reaching as high as 8.4 percent (28). These figures significantly reduce the estimated 10 percent claimed by Saunders for southern Portugal (54–55). Earlier histories of slavery in Iberia minimized the importance of slave labor in agriculture, but Fonseca notes that they were by no means inconsequential. In the southern region of Portugal, slaves were more likely to be engaged in agricultural pursuits than in any other tasks (36, 77–92).

8. Saunders, *Social History,* 107–108.

The African response to slave life in Portugal was rather predictable. Petty thievery was probably the most common form of resistance. Slaves stole fish, grapes, clothes, and such—all items to improve their daily living conditions. Others defied Portuguese law and the Catholic Church, gathering to socialize and gamble on Sundays and holy days. Still others took out their frustrations on their fellow slaves, violently lashing out with fists, clubs, and knives.[9] For those who found their lives particularly intolerable, flight was an option. Unlike most places in the Americas, no runaway slave communities existed in Portugal; there simply were not enough slaves to sustain such communities, and isolated runaways were easily identified. Those who made it across the Castilian border were frequently extradited to their Portuguese masters. The only sure way to effect successful flight was to land in North Africa, or *terra dos mouros* (land of the Moors), as it was more commonly known, some three hundred miles from the southern coast of Portugal. Such a trip required a boat and navigational skills or the financial means to pay a boat captain. Although the majority of slaves had none of these resources, some still tried to escape.

African slaves in Portugal attempted to steal boats and return to Africa from as early as the fifteenth century, but not until the 1550s do we see a rash of these attempts, almost always by Senegambian slaves. Indeed, among the slaves imported into Lisbon (and parts of the Americas) in the mid-sixteenth century were large numbers of Islamic Jolofs. The majority of these slaves were captured through warfare in Senegambia, as the coastal provinces of Kajoor, Waalo, and Baol broke away from the centralized rule of the Jolof interior.[10] As the Jolof confederation disintegrated in the middle of the sixteenth century, Portuguese traders took advantage of deep political divisions, purchasing slaves from all sides. Whether the political divisions of Senegambia continued to manifest themselves in the slave communities of Europe and the Americas is unclear. The Portuguese identified all en-

9. Ibid., 122–125. See, for instance, the case of the slave Manoel, who was arrested for playing dice games "only on Sundays" (Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo [hereafter cited as ANTT], Chancelería D. Filipe III, Perdões e Legits, livro 14, fols. 308–308v [Oct. 18, 1623]). On slaves' stabbing other slaves, see ibid., fols. 310v–311 (Nov. 6, 1623), and livro 12, fol. 5v (July 23, 1633).

10. Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge, 1998), 8, 43–44. On the earliest attempts to steal boats and return to Africa, see Saunders, *Social History,* 137–138. James Lockhart found 45 "Jelofs" in a sample of 207 Africans in Peru between 1548 and 1560. These Jelofs constituted the largest group of Africans in his sample. See Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532–1560: A Social History* (Madison, Wis., 1968), 173.

slaved peoples from the region as Jolofs, regardless of their former political affiliations. For slave traders and slaveowners, Jolofs came from the same broad region, spoke the same language, and had at least a marginal belief in Islam. The Portuguese were thus responsible for creating a homogenizing Jolof identity that ignored obvious divisions in northern Senegambia. At the same time, former enemies in Senegambia now had common cause in opposing their enslavement and Portuguese sociocultural hegemony. Many, if not most, of the enslaved quickly recast their identities to adhere to their new condition and context. Ironically, some had to embrace the very Jolof identity they had fought to shed in Senegambia.

Perhaps nowhere is the transformation and expansion of identity in the diaspora clearer than in the realm of religion. As slaves funneled out of Senegambia, they carried their Islamic beliefs with them. This Islamic identity allowed them to forge alliances with fellow slaves in Portugal, not only among fellow Jolofs but also among their Moorish and Turkish religious brethren. Indeed, one of the most striking features of Portuguese slavery for Jolof, Fula, and other Islamic Africans must have been the realization that many slaves shared Islamic faith, regardless of their race or place of birth. Thus, Islam became a central node of identity for many enslaved West Africans in Portugal.

The emergence of an enslaved Muslim community that included significant numbers of Jolofs facilitated the organization of plots to return to Islamic Africa. The majority of these escape attempts failed, but an examination of the individuals involved reveals a great deal about slave identity. Between 1553 and 1566, at least eight Jolof slaves were accused of attempting to return to North Africa. In some of these cases, religious affiliations among diverse Muslims were the inspiration for collective action. In 1561, for instance, an Islamic African named Antônio joined six white Mouriscos in a flight attempt. The seven men had already approached an East Indian boatman to carry them to North Africa, but the plot fell apart when one of the ringleaders was arrested and confessed to the Inquisition. Similarly, in 1564, a Jolof slave, also named Antônio, allied himself with two Turks in his attempt to flee to North Africa. Antônio claimed that, despite his baptism in the Catholic Church, he remained a Muslim and never truly became a Christian. The three men procured a boat and were prepared to depart when their plot was uncovered.[11]

In spite of zealous attempts by some Jolofs to escape, others determined that the risks of flight were too great. In 1554, two Turkish slaves asked a

11. ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processos, nos. 10845, 12869.

