

**THE MAKING OF QUILENGUES:
VIOLENCE, ENSLAVEMENT AND RESISTANCE
IN THE INTERIOR OF BENGUELA, 1600-1830**

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Abstract

The Making of Quilengues: Violence, Enslavement and Resistance in the interior of Benguela, 1600-1830 is a history of small-scale societies in West Central Africa during the age of the Atlantic slave trade, starting with the oldest references to Mbangala nomadic warriors that inhabited the region to the latest references about the *soba* of Socoval, the most powerful African ruler of Quilengues. There are three main themes in this dissertation. One is the political and cultural composition of the immediate backlands of Benguela from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. A second topic is that of the long historical process of Portugal's "conquest" of this area during the period under scrutiny. Lastly, this dissertation explores the role of both locals and foreigners in the development of the Atlantic slave trade from Benguela.

While a considerable portion of the historiography on West Central Africa focuses either on Portuguese commercial and cultural penetration into the interior or on the "kingdoms" of Kongo and Ndongo, this dissertation is centred on the history of small-scale decentralized societies scattered throughout one extensive area in the backlands of Benguela, that is Quilengues. These are social formations often ignored or understudied in favor of the history of larger and centralized political units. One of the goals of this doctoral dissertation is to highlight different reactions and responses from local African rulers and their peoples to the economic stimuli emanating from the coast after the official arrival of the Portuguese in the early seventeenth century. A second objective is to advance an Africanist perspective of the history of Quilengues where Africans are agents of their own history, thus moving beyond a simple analysis of Portuguese penetration into the interior of West Central Africa. Indeed, a critical reading of the extant colonial documentation through an Africanist lens provides a unique glimpse into the political strategies adopted by African societies to resist and adapt to the changing times.

Colonialist historians, mainly concerned with questions relating to Portuguese penetration into the "kingdoms" of Angola and Benguela and the consolidation of "colonial power", tend to see a vassalage treaty as a sheer act of subjugation of African authorities, disregarding the different aspects of resistance that it entails. This usually occurs because they envision this historical process as a dispute between two sides: Portuguese colonizers conquering and imposing themselves onto subjugated African authorities. However, the African political landscape was very complex, especially in the backlands of Benguela, a region populated by numerous African independent and autonomous polities built around lineages and through kinship structures that established temporary alliances and dependencies with one another.

This dissertation shows that resistance, in its varied forms, was a fundamental factor that slowed down Portuguese "colonial ambitions" in the interior of Benguela. As evidenced here, Portuguese "explorers" arrived in West Central Africa with a clear project of conquest and colonization. However, logistic limitations and local resistance delayed such a process until the early twentieth century, when the Portuguese overcame most of these limitations (such as transportation and communications), and found themselves in a better position to effectively expand and occupy the territory under their colonial domain.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank Professor José C. Curto for his support during the research that culminated in this thesis. I once heard it is “cheap flattery” to include your supervisor in the acknowledgements. However, my relationship with Professor Curto and his support for my research precedes my engagement in the doctoral program at York University. Since we first met in 2011, Professor Curto has been a generous and supporting fellow historian, who shared his time and his sources with me. In 2012, I became member of the international research group *Angola Resgate*, coordinated by Professor Curto, with whom I travelled to Angola for the first time. During this trip, I had the opportunity to research in the *Arquivo Nacional de Angola* (archive that holds great part of the sources used in this thesis). I also joined the group to research in the *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* and the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*, two Portuguese archives that also hold many of “my” sources. Hence, my participation in the *Angola Resgate Group* was fundamental for the realization of this thesis.

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I want also to acknowledge the importance of two recently deceased scholars of Angola, who played significant roles in the development of this thesis: Jan Vansina and Joseph Miller. I exchanged one message with Professor Vansina in March 2016, through the intermediation of Professor Lovejoy, because I had questions about his theories on the rise of the Mbangala in Quilengues, which he expresses in *How Societies are Born* (2004). He was generous in his teachings and rigorous with my mistakes, encouraging me to keep researching the theme. Professor Miller was also a very generous mentor who meticulously answered my emails, making me rethink and improve my arguments in every exchange. He also read my PhD project, approving my approach to the Mbangala issue and debating with me about recent criticisms on his “slaving frontier” thesis. Unfortunately, we were never able to finish our conversation.

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Geographic scale: 1:4,725,901

Geographic Coordinate System: GCS_WGS_1984

Projected Coordinate System: Africa Albers Area Conic

Datum: Datum: D_WGS_1984

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Geographic Coordinate System: GCS_WGS_1984

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Geographic Coordinate System: GCS_WGS_1984

Projected Coordinate System: Africa Albers Area Conic

Datum: Datum: D_WGS_1984

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Introduction

A history of small-scale societies in West Central Africa during the age of the Atlantic slave trade

West Central Africa is a geopolitical region of the African continent characterized by its relations with the Atlantic world since the fifteenth century. The peoples who inhabited this region experienced similar historical processes related to the arrival of European travelers on their coast. But those same processes also differentiate these peoples from those of Central and West Africa. The boundaries and composition of West Central Africa may vary depending on the author or source consulted: but that said, it usually centres on what is today geographically represented by the Republic of Angola. On the coast, it extends roughly from the Republic of Congo southwards to northern Namibia. Its extension into the interior of the continent, on the other hand, varies greatly, depending on local geographic and environmental features.

The peoples of West Central Africa were virtually isolated from other parts of sub-Saharan Africa because of some of these same geographic and environmental features. For instance, the dense equatorial forest to the north (Congo) and the desert terrains of the south (Namibia) framed the areas where most local societies developed. Far into the interior, in Central Africa, large centralized political powers (such as Lunda and Luba) also served as barriers to the peoples living within West Central Africa. Some historians have argued that the arrival of the Portuguese in this part of the continent “opened up connections” with the “Old World”: that is, unprecedented relations were thereby established with Europe¹.

Although the history of pre-twentieth century West Central Africa has received more attention from scholars in the last few decades, there is still much to be uncovered about the small-scale societies that inhabited the region. Much of the recent historiography still focusses on two different but interconnected processes: the centralization and disruption of the African “kingdoms” of Kongo and Ndongo during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the Portuguese presence on the coast and their penetration into the interior from 1575 onwards. In spite of some important

¹ According to John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 13, the “opening” of the Atlantic meant the intensification of relations between Europe and West Africa, but it represented the arrival in a “new world” in West Central Africa, similar to what happened in the Americas.

exceptions², little has been written on the history of small-scale decentralized societies before 1850.

Even though the territory of Quilengues (Map 1) appears in eighteenth and nineteenth-century colonial reports as the largest and most populated “province” in the interior of Benguela, it has not yet attracted the attention of historians. In the whole corpus of Ralph Delgado, still the premier (if colonialist) historian of Benguela, one finds but one chapter specifically devoted to Quilengues³. Further information regarding Quilengues may be found dispersed in accounts penned by missionaries and in memoirs written by travellers, not to mention official reports composed by military personnel. Yet, the fact remains that no scholarship on the political and cultural composition of this area exists. The lack of a specific historiography on Quilengues has, not surprisingly, consistently generated misconceptions about the peoples that occupied its territory and the history of such occupation. Historians and anthropologists present diverse and, quite often, overlapping narratives about this particular area and its inhabitants.

Autonomous political entities in the interior of Benguela (*sobas*) developed different responses to the arrival of Europeans on the coast, with some embracing the commercial and cultural novelties brought from abroad. A constant flow of foreign commodities into Benguela subsequently changed consumption patterns in the interior, while access to luxury goods (such as textiles and alcohol) had a deep impact on local customs regarding cattle distribution, the major strategy for political control prior to the seventeenth century. Thus, local “patron-client” relations established between lineages and local rulers changed drastically with the penetration of slave merchants from the coast laden with imported goods⁴.

The Portuguese project of “conquest” of Angola and Benguela relied on the signing of treaties of vassalage with African rulers. These treaties imposed a series of obligations upon *sobas* (including payment of tribute and military support) and were usually only accepted after military defeat. Nevertheless, there are cases of *sobas* who voluntarily turned themselves into vassals of

² Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2004).

³ Ralph Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza: Ocupação e aproveitamento do antigo reino de Benguela, 1843-1942*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1940), 281-307.

⁴ As David Birmingham, *The Portuguese Conquest of Angola* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 3, frames it: “When the Portuguese opened trade-routes across the ocean the attention of the peoples of the region swung round and began to focus on the new coastal outlets”.

the Portuguese. A *soba* could choose to become a Portuguese vassal, for example, to secure protection from rivals or even from Luso-African slaving raids. Other African rulers saw advantages in opening commercial relations with the Portuguese and greatly valued the luxury goods brought by Luso-African caravans to their *sobados* or polities. Therefore, one of the goals in writing this doctoral dissertation is to highlight different reactions and responses from local African rulers and their peoples to the economic stimuli emanating from the coast. A second objective is to advance an Africanist perspective of the history of Quilengues where Africans are agents of their own history, thus moving beyond a simple analysis of Portuguese penetration into the interior of Angola. Indeed, a critical reading of the extant colonial documentation through an Africanist approach provides a unique glimpse into the political strategies used by African societies to resist and adapt to the changing times.

This dissertation focuses on the history of the interior of Benguela from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the end of the so-called “legal” slave trade in 1830, following the trail left by the documentation, starting with the oldest references to nomadic warriors (Mbangala) that inhabited the region to the latest references about the *soba* of Socoval, the most powerful African ruler of Quilengues, as an independent polity. Three main themes will thus be developed in this dissertation. One is the political and cultural composition of the immediate backlands of Benguela from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. A second topic is that of the long historical process of Portugal’s “conquest” of this area during the period under scrutiny. Lastly, a third theme to be explored is the role of both locals and foreigners in the development of the Atlantic slave trade. Let us now reflect on some important theoretical concepts to be used in the elaboration of this dissertation, as well as some of the historiographic discussions that will guide it.

Theoretical framework: “conquest” in a “pre-colonial” world

It is important to highlight some aspects of the theoretical framework used in this dissertation to think through the historical processes experienced by the peoples who inhabited Quilengues from the seventeenth to the first half of the nineteenth centuries. First, one must understand that this was a “pre-colonial” context, despite Portuguese colonial assertions to the contrary. As we will see below, there were logistical limitations that, together with constant acts of resistance and “rebellion” on the part of local African rulers, slowed the process of colonization

in the interior of Benguela. That said, I try to avoid the use of terms such as “pre-colonial”, “colonial” and “post-colonial” as periodization for the History of Africa because they have been largely imposed by westerners. I do recognize that these terms might be useful to discuss the level of Portuguese control and African “submission” during the first centuries of contact. But, as will be shown during different moments in the following chapters, the colonization of the backlands of Benguela (and indeed in all of Angola) was a slow process that took centuries to complete. Hence, I prefer to use the concept of “conquest” to refer to this “pre-colonial” period in the History of Angola, an era characterized by Portuguese and Luso-African forces periodically attempting to usurp the autonomy and sovereignty of African rulers in the interior of Benguela⁵.

The idea that the Portuguese occupation of Angola, including the interior of Benguela, was a long process of “conquest” is not a novelty, although historians disagree as to its length. It is quite common to find references on the “conquest of Angola” as constituted by a period between Portuguese arrival in the mid-sixteenth century and the downfall of the kingdom of Ndongo in the early decades of the following century⁶. But, in the particular case of the backlands of Benguela, I here argue that the timeline should be extended until the end of the nineteenth century⁷. Indeed, the colonization of the areas behind the town of Benguela was only consolidated following the wars of “pacification” that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century.

One of the most important Portuguese colonial historians of the nineteenth century, Joaquim José Lopes de Lima, theorized about the three main Portuguese strategies of expansion overseas. The first consisted in founding “trading posts” (*feitorias*) in coastal regions aimed exclusively at developing commercial relations with local authorities, with no intention of penetration inland or occupying territory. This, according to Lopes de Lima, was the model implemented in places like Bissau and Cacheu, in West Africa. Establishing a “colony”, on the other hand, was a more complex enterprise, one that included the participation of Portuguese nobles (*fidalgos*) who received royal privileges and exemptions to explore certain territories, moved with their families and serfs to these landscapes, and reproduced a semblance of Portuguese

⁵ I have previously discussed these issues in Estevam C. Thompson, “Fontes coloniais para uma história pré-colonial de Benguela, sécs. XVII a XIX”, *Africana Studia*, No. 25 (2015): 33-69.

⁶ For a good example, see Birmingham, *The Portuguese Conquest of Angola*. See also Chapter 4 below.

⁷ At least one Portuguese colonial historian, Gastão Sousa Dias, *Páginas da história de Angola*, Cadernos Coloniais No. 60 (Lisboa: Cosmos, 1939), 22, recognized early on that Portuguese control over “Angolan” territories was largely nominal before the Conference of Berlin (1884-1885).

society away from home. In Lopes de Lima's point of view, such was the case of the Atlantic islands of Madeira, Azores and Cape Verde⁸. The third strategy was effective "conquest" (*Conquista*), which consisted in the military occupation of territories where the Portuguese found strong local rulers that could not be easily defeated. As a result, "conquest" became a long-term military investment that required the participation of local authorities with whom the Portuguese could share the burden of administration. It is precisely within this context that the "kingdoms" of Angola and Benguela⁹ emerge as perfect examples of "conquests" until the nineteenth century¹⁰. As Jan Vansina reminds us, "conquest" can mean different things, from a series of raids to the military annihilation of an enemy. But, the history of conquest is also, usually, followed by that of revolts: hence it does not end conflict, let alone contradictions¹¹.

As mentioned above, a considerable portion of the historiography on West Central Africa focuses either on Portuguese commercial and cultural penetration into the interior or on the "kingdoms" of Kongo and Ndongo. My dissertation, on the other hand, is centred on the history of small-scale decentralized societies scattered throughout one area in the backlands of Benguela, social formations often ignored or understudied in favor of the history of larger and centralized political units. As will be seen below, the persistence of these small-scale societies in the interior of Benguela is related to environmental and ecological conditions specific to the area, which placed limits both on their dimension and their location. Small itinerant pastoralist groups occupied arid and desert areas, while more populous agropastoralist communities built hamlets (*libatas*) around local rivers and lakes. As Jan Vansina explains, these conditions "discouraged the elaboration of larger scale social units, for it easily induced local collaboration while discouraging strong monocephalic government because it was all too easy for the discontented to strike out on their own and settle somewhere else"¹².

My research has been greatly influenced by the work of several clusters of literati. One of these includes historians of "pre-colonial" West Central Africa (that is before the 1880s) such as

⁸ José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas na África Occidental e Oriental; Ásia Occidental; China, e na Oceania*, vol. 3 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1846), 93.

⁹ While Benguela could be considered a "commercial outpost" (*feitoria*) during early attempts at occupation, it soon became a place of "conquest". On Benguela as a *feitoria*, see Aida Freudenthal, "Benguela: de feitoria à cidade colonial", *Fontes e Estudos, Revista do Arquivo Nacional de Angola*, No. 06-07, Luanda (2011): 197-229.

¹⁰ Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica...*, 93.

¹¹ Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 18.

¹² Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 217, 259.

Jan Vansina, David Birmingham, Joseph C. Miller, John K. Thornton, José C. Curto, Anne Hilton, Linda M. Heywood, Beatrix Heintze, Catarina Madeira Santos, Thomas Desch-Obi, Roquinaldo Ferreira, Mariana P. Candido and Daniel Domingues da Silva. These scholars have shown multiple ways through which to understand the “pre-colonial” past of this region by asking important questions regarding the motivations and desires of African communities involved in various historical processes, even when largely using European-generated documentation. A second group of literati is represented by colonialist historians from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries whose work remain crucial for any scholar of pre-1880s West Central Africa. Although their writings are imbued with colonialist and imperialist views, exalting the “Portuguese civilizing mission” in the region, a critical approach to their work can generate valuable information when writing a History of Angola from an Africanist perspective. Indeed, their work sometimes provides primary documentation that is no longer extant. Among these colonialist historians one finds: Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, Elias Alexandre da Silva, José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, Raimundo Matos, J. C. Feo Cardozo de Castello Branco e Torres, Luciano Cordeiro, Alfredo Felner, Carlos Couto, Gastão Dias, and others. The most important, for my research, has certainly been Ralph Delgado, a prolific Angolan-born author who collected and published the most important collection of historical information about Quilengues and its relation to neighboring areas. No less important for my work has been a third cluster of literati made up of twentieth century ethnographers such as Augusto Bastos, Carlos Estermann, Wilfrid Hambly, Gladwyn Childs, José Redinha, and Alvin Urquhart. Their work remains of great value especially, in this particular case, to identify peoples and their migratory movements. The concepts they adopt and the representations they imprint upon their “objects of study”, however, also need to be approached critically. Hence, I will not use colonialist categories such as “race”, “tribe”, “primitive” and others (in the same vein) commonly used by such ethnographers. Neither will I draw upon the concept of “ethnicity” as a fixed category: I prefer to see different “ethnolinguistic groups” as historical and social constructs, and not as biological entities.