Jolof slave named Francisco to help them get to the "land of the Moors." Francisco, who operated a fishing boat for his master in the town of Setúbal, agreed to carry the two Turks to North Africa. The three men decided to leave during the celebration of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, or, as it was also known, the "festa dos negros." On this day, however, the docks were closely guarded, perhaps in response to the flight threat posed by slaves on holy days. Francisco then told the men that any Saturday would probably be a better time to depart.[12]

Similar delays persisted for nearly a year, during which time Francisco prayed the *shahada* as well as other Muslim orations with his religious brethren. When the plot finally unraveled and Francisco was questioned by inquisitors, he claimed that it was not his will to go to North Africa; the Turks had coerced him. Furthermore, he stated, as a forty-year-old man, he was too old to earn money to feed himself in a new land. Francisco told the inquisitors that, when he arrived in Portugal, his master never taught him Catholic prayers and orations, and so he continued his Islamic ways. Francisco's efforts to throw himself at the mercy of the church worked. His only punishment was a short stay in jail and instruction in the faith. When he was reconciled to the church nine months after his arrest, the Inquisition demanded that he continue his religious instruction and attend Mass on Sundays and holy days. The inquisitors also ordered that his master not sell him under penalty of confiscation or payment of the equivalent of his value.[13]

Although religious brotherhood formed the basis for some runaway plots, other escape attempts were almost certainly the result of African kinship affinities. In 1566, a Jolof slave named Antônio tried to persuade another Jolof named Zambo to escape to the "land of the Moors." At the time, the masters of both slaves were imprisoned in the Castle of Lisbon. Antônio complained to Zambo that they were ill clothed and poorly fed. After many hours of conversation, Zambo finally relented and told Antônio, "Brother, let's go."[14]

The two men consulted a boatman named Antônio Fernandes, who agreed to deliver them to "any land of the Moors" in exchange for cash. They

12. Ibid., 7565. This association of the celebration of Nossa Senhora do Rosário with "the party of the negros" is significant in that Africans and their descendants were the most prominent devotees of Our Lady of Rosary. Saunders posits that the majority of black religious brotherhoods were dedicated to Our Lady of Rosary because of the "semi-magical, almost talismanic nature of the rosary itself." See Saunders, *Social History*, 152.

13. ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processos, no. 7565.

14. Ibid., 10870.

arranged a day and time for their departure and agreed to meet at the boatman's house. In the interim, Zambo met an older Jolof man named Pedro, who asked if he could come along with them. Zambo agreed and also persuaded a thirteen-year-old Jolof girl, Antônia, to make the journey. Zambo, Antônia, and Pedro arrived at the boatman's house at the appointed time. After waiting several hours for Antônio, the three Jolofs departed without their comrade. Just as they were launching their boat, they were captured by the police.[15]

In his defense before the Inquisition, Zambo claimed that Antônio had tricked him, forcing him to make the trip against his will. He noted that Antônio was an old man and had been in Portugal for many years. Explaining his own naïveté and that of the other Jolofs, Zambo told inquisitors that he had been in Portugal for only five years; Antônia had arrived the same year he had; and Pedro was "very boçal," having arrived only within the year. Zambo attempted to further protect the young girl, Antônia, by telling inquisitors that he had forced her to join them. Ultimately, Zambo was sentenced to march in the Auto da Fé of 1567 and to undergo instruction in the faith.[16]

In the course of his interrogation, Zambo confessed that, even after being baptized in the Catholic Church, he remained committed to Mohammed and continued to recite Islamic orations. Nevertheless, his involvement in the plot to escape seemed to have far more to do with kinship than religion. The kinlike relationship that was forged between him and the older man, Antônio, was cemented at the moment Zambo told him, "Brother, let's go." Moreover, Zambo took responsibility for a young Jolof girl who was particularly vulnerable. Finally, the recently arrived Pedro also was taken under Zambo's wing. Given Pedro's neophyte status in Portugal, he probably could communicate only in the Wolof language. Indeed, the first language of all the conspirators was likely the language of their common homeland.

Several lessons can be learned from the escape attempts of Jolof slaves in sixteenth century Portugal. Even though Jolofs formed only a small group in Portugal, they found a much larger community of enslaved Muslims who could serve as potential allies. From as early as 1455, European travelers in Africa noted that the Jolof were "not . . . very resolute" in their practice of Islam, "especially the common people."[17] Islam in Senegambia remained

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Alvise da Cadamosto, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on West-*

intertwined with beliefs in ancestral spirits and spirits from the natural world. Nevertheless, in Portugal, religious solidarity between enslaved Jolofs, Turks, and Moors served as a basis for resistance to slavery. For some Jolofs, religious identity probably took on far greater importance in Portugal than it had in their homeland, strengthening the Islamic presence that Portuguese Catholics sought to eradicate.

Moreover, even as Islamic religious identity took on new importance, kinship and kinlike networks remained paramount. Where they could, Jolofs sought out one another, engaged one another in conversation, and sought solutions to their collective condition. As Zambo's case illustrates, runaway attempts were not conspiracies by random slaves. They were built on affiliations that began in Africa through a shared language, a shared understanding of age and kinship obligations, and so on. In the end, Jolof identity in Portugal was simultaneously shaped by the Portuguese present and the African past, as the various cultural strands fused to create a new culture of resistance to slavery in Portugal.

Developing Communities of Runaways: São Tomé and Brazil

During roughly the same period that Jolof slaves were banding together to run away from their masters in Portugal, similar groups of slaves formed the Portuguese Atlantic's first runaway communities in São Tomé and Brazil. The history of runaway slave communities is intimately tied to some of the most important foundational myths of each of these countries. In São Tomé, the communities of *Angolares* have been held up as a bastion of Angolan-derived resistance to Portuguese colonialism. Similarly, in Brazil, the communities of Palmares have served to demonstrate the rejection of the colonial slave regime and the creation of an independent, Angolan-inspired "republic" in Pernambuco (present-day Alagoas). Although there is some degree of truth in each of these myths, the history of these societies is often collapsed into a timeless composite. In fact, it often seems that these runaway communities have no history at all. As rendered in much of the scholarly literature, these communities attained their essential characters almost from their inceptions and carried them forward into subsequent centuries. Following is an attempt to unravel the earliest histories of these famous runaway communities and to add some historical specificity to the foundational myths.