On “ethnicity” and “ethnic” labels

Ethnographers and historians from the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century tended to see the different small-scale communities inhabiting the interior of Benguela, not to mention

other parts of the African continent, as belonging to different “tribes” (see Chapter 1). I avoid using the concept of “tribe” throughout this dissertation due to its theoretical limitations and historical stigma: used in colonial times to identify those considered “primitives” by “evolutionary” models, such paradigms have been refuted since the mid-twentieth century; moreover, it is also a concept connected to pseudo-scientific “racial” ideologies that have similarly been long debunked¹³. Nevertheless, in order to maximize the ethnographic and historiographic secondary sources supporting this dissertation, one is sometimes forced to refer to such “tribal” and “ethnic” labels in order to make an argument drawing upon those authors. Similarly, when dealing with primary sources from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, I sometimes have to refer to the very “ethnic” labels given to peoples living in the interior of Benguela by Luso-African settlers (such as “Muquilengues”). In both cases, it is important to recognize that these “ethnic” labels were attempts by outsiders to make sense of the multitude of languages and traditions that populated the interior. In this attempt to “organize” information about the different peoples of in the interior of Benguela, these “outsiders”, Luso-African settlers and European ethnographers alike, sometime made up their own “ethnicities” and helped to create new identities¹⁴.

This doctoral dissertation is, thus, not concerned with “Kilenges” as an “ethnic” group, but rather about writing the history of the territory of Quilengues and the various peoples who inhabited it over time. I will not engage in a profound discussion on the validity of ethnographic labels and anthropological concepts preferring, instead, to establish a theoretical framework that allows my research to address the issue of the existence of peoples from different cultural backgrounds in one and the same territory. I intend to instrumentalize these concepts and labels only to address what I see as most important for this dissertation: to attest for the plural and multifaceted character of the peoples that occupied Quilengues before the later 1800s.

Traditionally, the study of ethnicities (Ethnography) sought to measure traits and patterns to establish the difference between “races” and “tribes”. This method of analysis was usually applied to groups that accepted their ethnic label by self-identification or as an outside imposition, but did not work to address those groups that did not accept the ethnic label given to them. “Race”, another category of analysis much used by ethnographers, virtually disappeared from

¹³ For a critique of the use of the term “tribe” by historians of Africa, see Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 14-16.

¹⁴ According to Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 14-15, the Lulua people is another a good example of this forged identity.

anthropological discourse in the 1950s, especially after the fall of Physical Anthropology and Forensic Anthropology as acceptable scientific fields. Together with the concept of “race”, that of “tribe” was put aside by most anthropologists in the second half of the twentieth century¹⁵. The alternative to replace the naturalized biological concept of “race” and its sociopolitical artificial unit “tribe” was the development of the concept of “ethnicity”. It did not take long, however, for criticism to arise about the static and monolithic view that some anthropologists still had of the “ethnic-cultural units” they began to study.

As the anthropologist Fredrick Barth (1969) alerted, “though the naive assumption that each tribe and people has maintained its culture through a bellicose ignorance of its neighbours is no longer entertained, the simplistic view that geographical and social isolation have been the critical factors in sustaining cultural diversity persists”¹⁶. He tackled the idea that different human populations that remained isolated from each other created individual and disconnected cultures, each of them conditioned and determined by their environments and ecologies. Every “tribe” would be, therefore, an entire cultural and linguistic unit that generated a specific type of society. Over time, the limitations of the concept of “tribes” as isolated and fixed cultural units, with no or little mobility, became clear to anthropologists. Cultural boundaries are not erased by the fact that people constantly cross them: or, as Barth puts it, ethnic distinctions do not depend on the absence of mobility, contact and information. Actually, stable and persisting social relations maintained across cultural boundaries are only possible precisely because of dichotomized ethnic statuses. Instead of focusing on the “cultural stuff” that made up ethnicities, Barth proposed a focus on the boundaries of these ethnic groups. He paid especial attention to cases in which members of a group maintained their identity even in interaction with other groups. After all, “ethnic groups were not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories”¹⁷.

According to this methodology, ethnic boundaries canalize social life since the identification of another person as a fellow member of an “ethnic group” implies a sharing of criteria of judgement and evaluation. At the same time, the identification of others as strangers belonging to other “ethnic groups” also shows criteria, for it implies the recognition of limitation

¹⁵ Susan Emley Keefe, “Introduction”, in *Negotiating Ethnicity: The Impact of Anthropological Theory and Practice*, Susan Keefe ed., NAPA Bulletin No. 8 (Arlington: American Anthropological Association, 1989), 5-6.

¹⁶ Fredrick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 9.

¹⁷ Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 9-16.

and restriction. Barth argues that these “ethnic groups” only persist as significant units if they imply difference in behaviour. Interaction between different groups, therefore, is essential for the creation of ethnicities and allows the persistence of cultural differences among different groups¹⁸.

Barth’s position that ethnic identification arises from groups adapting to socioeconomic niches, and then recognizing their particularities and differences from other groups, has been scrutinized and criticized for decades. This is particular the case of his view that ethnicity resides in a group’s construction of social boundaries between “us” and “them”. In other words, critics point out that ethnicity should not be taken as inherently relational, and that by “locating the forces of ethnicization at the social borders of groups, [Barth’s methodology] draws attention *towards* explaining intergroup distinctions, and *away from* the internal dynamics of how groups form and change” [*italics in the original*]¹⁹.

According to his critics, Barth’s methodology fails when treating an “ethnic group” as effectively homogeneous. They refute his understanding of “ethnicity” as a group of people with the same language and a common economic orientation, having close daily interactions, who are able to create cultural features and forms that underline their difference from their neighbors. Such an understanding, Barth’s critics denounce, leads to the naturalization of ethnic ideologies and the creation of the “tribalism model”, which is imposed top-down, whether by European, Luso-African or African elites. “Europeans who arrived with a view of African societies as inherently tribal often then facilitated the process of making them so”²⁰. By following the methodology developed by Barth and analysing the historical process of classification of “tribes” by colonial powers, one ends up by concluding that African ethnicities are exclusive European creations.

Hence, the first definitions of “ethnic group” used by anthropologists to replace the imprecise colonial label of “tribe” still equated culture, language and society. It did not, consequently, differ much from the concept of “race” that was rejected, following the mid-twentieth-century, by the scientific community. Anthropologists and historians are now aware that language and ethnicity are not interchangeable words, that these concepts are not enough to define

¹⁸ Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15-16.

¹⁹ Bill Bravman, *Making Ethnic Ways: Communities and their Transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800-1950* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998), 9-10.

²⁰ Bravman, *Making Ethnic Ways*, 10-11.

a society, and that equating language, culture and society is a “fatal error” of analysis²¹. Nevertheless, language is still not completely disconnected from culture. Although it does not define culture, language is a fundamental element of any culture. Moreover, as imprecise as anthropological categories of measurement of ethnicity might be (such as language), they do facilitate analysis of patterns of difference between groups²². They cannot be dismissed in any academic work that intends to highlight cultural plurality and social diversity. Thus, while I will occasionally make use of some “ethnic” labels in the pages that follow, particularly when sources make use of them or for the sake of writing and understanding, I neither adopt these markers as fixed identities nor do I not seek to turn this dissertation into a study about “ethnicities” in the interior of Benguela.

Violence and the “slaving frontier”

According to current estimates, around 12.5 million African slaves were sold to Atlantic slaving networks from 1501 to 1866²³, of which around 5.6 million slaves left the coast of West Central Africa²⁴. After the establishment of Luso-African settlements on the coast, Luanda in 1575

²¹ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 60.

²² Keefe, “Introduction”, 5. See also Paul E. Lovejoy, “Methodology through the Ethnic Lens: The Study of Atlantic Africa”, in *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed*, Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, eds. (Austin: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 105-117.

²³ See estimates for slave exports in David Eltis, et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, <https://slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates>, (last access, 11 September 2020).

²⁴ For more estimates about the slave trade from West Central Africa, see Herbert S. Klein, “The Portuguese Slave Trade from Angola in the 18th Century”, *Journal of Economic History*, XXXII (1972): 849-918; Joseph C. Miller, “The Slave Trade in Congo and Angola”, in *The African Diaspora: Interpretive Essays*, Martin L. Kilson and Robert I. Rotberg, eds. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 75-113; Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Joseph C. Miller, “Legal Portuguese slaving from Angola. Some preliminary indications of volume and direction”, *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre Mer*, 62, n. 226-227 (1975): 135-176; Joseph C. Miller, “The Numbers, Origins, and Destinations of Slaves in the Eighteenth Century Angolan Slave Trade”, *Social Science History*, 13, n. 4 (1989): 381-419; José C. Curto, “A Quantitative Re-assessment of the Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Luanda, Angola, 1710-1830,” *African Economic History*, 20 (1992): 1-25; José C. Curto, “The Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Benguela, Angola, 1730-1828: A Quantitative Re-Appraisal,” *África*, 16-17, no. 1 (1993/1994): 101-116; David Eltis, “The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment”, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 58, n. 1 (2001): 17-46; José C. Curto, “Another Look at the Slave Trade from Benguela: What We Know and What We Do Not Know”, *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2015): 9-26; 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); Roquinaldo Ferreira, “The Suppression of the Slave Trade and Slave Departures from Angola, 1830s-1860s,” in David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 313-334; Roquinaldo Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico: Tráfico Ilegal de Escravos e Comércio Lícito em Angola, 1830-1860” (M.A. Dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1996); Daniel Domingues da Silva, “The Transatlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port

and Benguela in 1617, the slave trade became a main economic activity in much of West Central Africa until the mid-nineteenth century. During this period, a combination of local and foreign slavers and traders transformed West Central Africa into the most important exporting region in the history of the Atlantic slave trade. The eighteenth century, in particular, saw Luso-African caravans enter into the interior of the continent and open new slave markets and trading routes. Since the 1960s, this historical process of penetration has become one of the most important themes for Angolanist historians. David Birmingham, for example, has written extensively on the “conquest of Angola” and the subsequent development of peaceful commercial relations between Luso-African settlers and their itinerant traders (*pumbeiros* and *sertanejos*²⁵), on one hand, and local African rulers under direct Portuguese influence, on the other. His most significant argument is that the centres of slave supply gradually moved eastwards with these caravans, as itinerant traders advanced further and further inland in search of captives²⁶. In the 1980s, Joseph C. Miller built upon Birmingham’s view of the process by elaborating his own thesis on a “moving frontier zone of slaving violence” heading eastward with the penetration of slaving caravans: the “wars of slaving” would only come to an end through the “heart of the continent” with the advent of colonial rule at the end of the nineteenth century²⁷. According to this thesis, as the violent methods of slave acquisition moved further inland, the areas within its boundaries became zones of relatively

Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701-1867,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 46, n. 1 (2013): 105-122; Daniel Domingues da Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁵ *Pumbeiros* or *pombeiros* (from *pumbo*, meaning “market”) were “black” itinerant traders, often enslaved persons, who served as agents for “white” merchants (*sertanejos*) in the interior (*sertões*) of Angola and Benguela. While both *sertanejos* and *pumbeiros* could lead caravans, there were some African territories, like Humbe, in the southern interior of Benguela, where only *pumbeiros* could enter: this because they were “barefoot blacks” (*pretos descalços*), meaning that they were not considered complete outsiders. Despite the fact that some *sertanejos* were “black” and born in Benguela, they were often considered “white” outsiders by Africans because they wore European clothes and traded in European products. These *sertanejos* had partnerships with “white” businessmen (*negociantes*) in the coastal settlements from whom they acquired imported goods to exchange for captives. Due to the spike in violent conflicts related to increased slaving in the interior of Angola during the early seventeenth century, Governor Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos (1620) prohibited the participation of “white” and “Europeanized blacks” (*pretos calçados*) in trading activities throughout the *sertões*, undertaking that were to be delegated to *pumbeiros*. For more on *pumbeiros*, see Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica...*, 63; Ernest G. Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh, in Angola and the Adjoining Regions*. (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1901), 164. See also Miller, *Way of Death*, 190; David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours Under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 17 – Note 1.

²⁶ Despite arguing for the development of mostly peaceful commercial relations between African rulers and Luso-African settlers in Angola, Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, 133-136, recognized the continuation of violence as means to acquire enslaved individuals. As he has pondered: “It was frequently the case, however, that governors used officials and army officers to trade for them in the back-country, where their forceful methods of obtaining slaves disrupted a system of more or less peaceful negotiation used by the *pumbeiros*”.

²⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 141.

peaceful commercial negotiations. According to Miller, moreover, the expansion of the “slaving frontier” inland meant that the enslaved individuals sold to Atlantic markets in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came predominantly from areas deep in the interior of West Central Africa, hundreds and hundreds of kilometers away from the exporting regions on the coast²⁸.

Over the course of the last two to three decades, on the other hand, other historians of Angola have been placing far greater emphasis on zones in the backlands and near interior of Benguela, including areas such as Quilengues and Caconda, as significant suppliers of slaves during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This new generation of Angolanists have questioned the idea of an ever-expanding “slaving frontier” and the end of slaving operations in areas close to the coast, many of them under Portuguese “vassalage”. They have also shown that, contrary to the “slaving frontier” thesis, a considerable number of slaves exported from Benguela (and Angola) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not originate in the “heart” of the continent²⁹. The last three chapters of this dissertation tackle the “slaving frontier” thesis and the criticisms it has received over the last few decades, showing the continuation of violence and wars in the near interior of Benguela, as well the importance of Quilengues as a supplier of captives to the Atlantic slave trade, thus corroborating the recent historiography on the theme. The wars against the *soba* of Socoval presented in these chapters are, in particular, a clear example of the betrayal and capitulation of a former ally and the enslavement of his people by Luso-African slavers (usually military officers in position of authority), who were sold in large numbers to Brazil at the end of the eighteenth century. However, I also argue that we should not completely abandon the “slaving frontier” thesis. Rather, we should improve upon it by including other movements of local enslaving networks in the areas under Portuguese direct influence. As this dissertation shows, constant “waves” of slaving campaigns hit the areas within the “slaving frontier”, keeping these territories as relevant suppliers of captives throughout the centuries. Hence, although the “slaving

²⁸ Although Miller, *Way of Death*, 150-151, elaborated his “slaving frontier” thesis having Luanda and the interior of Angola as the centre of his analysis, he also considered its advance in the backlands of Benguela, which he dubbed “the southern wing of the slaving frontier”.

²⁹ José C. Curto, “Rethinking the Origin of Slaves in West Central Africa”, in *Changing Horizons of African History*, Awet T. Weldemichael, Anthony A. Lee and Edward A. Alpers, eds. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2017), 23-47; Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867*, 18-19, 73-99; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 198-214; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 52-87.

frontier” did expand eastwards, as plenty of sources attest, the zones within its boundaries remained important suppliers of slaves. These two views are, in effect, not mutually exclusive.