In the sixteenth century, São Tomé became the Atlantic's first true "sugar

ern Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century, trans. and ed. G. R. Crone, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2d Ser., no. 86 (London, 1937), 31.

society," its very creation and economic sustenance resting solely on the backs of African slaves. By the 1550s, the island had between sixty and eighty sugar mills that produced a total of 150,000 arrobas (2,150 tons) of sugar per year. The average sugar plantation had between one hundred and three hundred slaves, creating a slave labor force of around ten thousand for the entire island. Living conditions for the island's slaves were abysmal. Their huts were infested with fleas and lice. Disease and malnourishment were common. And it was not unheard of for masters to murder disobedient slaves. As would be the case some years later in Brazil, the ill treatment of São Tomé's slaves prompted one priest to comment that they were treated "worse than cattle."[18]

São Tomé's slaves responded to their daily hardships in much the same way as other slaves across the diaspora—they fled. From the very beginnings of sugar production on the island, slaves began running away from the cane fields, and the pace of slave flight increased rapidly by the second decade of the sixteenth century. Between 1514 and 1527, nearly 5 percent of the slaves that arrived in São Tomé escaped, accounting for almost 700 runaways. By the 1530s, long periods of famine prompted even more slaves to abandon the sugar plantations, swelling the ranks of the runaway communities. In 1530, the royal factor counted 230 slaves that fled to the interior. These slaves, from a variety of African backgrounds, usually ran to the densely wooded areas of the island. There, they formed communities that survived, in part, by raiding Portuguese villages. Planters and government officials became so concerned with the threat that they dispatched armed troops to destroy the runaway settlements. Only a year later, in 1531, the runaways defeated the troops that were sent to subdue them, prompting planters who lived nearest to the forest to abandon their properties and move closer to the city. Fearing imminent attack by the runaways, in 1535 residents of the island asked the Crown to send troops to aid in the *guerra do mato* (bush war). Entries into the bush were frequent but largely ineffective, as the runaway communities continued to grow. In 1545, one resident complained of an army of 600 to 800 armed slaves who attacked his homestead. By this time, the communities were self-replicating. During one entry in 1547, a planter and his armed slaves captured 40 fugitives, including women and children.[19] The cycle of runaways, assaults on the island's city, and the responses of armed militias continued throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, culminating in the 1590s in a series of bold attacks by the runaways on the island's major city, led by a man named Amador. The city of São Tomé was nearly overthrown in 1595. Though Amador was arrested and executed in 1597, runaways continued to plague the island well into the seventeenth century.

Despite the clear narrative of events leading to the buildup of São Tomé's runaway slave communities, described above, the dominant historiography of the island reveals a very different account. Indeed, the early history of runaway communities is practically erased in favor of a more dramatic story emanating from eighteenth-century oral history.[20] A group of enslaved Africans, known as Angolares, were shipwrecked off the coast of São Tomé in 1554. Supposedly, they were on their way from Angola to Brazil. The survivors of the wreck swam ashore and settled in the southern hinterlands of the island, building several small *quilombos* (runaway communities) on Mount Cambumbé. There, they continued to speak the Kimbundu language and to live according to Angolan customs. The first contacts between the Angolares and the island's other inhabitants allegedly came when runaways from the island's sugar plantations were welcomed into the Angolan community. Not until 1574 did the Portuguese learn of the Angolares, when the residents of the quilombos made their first raids on the city of São Tomé. Throughout the latter part of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese attempted to eradicate the Angolares, conducting military expeditions against the villages, but the Angolares were never vanquished.[21] Supposedly, the Angolar communities maintained their ethnic integrity well into the nineteenth century, as the inhabitants remained "fetishists and su-

18. Robert Garfield, *A History of São Tomé Island, 1470–1655: The Key to Guinea* (San Francisco, Calif., 1992), 72–73; J. Cuvalier and L. Jadin, *L'Ancien Congo d'apres les archives romains (1518–1640),* Memoires de l'academie royale des sciences coloniales, XXXVI (1954), 154–155 (report of Bishop Ulhoa, ca. 1590). For the treatment of slaves in Bahia in the 1630s, see Father Antônio Rodrigues's comment that an overseer knew "how to treat the bulls better than the Negroes" (ANTT, Cartório dos Jesuítas, maço 69, no. 75).

19. Catarina Madeira Santos, "A formação das estruturas fundiárias e a territorialização das tensões sociais: São Tomé, primeira metade do século XVI," *Studia,* LIV–LV (1996), 77, 78; Rui Ramos, "Rebelião e sociedade colonial: 'Alvoroços' e 'levantamentos' em São Tomé (1545–1555)," *Revista internacional de estudos africanos,* IV–V (1986), 31, 34, 35.

20. Father Manuel Rosário Pinto recorded the oral history in 1734. For a transcription of this "Relação," see António Ambrósio, "Manuel Rosário Pinto," *Studia,* XXX–XXXI (1970), 205–329.

21. This version of events can be found in Francisco Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé* (Lisbon, 1961), 63–73; and Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island,* 76–79.

perstitious like the Negro from Angola." They also purportedly held property in common, elected kings and chiefs, and spoke a language that was a mix of São Tomé dialect and Kimbundu.[22]

Several historians have questioned the veracity of the Angolar legend, noting that the mention of shipwrecks and the term "Angolar" do not appear in the documents until the eighteenth century. Moreover, until the middle of the sixteenth century, the majority of São Tomé's slaves were imported from Kongo, not Angola. Others came from the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra.[23] The early runaway communities of São Tomé were thus a peculiarly Sãotomense phenomenon, reflecting the mixture of various African and Portuguese cultural influences. The later emphasis on Angola may be explained by the increased presence of Angolans in São Tomé beginning in the last decades of the sixteenth century, or it may be an error of the eighteenth-century oral sources, since the ethnic signifier "Angola" had come to mean any area along the West Central African coast, including Kongo. Certainly, São Tomé's "bush wars" of the late sixteenth century were not the direct legacy of a single shipwreck of Angolans; rather, they were the result of a mixed group of Africans who came together in the slave communities and forests of the island to assert their freedom.

Even as the city of São Tomé withered under Amador's siege in the mid-1590s, African slaves were creating the first significant runaway communities in Brazil. The connection between the two situations was not lost on the Portuguese. In 1597, the Jesuit priest, Pedro Rodrigues, noted that among the enemies of the Portuguese in Brazil were "the runaway negros from Guiné who are in some of the mountains of Brazil from whence they come to make raids, and there could come a time when they will dare to destroy

22. Almada Negreiros, *Historia ethnographica da ilha de S. Thomé* (Lisbon, 1895), 296–300. Gerardo A. Lorenzino's work on the Angolar language complicates the formulation of Almada Negreiros, noting the significant contribution of Kwa to the Bantu-Sãotomense mix. See Lorenzino, *The Angolar Creole Portuguese of São Tomé: Its Grammar and Sociolinguistic History* (Munich, 1998).

23. See Jan Vansina, "Quilombos on São Tomé; or, In Search of Original Sources," *History in Africa,* XXIII (1996), 453–459; and Gerhard Seibert, "A Questão da origem dos Angolares de São Tomé," Brief Papers, no. 5/98, Centro dos Estudos Africanos, Lisbon, 1998. John Thornton shows that imports from Mpinda to São Tomé rose from 2,000–3,000 in the 1520s to 4,000–5,000 in the 1530s, to as many as 6,000–7,000 in 1548 (Thornton, "Early Kongo-Portuguese Relations: A New Interpretation," *History in Africa,* VIII [1981], 183–204. Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, Wis., 1969), 99–100, estimates that roughly 20 percent of São Tomé's slaves came from the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra.

the *fazendas* [cane farms], as their relatives do on the island of São Tomé." Of course, Father Rodrigues's prediction soon came to pass. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, runaways plagued Portuguese settlements from Bahia to Pernambuco. In a report describing the Jesuit mission to the Bahian Recôncavo in 1617, an anonymous priest wrote:

> The people from Angola who come to these parts . . . have the custom of fleeing to the woods, joining together in small groups and living from the assaults that they make on the residents, stealing livestock and destroying their crops and cane fields, which results in much damage and many losses, beyond those losses that come from the lack of their daily services. And many of them live for many years in the woods, and some never return because they go to the Mocambos, which are some . . . small villages . . . where they live many leagues inside the forest. And from there, they make their assaults, robbing and attacking and often times killing many. And in these assaults they try to carry away their male and female kinsmen to live with them as pagans.[24]

Little detail is known about these first African runaways, but Brazil's most famous runaway slave community, Palmares, also allegedly emerged during this early period in the southern part of Pernambuco. Like the history of the Angolares in São Tomé, the long history of Palmares has been distorted to reflect a dominant Angolan presence, albeit with influences from Brazilian-born blacks, Indians, and even whites. Based largely on documentation from the late seventeenth century, scholars have focused on the characterization of Palmares as an Angolan-derived quilombo. They also have emphasized important symbolic connections to Angola: members of the community called it "Angola janga" (little Angola), its leader was known as Ganga Zumba, and so on.[25] Robert Anderson has raised questions about the extent to which Palmares was Angolan in the late

24. Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter cited as ARSI), Brasilia 26, fol. 218, Brasilia 8, I, fols. 46–47. The report is also quoted in Stuart B. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery* (Urbana, Ill., 1992), 105.

25. The seminal study of Palmares is Edison Carneiro, *O Quilombo dos Palmares,* 4th ed. (São Paulo, 1988), orig. publ. as *Guerras de los Palmares* (Mexico City, 1946). Also see Décio Freitas, *Palmares: A Guerra dos Escravos,* 2d ed. (Rio de Janeiro, 1978). For African influences on Palmares, see Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil* (São Paulo, 1933). The best-known English work on Palmares is still R. K. Kent, "Palmares: An African State in Brazil," *Journal of African History,* VI (1965), 161–175. Also see Stuart B. Schwartz, "Rethinking Palmares: Slave Resistance in Colonial Brazil," in Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels,* 103–136.

seventeenth century. He notes that the population of Palmares was, by that time, largely Brazilian-born. Moreover, recent archaeological evidence suggests that there was a strong indigenous presence at Palmares in its later years.[26] These findings clearly demonstrate that Palmares underwent important transformations over the course of its history, but they reveal very little about the earliest years of the famous runaway community. When did Palmares take on its Angolan qualities? Were the Angolan influences a result of the first generations of slaves in Pernambuco, or did they come later?