A note about spelling

Spelling is always an important issue when dealing with the history of Angola, including Benguela and its interior, because different spellings of the same name or word can represent different historical contexts related to its use. Therefore, I use “Kakonda” in relation to the seventeenth-century African ruler and “Caconda” in reference to the Luso-African *presídio*³⁰. As I discuss in Chapter 1, the spelling of “Quilengues” and not “Kilengues” is a methodological choice on my part to highlight the Luso-African origin of the concept during the “invention” of this territory. So far, I have collected nineteen different spellings for “Quilengues” as a geographical reference and sixteen versions related to cultural references (Appendix 9). There are additional concerns about the spelling of rivers and other geographical references, some of which exhibit more than a few different formats. Hence, I chose to adopt the spelling of the national languages from where these geographical references come. Hence, I use Cunene (not Kunene) and Cuanza (not Kwanza).

Primary Sources and Methodology

I have used different sets of published and unpublished primary sources to write this dissertation, varying from African oral traditions to Portuguese official colonial documentation. Among the published sources, one finds series of collections and official publications by Portuguese colonial and overseas institutions: *Arquivos de Angola*, *Angolana*, *Boletim Oficial de Angola*, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana*, *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes*, *Annaes do Conselho*

³⁰ *Presídio* (plural *presídios*) were Luso-African fortifications, some more imposing than others, built throughout Angola and Benguela that became centres of Portuguese commercial and political influence. *Presídio* was also a Portuguese “colonial” administrative division usually commanded by a military officer (*capitão-mor*). According to Rafael Bluteau, *Diccionario da Lingua Portuguesa*, Tomo 1 (Lisboa: Simão Thaddeo Ferreira, 1789), 239, the term was further used to identify a unit of soldiers who secured an outpost (*gente da guarnição de uma praça. O que serve de guarda, apoio e de conservar*). Moreover, the term *presídio* identified not only the “fortress” and its military personnel, but also the residences of local settlers (*moradores*), and the African vassals under its jurisdiction. Contrary to what is affirmed by Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 282, Quilengues was not a *presídio*, but a *distrito*, another “colonial” administrative division characterized by the lack of permanent military personnel.

Ultramarino, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, and *Fontes e Estudos*, among others. There are also several important documents published by colonialist historians such as Ralph Delgado, Alfredo Felner, Castello Branco e Torres, Silva Correa, as highlighted above. The unpublished sources, in turn, consist of manuscripts dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from archives in three different continents. In the case of repositories in Angola, the most important documents used below are held at the *Arquivo Nacional de Angola* (ANA) in Luanda, although parish records from the *Arquivo do Bispado de Luanda* (ABL) have also proven helpful. In Portugal, the most significant repository is certainly the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* (AHU) in Lisbon, but smaller collections of importance are also found at the *Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa* (BNL) and the *Biblioteca Pública de Évora* (BPE). In Brazil, the holdings of the *Arquivo do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* (AIHGB) and the *Biblioteca Nacional* (BNRJ), both in Rio de Janeiro, are further invaluable, as well. I have individually referenced all primary sources used in this thesis and classified them by archive, reference numbers and date. In cases where documents have no title, I have made up an informative title so as to facilitate referencing (see Bibliography under Unpublished Primary Sources).

All of the documentation used throughout this dissertation has been digitized over decades by the *Angola Resgate Group*, of which I am a member, and is available through the Harriet Tubman Institute (Toronto). I have selected and transcribed hundreds of these documents and organized them by date and area of provenance or reference, including Quilengues, Dombe Grande, Caconda, and Benguela, in order to develop a more thorough understanding of the historical processes under analysis. Still, only part of these documents has made it into this work: hundreds of other transcribed documents will underpin other studies, still in the future. Also excluded from this current analysis are the extant post-1797 censuses for Quilengues: the length of this dissertation would have fallen outside of acceptable parameters with the integration of these, otherwise, valuable data.

Thesis Summary

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, followed by a conclusion attempting to make sense of the several arguments made therein. The first chapter – *The land and the people(s)* – is about the geographic and “ethnographic” compositions of Quilengues. Here, I try to determine its

geographical extension during different historical moments, using extant cartographic data to analyse recurrent changes over time. Great part of the sources in this chapter consists of colonial documentation and ethnographic works from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries concerning the “administrative” division of the lands in interior Benguela according to “colonial” officials and their attempts to classify the different peoples that occupied these territories. I also use a collection of historical maps from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to identify the main rivers and geographical features of West Central Africa, as well as to try to determine the location of some local polities. I argue in this, Chapter 1, that Quilengues was a Luso-African invention based on their distorted understanding of the local political and “ethnolinguistic” landscapes. Although there is undoubtedly a reference to the Tyilenge peoples, Quilengues was composed by a variety of peoples, some of whom had migrated from other parts of West Central Africa and found refuge in the lowlands of Quilengues, locally known as Mbuelo. This chapter also points to the fact that this outside attempt to understand and “organize” the multifaceted cultural reality of the interior of Benguela led to the creation of “ethnic” labels and the forging of new identities. For example, the ethnographer Carlos Estermann applied the “ethnic” label of Nyaneka-Khumbi to groups of people who did not share a same identity and who still question this classification today. Worse still, he singlehandedly changed the name of the peoples of Mbuelo (*Bangala*) because of misconceptions about the history of the *Imbangala* of Kasanje, which help to cover-up the historical connections between these two groups and their movements of migration to different parts of Benguela and Angola.

The second chapter – *Early history of Quilengues* – deals with one of the most important and misunderstood historical processes of West Central Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the rise and expansion of the Mbangala bands. This chapter reveals the sociopolitical landscape of the interior of Benguela before the arrival of the Portuguese, tackling the misconceptions about different groups of roaming warriors in Africa, identified as one and the same group because of their military abilities and their supposed taste for human flesh. In this chapter, I use a series of sources from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries to identify these different groups and analyse the twentieth and twenty-first century historiographic debates on the issue. I start by explaining the cacophony of legends about “cannibal” warriors who roamed the entire African continent (Jagas, Mane, Sumba, Zimba, Galas, etc.) and supposedly came from a “nation of savages” in inner Africa. I identify the origins of some of these stories and some of their

promoters, such as the Catholic missionary, not to mention slave trader, Father Baltasar Barreira. I show the historical discussion about the differences between the Jagas who attacked the “kingdom” of Kongo in the sixteenth century and the Mbangala bands who worked alongside the Portuguese in the development of the slave trade during the seventeenth century. Finally, I also engage upon a major discussion advocating a historiographical revision on the origins of the Mbangala because of the realization that the oral tradition recounting the “exodus of Kinguri” was a nineteenth-century Mbangala addition to Lunda traditions. Hence, previous explanations based on these oral traditions have to be revised: they can no longer be used as historical references for either the origins of the *Imbangala* of Kasanje nor the expansion of the Lunda commonwealth. I conclude the chapter by providing evidence on the rise of Mbangala bands in Quilengues and other documentary references for at least three waves of migrations from Quilengues to other parts of West Central Africa.

The third chapter – *Foreign intervention and the rise of the Atlantic slave trade in Benguela* – shows how Portuguese traders and Mbangala warriors worked together for the consolidation of the Atlantic slave trade in the area. I use published primary sources and colonial historiography to analyse the process of the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast of Benguela, from their failed attempts in Benguela-a-Velha (1587) to the foundation of São Filipe of Benguela (1617), and the first slaving expeditions promoted by the two first governors of Benguela in association with local Mbangala warlords. I challenge recent historiography that denies the participation and importance of the Mbangala in Benguela, showing it is mistakenly based on old misconceptions about who the Jagas were and about the origins of the *Imbangala* of Kasanje, as explained in the previous chapter. Hence, the Jagas that appear in many colonial references were mostly Mbangala warlords: they appear under the same term later used to identify some local enemies of the Luso-Africans. The chapter also shows the process of occupation of different parts of the coast of Benguela and the first incursions into Quilengues, including the building and rebuilding of the *presídio* of Caconda in three different parts of the interior. Chapter 3 ends with the surge in slave exports from Benguela in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the strategies used by local slavers to increase the supply of captives to their Atlantic connections.