Though we may never be able to answer these questions completely, one thing is clear: there is little evidence to suggest a preponderance of Angolan influences in the earliest manifestations of Palmares. Some scholars claim that the first runaway communities of Palmares emerged in the late sixteenth century.[27] If so, we can be almost certain that Palmares began as a mixed community of Indians and Africans of various backgrounds. Until the last decades of the sixteenth century, Brazil's slave population was made up largely of indigenous peoples. Africans began arriving in significant numbers around the middle of the sixteenth century from a variety of destinations, although Central Africa became the dominant source for the colony's slaves by the 1590s. Evidence suggests that the first groups of runaways were a reflection of this mixed slave population. In particular, runaway Africans joined so-called santidades, renegade communities that have long been associated with indigenous millenarianism. The santidade cult of Jaguaripe, Bahia, is perhaps the best known. There, Indian, African, and mixed-race runaways formed a religious community that sought to overthrow Portuguese slaveowners and to make themselves "lords of the white

26. Robert Nelson Anderson, "The *Quilombo* of Palmares: A New Overview of a Maroon State in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," *Journal of Latin American Studies,* XXVIII (1996), 545–566. Anderson uncovers a number of problems with Kent's research, including errors in Portuguese translation and faulty historical interpretations. Pedro Paulo de Abreu Funari, "A arqueologia de Palmares—Sua contribuição para o conhecimento da história da cultura afro-americana," in João José Reis and Flávio dos Santos Gomes, eds., *Liberdade por um fio: História dos quilombos no Brasil* (São Paulo, 1996), 26–51. More recently, see Funari, "Conflict and the Interpretation of Palmares, a Brazilian Runaway Polity," *Historical Archaeology,* XXXVII (2003), 81–93.

27. Freitas, *Palmares,* 15. See also Ronaldo Vainfas, "Deus contra Palmares: Representações senhoriais e idéias jesuíticas," in Reis and Gomes, eds., *Liberdade por um fio,* 62–63; and Flávio dos Santos Gomes, "Palmares," in Colin A. Palmer, ed., *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History: The Black Experience in the Americas,* 2d ed., IV (New York, 2005), 1713–1716.

people." Adherents engaged in prayers, baptisms, speaking in tongues, and trances induced by alcohol and tobacco. Believers claimed that, once God freed them from the yoke of white supremacy, crops would grow abundantly without any attention, hunters' arrows would travel through the woods in search of prey while the hunters rested, and so on.[28]

Whether Africans understood the full implications of the Christian message elicited by santidades is impossible to know; the message of freedom was one that would have appealed to all slaves, however, regardless of background. The prospect of freedom in the santidades thus might have facilitated a redemptionist form of Christianity in some Africans. This message would have been particularly resonant with those handfuls of Central Africans who already had some contact with Christianity in Africa, a Christianity that was itself endowed with a healthy dose of redemptionist magic.[29]

Regardless of whether religion was part of what drew Africans to santidades, across Brazil during the sixteenth century the formula held that Africans joined Indians in *their* communities. For example, in 1588, Philip I wrote to the governor of Brazil, Francisco Giraldes: "I am informed that . . . between the captaincy of Bahia and Pernambuco, along the coast, there are more than three thousand Indians that have made fortifications, and they make . . . great damage on the farms of my vassals in those parts, drawing to their sides all the Guiné negros that have run away, and they impede the ability to travel from one captaincy to another."[30] Given the preponderance of Indian slaves in the sixteenth century, runaway and renegade communities were usually characterized as Indian. The earliest Africans found themselves more isolated from their African brethren than would later cohorts.

28. See Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550–1835* (Cambridge, 1985), 47–50; and, more recently, Alida C. Metcalf, "Millenarian Slaves? The Santidade of Jaguaripe and Slave Resistance in the Americas," *American Historical Review,* CIV (1999), 1531–1559.

29. For Christianity in Central Africa, see the various works of John K. Thornton, especially "The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1483–1750," *Journal of African History,* XXV (1984), 147–167; "Perspectives on African Christianity," in Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford, eds., *Race, Discourse, and the Making of the Americas: A New World View* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 169–198; and "Religion and Cultural Life in the Kongo and Mbundu Areas, 1500–1800," in Linda Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge, 2002), 71–90.

30. Instituto do Açúcar e do Álcool, *Documentos para a história do açúcar* (Rio de Janeiro, 1963), I, 359–360.

As such, they allied themselves with Indians in a variety of settings, usually known as santidades, as a way of escaping their servitude.

Over time, as more and more Africans began to arrive in Brazil, the Portuguese conflated the meanings of "santidade" and "mocambo" (the Kimbundu word for "hideout").[31] On the one hand, this was a logical shift in the perception of the residents, as prototypical runaway communities shifted from Indian to African. On the other hand, this conflation was an expression of continued alliances between Indians and Central Africans. In 1612, for example, Diogo de Campos Moreno claimed, "Indians run away to the forest . . . where they create . . . abominable rituals and behaviors, joining the negros from Guiné, who have also run away, which results in deaths, thefts, scandals, and violence, so that nobody is able to cross the backlands safely from one part to the other, nor are they able to expand the settlements further into the interior." Moreno noted that these were "mocambos among the negros, or gatherings of runaways that are called Santidades."[32] Not only did Moreno use the terms "mocambos" and "santidades" synonymously, but also his statements demonstrate that, by the second decade of the seventeenth century, Indians were beginning to join well-established African communities, rather than the other way around. Slowly but surely, santidades were giving way to mocambos, as Central Africans supplanted other Africans and Indians in Brazil's slave population.

The use of the Kimbundu term "mocambo" as early as 1612 is a watershed in the history of Brazilian runaway communities. Distinctly Central African ideas were already becoming salient enough to penetrate into the Portuguese vernacular, as the Kimbundu "hideout" became the preferred way of describing runaway slave communities. Yet there is no evidence that these communities were quilombos, the lineageless warrior groups of Angola that were allegedly the inspiration for the social organization of Palmares. The first known use of the term "quilombo" in Brazilian documents does not occur until 1691. Indeed, the first use of the term in the entire Portuguese-speaking world appears as late as 1622 in Angola.[33] That Palmares, or any of the early runaway communities in Brazil, were called quilombos by their inhabitants, or by the Portuguese, is thus highly unlikely.