The fourth chapter – *Conquest, vassalage and African political power* – deals with the Portuguese strategies of occupation of Angola, based on the signing of treaties of vassalage with

local authorities, and the different meanings that these treaties had in the African context. I use primary sources from Angola, Portugal and Brazil to show how the development of the Atlantic slave trade in Benguela led to changes in patterns of consumption and relocated the centres of wealth from cattle in the interior to slaves on the coast. I also argue for the Portuguese limitations to “colonize” the interior of Benguela, showing it remained a “conquest” under dispute during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Due to limitations in transport and communications, the “colonizers” could not maintain control over “conquered” lands and had to make agreements with defeated African rulers. Hence, I contend that these treaties of vassalage should not be understood as mere colonial tools of African subjugation, but rather as eventual instruments of resistance. I further maintain that despite the supposed “legal” protections given to the African vassals of Portugal and their peoples, anyone in the interior of Benguela could become victim of the Atlantic slave trade. Indeed, I effectively show how the *soba* of Socoval, the most important political entity in Quilengues from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, became an “enemy” following disputes with slavers positioned as regents of Quilengues. The latter arrested the *soba* and raided his people, despite the fact that he was an old ally of the Portuguese. This chapter also shows how slavers in positions of authority acted in total disregard of the orders of their superiors to preserve peace in the interior and, instead, used the military personnel under their command to advance their private slaving operations.

The evidence presented in Chapter 4 corroborates and advances recent critiques from historians of West Central Africa against Miller’s classic “slaving frontier” thesis. As the chapter shows, the internalization of the slave trade in Angola and Benguela did not mean the end of violent slaving operations in areas close to the coast, such as Quilengues. Also, the continued existence of slaving operations in Quilengues further weakens the argument that slaves exported to Brazil in the nineteenth century came from societies far in the interior of the continent. That said, I also assert that we should not abandon the “slaving frontier” thesis entirely, but rather expand it to include the permanence of violent means (such as slaving raids) to acquire slaves in territories like Quilengues and Caconda, despite the continued penetration of Luso-African itinerant traders deeper into the continent. Slavers in positions of authority continued to promote slaving campaigns in these areas, despite the existence of peaceful commercial relations with local communities as well. As the case of the *soba* of Socoval attests, the diplomatic and commercial relations between

African rulers and Luso-African settlers varied greatly in time: thus, any discussion of this process must be guided by specific historical evidence so as to avoid generalizations.

The fifth chapter – *Strategies of resistance in Quilengues in the first half of the nineteenth century* – advances the arguments of the previous chapter (on violence and the slave trade) and shows the strategies developed by African rulers in the interior of Benguela to protect themselves and their peoples from the slaving operations that wrought havoc upon their lands. They adopted tactics that varied from espionage and guerilla warfare to the manipulation of resources that blocked the advance of slaving caravans (because of the lack of porters) and forced them to retreat due to a lack of supplies. This chapter also shows the great complexity of the political landscape in the backlands of Benguela, where different African polities made secret treaties to take revenge on old disputes with neighboring rulers. Although Luso-African settlers and colonial historians tended to divide these African polities and their political alliances in relation to their broad “ethnic” labels, including “Mundombes” and “Muquilengues”, the primary sources show that these African alliances could include peoples from different parts and “ethnic” backgrounds. A substantial portion of the chapter focuses on one military expedition against Quilengues during 1811-1812, led by a “black” local slaver (Captain Diniz), to “punish” the *soba* of Socoval and his local allies for “insubordination” and attacks promoted against African vassals in Dombe Grande. African rulers in Quilengues understood that this was a slaving operation, disguised as a “punitive” expedition, and united against the invasion. This episode exposes the violence of Luso-African slavers against local populations behind the “slaving frontier” and reveals the different African strategies of defence, ranging from direct conflict to complete avoidance of conflict. Finally, the chapter focuses on the community of slave traders in Benguela, the consequences of the independence of Brazil from Portugal to their commercial and social networks, and the negative impact that news about the end of the slave trade had not only among Luso-African and Brazilian slavers, but also among African rulers. Consequently, the prospect of ending the slave trade ignited new cycles of violence in the backlands of Benguela.

Thus, the history of the interior of Benguela between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century is one marked by violence, enslavement and resistance. Violence preceded the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast of Benguela, but it was undoubtedly boosted by increasing Atlantic demand for enslaved Africans. Violence was the main tool of enslavement, which in the hands of

both local and foreign agents of the Atlantic trade could take the form of wars, raids and kidnappings. Violence and enslavement, however, triggered resistance and sponsored strategies of defence on the part of African rulers, who learned to exploit the logistic limitations of the otherwise mighty Portuguese military forces that attempted to conquer the *sertões* of Benguela.

Chapter 1

The land and the people(s)

In a colonial report from 1799³¹, the governor of Benguela, Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos (1796-1800), stated that the Province of Quilengues was the largest of all seven provinces³² that composed the Captaincy of Benguela (Map 1). It was also the one with the highest number of people and heads of cattle. The governor described Quilengues as bordering the provinces of Benguela, Caconda and Galangue, and extending south as far as *Cabo Negro* (latitude 15°50'S). Inland, the territory of Quilengues stretched to the lands of Humbe, in the inner basin of the Cunene River. Important *sobados*³³ of southern Benguela, including Quipungo, Huíla, Humpata, Njau, Mulondo, Gambos, Handa and Humbe, as well as smaller communities of nomadic herders like the Mucuanos, Mucubaes, Mocarocas, and Muchanhamas formed the political and cultural landscape of this huge territory (Appendix 10). The Portuguese claimed to control all of it, although their access was effectively banned in many of those places³⁴.

Although colonial officials³⁵, ethnographers³⁶ and novelists³⁷ of Angola have portrayed the “Quilengues” (or “Kilenges”) as a single “tribe”³⁸, I argue that they were not a distinct

³¹ Alexandre Jose Botelho de Vasconcelos, “Descrição da Capitania de Benguella, suas Províncias, Povos, Rios mais caudelosos, Minas de Ferro, e Enxofre, e outras particularidades que tem, mais consideráveis, por Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcellos, 5º governador, em Benguella 1º d'Agosto em 1799”, *Annaes Marítimos e Coloniaes*, 4ª. Série, Parte Não Oficial (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 150.

³² Although the governor of Benguela, Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos, divided the Captaincy of Benguela into “seven provinces”, they were technically two “*presídios*” (Benguela and Caconda) and five “*districtos*” (Quilengues, Huambo, Bailundo, Bihé, Galangue), as founded by the governor of Angola Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho in 1769. Quilengues maintained its status of “district” until 1870, when it became a municipality. For more, see Chapter 2.

³³ *Sobado* is the territory under control of the *soba* (local African ruler).

³⁴ For instance, in the lands of the Humbe, “whites” were not allowed to enter until 1844, when itinerant traders, including the explorer Bernardino José Brochado, were allowed to enter the *sobado* of Mulondo, as long as he used a kind of “sarong” (traditional garment) instead of trousers: Bernardino José Brochado, “Descrição das terras do Humbe, Camba, Mulondo, Quanhama, e outras, contendo uma idéia da sua população, seus costumes, vestuários, etc.”, *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série I, Novembro (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1855), 188. See also, José Falcão, *A Questão do Zaire* (Coimbra: J. Diogo Pires, 1883), 86.

³⁵ Carlos Roma Machado de Faria e Maia, *Colonização do planalto de Huíla e Moçamedes* (Lisboa: Typographia Universal, 1919); Mario Milheiros, *Notas de Etnografia Angolana: Esboço para um estudo etnográfico das tribos de Angola*, 1ª. Ed. (Luanda: Edição do Mensário Administrativo, 1951).

³⁶ Carlos Duparquet, *Viagens a Cimbebasia* (Luanda, Museu de Angola: 1953); José de Oliveira Ferreira Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 1918).

³⁷ Jorge Arrimar, *O Planalto dos Pássaros* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2002); Guilherme de Alaya Monteiro, *A Conquista do Sertão* (Alfragide: Casa das Letras, 2012).

³⁸ I chose not to work with the concept of “tribe” because of its colonialist connotation. I do reproduce the term when used by one of the authors of the bibliography, but always in between quotation marks to clarify it is an inadequate analytical category. For more, see Introduction.

ethnolinguistic group until at least the late nineteenth century. Indeed, the documentation presented here identifies a mosaic of different “ethnic groups”³⁹ living within the district of Quilengues. This included local *sobados* of the region, such as Socoval and Lumbimbe, but also a great number of exiled polities to the south from Humbe known as the “Muhumbe potentates”. Hence, my thesis focuses on the study of the territory of Quilengues as a Luso-African invention and the historical processes experienced by the different peoples who inhabited it until about 1830. It is not a thesis about the “Kilenge people” *per se*.

Beginning in 1769, the Portuguese colonial administration tried to create new outposts in the interior of Benguela. However, as was the case before, it held little information about the *sertões*⁴⁰. Colonial knowledge about the terrain was very limited even in areas close to the town of São Filipe de Benguela. This problem increased in relation to the southern portion of the Captaincy. The lands in the interior of *Cabo Negro* were explored by a series of expeditions launched by the Baron of Moçamedes (governor of the Colony of Angola during 1784-1790) in 1785⁴¹. These ventures mapped the southern coast until *Angra dos Negros* (15°10'S) by land and sea. The land expedition also explored the interior before returning to São Filipe de Benguela. In 1785, another venture explored the *sertões* of Quilengues down to *Cabo Negro*. The data collected during these expeditions generated a series of maps of the interior Benguela that filled in a blank in the Portuguese cartography of West Central Africa, and was later reproduced in maps made by other European cartographers⁴². As a result of the foundation of the new “provinces” of

³⁹ As I mentioned above, I avoid using the concept of “tribe” due to its theoretical limitations and historical stigmas. Nevertheless, as previously discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, there are also limitations in the use of “ethnic” labels. For more, see Introduction

⁴⁰ According to Rafael Bluteau, *Diccionario da Lingua Portuguesa*, Tomo 1 (Lisboa: Simão Thaddeo Ferreira, 1789), 396, “*sertão*” (“*sertões*” in plural) is the “core of the lands”, “the bushes away from the coast”, opposite to “maritime” and “coastal” areas. In a poetic sense, *sertão* is the place where things are “more ardent”. I chose to use the Portuguese term “*sertões*” instead of “hinterland”. The *sertões*, in the sense used here, are all the lands beyond Portuguese control. Many of them were actually unknown to the Portuguese colonial administration until the twentieth century. For those areas close to the coast but outside of Portuguese control, I adopt the use of the term “backlands”

⁴¹ For more on the expedition to Cabo Negro in 1785, see Chapter 3. See also “Relação da viagem que fiz desta cidade de Benguela para as do Lovar, no anno de 1794”, Documento No. 21, in Alfredo Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização dos planaltos e litoral do sul de Angola*, 3 Vols. (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1940), 236-237; Augusto Antonio de Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola, 1784-1791”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, 7ª série, (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1887), 417-453.

⁴² J. Walker, “Map of the Coast and Interior of Congo, Angola and Benguela” (1822), in Thomas Edward Bowdich, *An Account of the Discoveries of the Portuguese in the Interior of Angola and Mozambique* (London: John Booth, 1824); Philippe Vandermaelen, “Benguela Afrique” (1827), in *Atlas universel de geographie physique, politique, statistique et mineralogique...* (Bruxelles, 1827).

Moçamedes and Huíla in the 1840s and 1850s⁴³, the size and importance of Quilengues was reduced drastically⁴⁴.

The territories in the *sertões* of São Filipe de Benguela – between the central plateau and the Chela Mountain Range – were locally known as *Mbuelo*, a word the Portuguese translated as “*países de baixo*”, or the lowlands⁴⁵. The independent polities of *Mbuelo* were often in conflict with those of Caconda (Kakonda), Huambo (Wambo), Bailundo (Mbailundo), Bihé (Viye)⁴⁶, located in zones of higher elevation known as the *Nano* and further into the plateau⁴⁷. For centuries, the *Mbuelo* had been an intersection for groups of African migrants. Since at least the end of the first millennia, there were extensive cultural exchanges among the peoples of Central Africa living between parallels 5°-8° S and 18°-20° S, which extends from the rivers Congo/Zaire and Kasai in the north to the rivers Cunene and Zambezi in the south. Quilengues, in particular, was a major migratory corridor that connected Benguela to places as far as the Okavango Delta, in today’s northern Namibia⁴⁸.

⁴³ For more about the foundation of the districts of Moçamedes and Huíla, see Antonio Joaquim Guimarães Jr., *Memória sobre a exploração da costa ao sul de Benguella, na África Occidental, e fundação do primeiro estabelecimento commercial na Bahia de Moçamedes* (Lisboa, Typographia de L.C.A., 1842); Jose Bento Ferreira de Almeida, *Moçamedes* (Lisboa: Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa, 1880); F. M. Bordalo, “Viagens na África e na América”, in *O Panorama: jornal literário e instructivo* (Lisboa, Typographia do Panorama, 1854), 227-228; Maia, *Colonização do planalto de Huíla e Moçamedes*. See also José C. Curto and Arshad Desai, “The Early Demography of Moçamedes, 1839-1869: A Preliminary Analysis”, *Historiae*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2019): 11-32.

⁴⁴ As we will see below, mid-nineteenth century Quilengues had lost a large portion of its territory as described by Governor Vasconcelos in 1799. Besides losing land to the new provinces of Moçamedes and Huíla, the district of Quilengues also lost the lands of Humbe, further to the south (Cunene Basin). By the 1850s, according to the itinerant trader and explorer Bernardino José Brochado, “Notícia de alguns territórios, e dos povos que os habitam, situados na parte meridional da Província de Angola”, *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série I, Dezembro (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1855), 204, Quilengues was reduced to the territory between Dombe Grande (northwest, close to the coast), Nano (east highlands) and Huíla (south).

⁴⁵ Gastão Sousa Dias, *Um grande missionário: Padre Ernesto Lecomte*. Coleção Pelo Império, No. 115 (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1946), 13, included the southern regions of Quipungo, Luceque and even the highlands of Huíla as part of Mbuelo.

⁴⁶ I chose to use the Luso-African version for the names of the places in the interior of Benguela. There are a few exceptions when I use both versions, such as Caconda and Kakonda, in which the former is used to identify the Luso-African *presídio* and the latter to identify the African potentate.

⁴⁷ José Maria de Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, in *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes, 4ª série, parte não oficial* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 198; Ernesto Lecomte, “No Cubango: Comunicação a Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa, em 3 de junho de 1889”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, 8ª série, No 7 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1889), 346-358; R. F. Burton, *The Lands of Cazembe* (London: John Murray, 1873), 24; Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...* Vol. 1, 123; Duparquet, *Viagens a Cimbebasia*, 64.

⁴⁸ Jan Vansina, “Communications between Angola and East Central Africa before c. 1700,” in *Angola on the Move: Transport Routes, Communications and History*, Beatrix Heintze and Achim von Oppen, eds. (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 2008), 130-143; Joseph C. Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, No. 32, December (1997): 5

Since the object of this study is Quilengues as a territory, it is necessary to make a careful analysis of its dimension and composition over time. I argue that the size of Quilengues decreased along with its importance throughout the nineteenth century. At the end of the eighteenth century, the district of Quilengues was a huge territory because it included the lands that would later become the districts of Moçamedes and Huíla. After the foundation of the coastal town of Moçamedes in 1840, the size of the district of Quilengues was significantly reduced. The arrival of new Portuguese-speaking settlers in Huíla during the 1850s also helped decrease its importance as an intermediary with the *sobados* of southern Benguela (Humpata, Quipungo, Gambos, Canina, Njau, etc.). Following the construction of the Benguela Railroad in 1899, Quilengues also lost its relevance as an intersection between the central plateau and the coast. By the twentieth century, what was once the largest district of the Captaincy of Benguela was reduced to the status of a municipality within the Province of Huíla.

This chapter begins by defining the general location and composition of “Quilengues of Benguela”, distinguishing it from other locations in Angola with similar names. It discusses the origins of the name Quilengues (or Kilenges) and its diverse meanings, highlighting its plural form (“*os Quilengues*”) as an indicator of its political and cultural plurality.

I trace the many transformations suffered by the territories in the interior of Benguela through a close analysis of colonial maps from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Appendices). These cartographic sources provide valuable information about the composition and extension of Quilengues over time, and allow a better understanding of this historical process. Despite being politically driven discourses about the past, as with other written documents, these maps are valuable sources for the writing of history and should be treated with the same and critical approach given to other sources. The chapter therefore provides a close analysis of a series of historical maps of Benguela and its interior from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with special attention given to its physical, political and cultural markers.