31. Other scholars have noted this same trend. See, for instance, Ivan Alves Filho, *Memorial dos Palmares* (Rio de Janeiro, 1988), 10–11; and Metcalf, "The Santidade of Jaguaripe," *AHR,* CIV (1999), 1531–1559.

32. Diogo de Campos Moreno, *Livro que dá razão do estado do Brasil—1612* (Recife, 1955), 110, 113.

33. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels,* 125; Vansina, "Quilombos on São Tomé," *History in Africa,* XXIII (1996), 453.

So how and when did Palmares shift from "mocambo" to "quilombo"? Events on both sides of the Atlantic probably contributed to this shift. Marauding bands of warriors, who called themselves Imbangala, emerged in Central Africa from as early as the 1580s, organizing themselves into *kilombo,* merit-based, male warrior societies that cut across lineage boundaries, erasing ties based on natal descent. These lineageless warrior societies were a pragmatic solution to the fracturing of natal kinship units caused by drought, famine, war, and forced migration that plagued Central Africa from the 1570s to the 1590s. By the 1620s, Portuguese governors in Angola employed kilombo warriors as mercenaries to capture hundreds of slaves in the regions around Luanda. These slaves, large numbers of whom were funneled into Brazil, came from diverse backgrounds, but generally they were from the Kikongo-speaking regions to the north of Luanda and the Kimbundu-speaking regions south of the Kwanza River. In the ensuing chaos created by Imbangala assaults, many people were forced to abandon their ancestral homes and regroup in the rugged highlands, often with unrelated strangers. The military-corporate organization of these refugee communities was not at all unlike the maroon communities that would later emerge in the Americas.[34] Nor was the social hierarchy of these refugee communities far removed from the organization of the Imbangala. For those who would arrive in Brazil from diffuse Central African refugee communities, the kilombo provided a unifying template for lineageless social organization, despite the associations with their own enslavement.[35]

On the Brazilian side, the Dutch invasion of Pernambuco in the early 1630s provided slaves with ripe opportunities to abandon the plantations and flee for the forests. The Dutch probably imported small numbers of slaves through the 1640s, but the conflict and disruption caused by the power struggles in Pernambuco and Luanda almost certainly inhibited the flow of slaves to the region.[36] Meanwhile, the Dutch engaged in a series of

34. Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830* (Madison, Wis., 1988), 142; Beatrix Heintze, *Asilo ameaçado: Oportunidades e consequências da fuga de escravos em Angola no século XVII* (Luanda, 1995); Miller, "Central Africa during the Era of the Slave Trade, c. 1490s–1850s," in Heywood, ed., *Central Africans,* 46–47. For the development of the kilombo in Central Africa, see Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola* (Oxford, 1976), 112–175.

35. The inhabitants of Palmares allegedly enslaved some of the people that they captured in their raids. From this perspective, enslavement is simply a potential outcome of warfare.

36. The Dutch invaded Pernambuco in 1629 and were not expelled until 1654. They

campaigns against the runaway communities of southern Pernambuco, indicating the growing strength and unity of these communities. During this period, the social organization of the quilombos likely began to take shape.

Thus, there were no quilombos in Brazil before 1624. Historians continue to cast the earliest runaway communities as quilombos, however, particularly owing to the nature of the source materials on Palmares. Since almost all of our knowledge about the Palmares comes from documents written in the 1680s and 1690s, historians tend to collapse the first ninety years of its history into the final ten years, distilling the community's long history into a snapshot of the quilombos. Moreover, the term "quilombo" has come to mean any runaway slave community in Brazil, significantly broadening the narrower, seventeenth-century definition of the term, thus casting a more unified, militant, African light on slave resistance and black power in Brazil.[37] To the extent that the term "quilombo" homogenizes a much more complicated early history of Palmares, it is not unlike the foundational myth of São Tomé's Angolar communities.

The three cases of slave resistance presented here—Portugal, São Tomé, and northeast Brazil—demonstrate the complex interplay between history, politics, and identity. In particular, they reveal how early histories are subject to contestation, transformation, and even erasure. In sixteenth-century Portugal, African slavery was not uncommon; yet there is a fairly widely held belief among educated Portuguese that there were never slaves in Portugal. Others believe slaves arrived in Portugal only as appendages of their Brazilian masters. In other words, African slavery in Portugal was incidental to the colonial and, especially, the Brazilian experience. The early history of Africans in Portugal is often forgotten as a result, because slavery is tied to colonial exploits in the Atlantic world outside Portugal. This erasure of slavery in Portugal is particularly unfortunate, since so many facets of it tie directly to the burgeoning Atlantic world.[38]

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also seized Luanda in 1641, only to be removed in 1648. On the slave trade, see David Eltis, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVIII (2001), 17–46.

37. For a fuller elaboration of the meaning of *quilombo*, see Schwartz, "Rethinking Palmares," in Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels*, 125. On the political symbolism of Palmares, see Abdias do Nascimento, "Quilombismo: An Afro-Brazilian Political Alternative," *Journal of Black Studies*, XI (1980), 141–178.

38. An example of the Portuguese apology for slavery can be found in no less a figure than the duke of Bragança, who in August 2000 wrote that works by foreign scholars, emphasizing Portugal's slave past, are examples of the "falsification of history," prompted by a "war which some countries launched against Portugal" (Letters to the Editor, *Anglo-Portuguese News* [Lisbon], Aug. 17, 2000). See Howard B. Johnson, "Storm over Sagres; or, How a Book Review Caused a Duke to Lose His Cool," http://www.people.virginia.edu/~hbj8n/storm.pdf.

São Tomé and northeast Brazil demonstrate different, but no less problematic, trends. The combination of sloppy methodology and the influences of presentist politics can significantly alter the ways we interpret the past. The early histories of the most famous runaway slave communities in São Tomé and Brazil, as shown above, are more complicated than the foundational myths allow. Though the romanticism and political power of revisionist histories might be transformed when we dig deeply into these myths, we more clearly reveal the complex historical processes of an Afro-Atlantic world in formation.

In Portugal, African identity was a determining factor in who attempted to escape from slavery in the middle of the sixteenth century, but this identity was far more nuanced than simple ethnicity. Jolofs shared cultural traits with other Jolofs, but they were also marginally Islamic. As such, Jolofs forged alliances with other non-Jolof Turks and Moors to mitigate the effects of their shared slavery. For some Jolofs, their Muslim identity likely became dominant in Portugal. For others, however, the ethnic past took precedence, as atomized Jolofs sought out one another in urban settings like Lisbon. The bottom line was much the same: the recasting or reassertion of identities in Portugal was aimed, in part, at liberation from enslavement.

For Central Africans in São Tomé and Brazil, the possibility of escape to an ethnic or religious homeland was not possible in the same way that it was for Jolofs in Portugal. The alternative was the formation of runaway communities in the countries of their enslavement. All evidence suggests that the earliest runaways went in small groups of two or three, only constituting larger communities as these small groups came together over time. In São Tomé, these runaways included slaves from the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra as well as those from Central Africa. In Brazil, the first small groups of runaways ran to settlements that had already been established by Indians. Thus, identity was shaped largely by conditions of the particular slave society. Only under the influence of increasing numbers of Central Africans did these diffused groups come together to form what would later be characterized as African-derived quilombos.

Ultimately, the identities of runaway slaves in the Atlantic world shifted in accordance with transformations in Africa and the diaspora. Joseph Miller's conclusion that "the transatlantic connection lies less in the transfer of

an integral set of practices than in ad hoc strategies of assembling new communities out of refugees of the most disparate backgrounds" is, to a large extent, correct.[39] Beliefs and practices evolved and were cast anew in the environments of the diaspora, but no more so than they were under similar shifts in the social, political, or economic conditions of Africa itself. Indeed, it is very difficult even to talk about "integral" (that is, ethnic) practices in early-seventeenth-century Angola, where thousands of people were already dislocated refugees and runaways before their entry into the Atlantic slave trade. Nevertheless, many of these Central Africans shared the refugee experience and equipped themselves with commonly understood ways of reformulating their identities. Assembling new communities often went hand in hand with the creation of new sets of social and cultural practices that could be understood by all. The development of shared languages, religious beliefs, and social structures resulted in integrally Central African forms that were transferred to places like Brazil through a Kimbundu lingua franca, a broadly shared belief in the power of ancestral spirits *(kilundu),* and lineage hierarchies like the kilombo. The peculiarities of various American slave settings no doubt led to alterations in the function of Central African practices, but the forms often remained the same. Thus, the cultural flexibility and adaptability that have so often been associated with slave communities in the Americas were already institutionalized in various Central African social and cultural forms, forms that were also essential to cultural survival and transformation in the diaspora. These integrally Central African forms were especially evident in places like seventeenth-century Brazil, where Central Africans made up more than 90 percent of the enslaved population.

The dynamic interplay between the history of Africa and the history of the diaspora transcends the three cases discussed here, bearing strongly on the history of the entire Atlantic world. Research on the slave trade increasingly enables us to trace the origins of groups of enslaved Africans, if not by particular ethnicity, then certainly by "provenance."[40] By reading the history of enslaved African peoples, moving forward in time we are able to gain a much better insight into historical change among Africans in various diasporic destinations. Moreover, we can begin to compare the experiences

39. Joseph C. Miller, "Retention, Reinvention, and Remembering: Restoring Identities through Enslavement in Africa and under Slavery in Brazil," in Curto and Lovejoy, eds., *Enslaving Connections,* 92.

40. For the useful conceptualization of "provenance groups," see Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *Devotos da cor: Identidade, étnica, religiosidade e escravidão no Rio de Janeiro, século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro, 2000), 95–127.

of common sets of Africans, noting how their identities diverged from one another in the diaspora.

During roughly the same period that Jolofs tried to flee from Portugal to North Africa, for example, runaway Jolof slaves in Santo Domingo stole horses from their Spanish masters, attacking colonial settlements on the island. In this way, they capitalized on cavalry skills learned in their homelands.[41] The toolbox from which these Jolofs drew their weapons of resistance was the same one that was used by Jolofs in Lisbon; however, their tool of choice was dictated by the context of their enslavement. Whereas Jolofs in Lisbon drew on their Islamic identity and their knowledge of nearby North Africa, Jolofs in Santo Domingo capitalized on their knowledge of Spanish horses. Ironically, the tools of resistance that were used by these widely scattered, enslaved Jolofs were the result of knowledge gained in earlier cultural exchanges with Arab Muslims and Portuguese in Africa. To that end, what was integrally Jolof was already integrally Atlantic, even in the sixteenth century.

These same lessons regarding continuity, change, and disjuncture in the diaspora can be seen in the experiences of the first African slaves in English-speaking North America. If the "20. and odd" Africans arriving in Virginia in 1619 were Central Africans from the Kingdom of Ndongo, how might they have been the same or different from those from Ndongo in northeastern Brazil who would contribute to the early manifestations of Palmares? How might they have compared to others from Ndongo who were arriving in Cartagena, New Granada (Colombia)?

Among other things, many of these Central Africans likely shared a rudimentary understanding of Catholicism. In the 1620s, Jesuit Father Alonso de Sandoval commented at length on the instruction needed to prepare African slaves for baptism in Cartagena. In discussing Central Africans, he noted, "If they are from Loanda, Angolas, Angicos, Congos, and Malemba, etc., they ordinarily *bring* enough knowledge to be validly baptized."[42] This prior knowledge of Catholicism was only one of the possible tools that could be used by Central Africans to help ameliorate their condition as slaves. In Brazil, as already noted, a certain form of redemptionist Christianity

41. Carlos Esteban Deive, *La esclavitud del Negro en Santo Domingo (1492–1844),* 2 vols. (Santo Domingo, 1980), II, 445–454. On the increasing importance of horses in Senegambian warfare, see Ivana Elbl, "The Horse in Fifteenth-Century Senegambia," *International Journal of African Historical Studies,* XXIV (1991), 85–110.

42. Alonso P. de Sandoval, *De instauranda aethiopum salute: El mundo de la esclavitud negra en America* (Bogotá, 1956), 380 (emphasis added).

might have animated the first Africans who fled to the santidades. During this period, the idiom of resistance was a shared Indian-African millenarianism that included elements of Christianity. But, over the course of the seventeenth century, as Central Africans came to dominate the slave population, they were able to re-create core cultural expressions from their African pasts, calling upon their ancestors in a variety of healing and divination rituals aimed at curing physical ailments and contesting their enslavement. In places where Central Africans constituted the majority of the population, as in much of northeastern Brazil, these beliefs and rituals had far greater resonance than the elemental, Africanized Catholicism that some might have learned in their homelands. Moreover, Catholicism in Brazilian slave society often came with Bible in one hand and whip in the other. Ultimately, Central African healing and divination were viewed as more powerful weapons against the institution of slavery than the Catholicism that was most closely associated with the raw power of masters.[43]

In places like early Virginia, the possibilities of re-creating distinctly Central African beliefs were far more remote than in seventeenth-century Brazil. Isolated and atomized from their countrymen, the "20. and odd" Central Africans were more likely to find an outlet for their Christian beliefs than for any other forms of Ndongo or even broadly conceived Central African beliefs. Their proximity to their masters and, particularly, to white indentured servants meant that these earliest Central Africans, and those that followed them in the seventeenth century, were more fully integrated into the day-to-day affairs of English colonial life, including the practice of Christianity. Here, Central Africans quickly came to understand that Christian practices (however Catholicized or Africanized) were a potential passageway to an improved condition, perhaps even freedom. Indeed, this nascent African-Christian identity, combined with integration into communities of British indentured laborers, some of whom were Irish Catholics, probably goes further to explain the development of cultural expressions in early Virginia than the presence of so-called Atlantic Creoles among the first

43. The Catholic Church was among the largest slaveholders in Brazil, especially during the early colonial period. In particular, the Benedictines and the Jesuits owned large sugar estates. See Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford, Calif., 1996); and Stuart B. Schwartz, "The Plantations of St. Benedict: The Benedictine Sugar Mills of Colonial Brazil," *Americas*, XXXIX (1982), 1–22. On Central African religious practices in Brazil, see James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Kinship, Culture, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003).

slaves.[44] Like the first runaway Africans in Brazil who adapted themselves to the redemptionist Christianity of Indian communities, Central Africans in Virginia used their prior knowledge of Christianity as a tool to integrate the community of servants in Virginia. These Central Africans would have found it in their best interest to elide the differences between themselves and British servants, who were ultimately freed after their period of indenture. By becoming like servants instead of like slaves, Central Africans challenged notions that they were chattel, opening the way for manumission and roles as freedmen.[45]

Ultimately, the first Central Africans that arrived in the Chesapeake were not unlike those that arrived in other parts of the diaspora; the conditions of their enslavement were, however, markedly different. As with Central Africans in Brazil, the culture and the society of the Chesapeake determined their possibilities and shaped the choices they made. By comparing and contrasting the experiences of enslaved Africans with similar pasts and charting the processes by which their identities were transformed across diverse spaces, we can begin to realize wider possibilities in the study of the so-called Black Atlantic.

44. During the seventeenth century, several Irish women were known to have had relationships with black slaves in the Chesapeake. The most famous of these, "Irish Nell" Butler, married the "saltwater" slave, Charles, in a Catholic wedding in 1681. Similarly, in 1713, an "Irish woman named Grace [was] married to a Negro man" (Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* [New Haven, Conn., 1997], 19–38). The extent of Irish-African alliances and Catholic resistance in early Virginia can only remain speculation. By 1700, however, the rising numbers of Irish servants alarmed some English colonists, who feared the growth of Catholicism. See Margaret M. R. Kellow, "Indentured Servitude in Eighteenth-Century Maryland," *Histoire Sociale / Social History*, XVII (1984), 236–237. For Irish-African alliances in the British Caribbean, see Hilary McD. Beckles, "A 'Riotous and Unruly Lot': Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West Indies, 1644–1713," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XLVII (1990), 505–522. For a fine reexamination of the cultural exchanges between white servants and blacks slaves, see John C. Coombs, "Building 'the Machine': The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 2003).

45. Perhaps the most obvious case of Christian expression is that of Anthony Johnson, who almost immediately after arriving in the colony in 1621 married a woman named Mary. Their four children were also baptized in the Anglican Church.