This chapter then discusses the topographic, hydrographic, and “ethnographic” features of Quilengues, linking its different environmental and ecological characteristics to the development of various economies and polities. I briefly show how the rise of agropastoralist communities in the interior of Benguela and the cultural choices followed by each of them, which generated

particular collective imaginations and oral traditions, led to the rise of institutions of governance and the formation of complex societies.

Finally, the chapter analyses the ethnolinguistic composition of the peoples who inhabited Quilengues. Although the territories in the interior of Benguela are usually identified as the lands of the Ovimbundu people, numerous other ethnolinguistic groups lived in the region prior to the twentieth century. These different groups of peoples, including the Nyaneka, Nkhumbi, Handa, Ngambwe, Muso, Ndombe and the Mbundu, did not remain fixed and isolated in particular territories. On the contrary, they moved about constantly, interacting with one another and with other groups that migrated through or into their territories. This chapter shows the ethnographic and linguistic complexity of Quilengues; and I argue that such complexity arose from centuries of cultural interactions between the several peoples that occupied the interior of Benguela. Thus, the ethnolinguistic similarities and differences of the peoples of Quilengues resulted from recurrent waves of migrations, long-term multicultural movements of expansions and constrictions, and not from the unidirectional diffusion of ideas from the central plateau (*Nano*) to the lowlands (*Mbuelo*), as recorded by some oral traditions.

The creation of the ethnic label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” by the missionary and ethnographer Carlos Estermann in the beginning of the twentieth century to identify the peoples living in the lowlands of *Mbuelo* helped cover up the presence of these Mbangala warriors in Quilengues, to the point that some historians have argued that they were not a relevant group in Benguela and its interior⁴⁹. I will briefly show the history of the invention of the term “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” and how it replaced the identity of “Mbangala”, which despite being imprecise (since it was not even an “ethnic identity”), bears great historical relevance.

Quilengues or Kilenge?

The origin of the name “Quilengues” is a matter that deserves some attention. There are different meanings and many spellings for this word (Appendix 9). Art historian Carl Haenlein, for instance, has defined “*kilengi*” as a Bantu word from Congo (Zaire) that means “joy arising

⁴⁹ Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 40-41

through beauty”⁵⁰. There are also documental references to an animal from the *sertões* of Benguela called “Quilengue”, although it is not clear what kind of animal it was⁵¹. Most of the historical references to “Quilengues”, however, are related to a region in the interior of São Filipe de Benguela (upper Coporolo River) inhabited by groups of Mbangala warlords erroneously called “*jagas*” by Luso-Africans (Chapter 2).

The oldest reference to the territory of Quilengues comes from Antonio de Cadornega’s *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, which was completed in 1680. In the last tome of this three-volume work, Cadornega made three separate references to Quilengues, all of them portraying it as a territory inhabited by many powerful “*jagas*”⁵². He first cited the “*Província do Gemge*” in the interior of the coastal town of Benguela, a place inhabited by *quilombos*⁵³ of *Jagas* called “*Quillengas*”⁵⁴. In another reference, Cadornega wrote about the “*Província dos Quilongas*” (plural form), which he identified as a separate region from the “*Província dos Quimbundos*” (also plural) and from the “*Província de Hoila*”⁵⁵. Some pages later, he mentioned “*os Quilengas*” (plural), which this time he identified as part of the “*Quimbundos*”⁵⁶ living in the interior of Benguela. Cadornega depicted the region of the *Quilengas* as having many *sobas* (“*muitos sovas*”),

⁵⁰ Carl Haenlein, “Kilengi”, in Christopher D. Roy, *Kilengi: African Art from the Bareiss Family Collection* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 11.

⁵¹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 53, Doc. 43-A, “Carta para o Secretário de Estado da Marinha e do Ultramar Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado”, (1 August 1769); BNL, Códice 8743, fls. 77-78, “Carta para o Ilmo. Exmo. Snr. Manoel da Cunha e Menezes, Governador de Pernambuco”, (30 November 1769); BNL, Códice 8743, fls. 78v-80, “Ordem por que se há de governar o Capitão Manoel Antonio Tavares, que vai em um navio de Sua Majestade conduzir a sua real presença treze zebras, um quilengue, um carneiro, quatro corsas e vários viveiros de pássaros” (30 November 1769).

⁵² See also Ralph Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela: do descobrimento à criação do governo subalterno* (Lisboa: Ed. do Autor, 1945), 157; Gladwyn M. Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 275.

⁵³ *Quilombos* or *Kilombos* were Mbangala military camps built around religious ritualistic practices. According to Jan Vansina, “Quilombos on São Tomé, or in Search of Original Sources”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 23 (1996): 453, the first known appearance of the word “quilombo” was in a 1622 letter from Governor João Correia de Sousa, despite previous descriptions since the beginning of the seventeenth century given by Andrew Battell about this kind of fortified encampment of the Mbangala. For more, see Chapter 2.

⁵⁴ Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680*, vol. 3 (Lisboa, Agência Geral do Ultramar, [1680] 1972), 168.

⁵⁵ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, 232.

⁵⁶ The term “Quimbundo” is misplaced here, because Cadornega is referring to the people of the central plateau (*Nano*), who in the twentieth century will be labeled “Ovimbundo”. The terms commonly used in colonial documents to identify the peoples of the central plateau from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries were “Mbundu” or “Munano”, but sometimes the term “Quimbundo” was used as well. See also Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda, “Notícia da cidade de São Filipe de Benguela e dos costumes dos gentios habitantes daquele sertão” (10 November 1797), *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes, 5ª série* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1845), 486-491; Antonio da Silva Porto, *Viagens e Apontamentos de um portuense em África*, Volume 1 (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1986), 130 – note 171.

thus suggesting that it did not constitute a single socio-political entity, but was rather comprised by a number of smaller polities. He included a certain *sova Angolo* from the province of “Hila” as part of the *Quimbundos* living in the interior of the town of Benguela⁵⁷.

Ethnographers have referred to the territory and the peoples of Quilengues in various ways. They have also pointed out some differences in the name in an attempt to understand its origins. In 1934, the ethnographer Wilfrid Hambly wrote about the “Ovimbundu of Elende” in reference to the peoples of Quilengues⁵⁸. Two decades later, José Redinha explained the name “Kilengues” as an adaptation of “*Tyilengue*”, which he considered an ethnic group of its own, different from Kakondas, Gandas, Nganguelas, etc.⁵⁹. In 1960, Gladwyn M. Childs also referred to the word “*Tyilengue*” in relation to Quilengues, but used the variant “*Chilengues*” as well⁶⁰. One year later, Carlos Estermann suggested that the name Quilengues was related to the “*Tyilengue-Humbi*” and the “*Tyilengue-Muso*”. He also then made reference to the *tyilombo tyoviholo*, a term related to the military camp (*kilombo*) of the *ovi-holo* in Quilengues. Estermann also pointed to another “*tyilombo*” of Tyilengue warlords in the lands of Catala (Katala). It was also known as *tyilombo tyonongoma*, or the “*quilombo* of drums”⁶¹. All of these references indicate that the Quilengues (*Kilenges*, *Tyilengue* or *Chilengues*) were groups of warriors from different “ethnic” backgrounds who established independent polities that occupied large portions of the interior of Benguela.

It is also important to reflect on the implications behind the use of “Quilengues” with the “q” rather than “Kilenges” with the “k”. Several ethnographers⁶² and historians⁶³ have adopted the use of the terms “Kilengue” and “Kilengi” (with the “k”), implying there was a proper “African origin” for both the name and the ethnic label. Such is also the case for “Kakonda”, “Kisama” or “Kasanji”, names that the Portuguese appropriated and turned into “Caconda”, “Quissama” and

⁵⁷ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, 250.

⁵⁸ Wilfrid D Hambly, *The Ovimbundu of Angola* (Chicago, 1934), 129-142.

⁵⁹ José Redinha, *Coleção Etnográfica* (Luanda: Museu de Angola, 1955), 40.

⁶⁰ Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 242

⁶¹ Carlos Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola: The Nyaneka-Nkumbi Ethnic Group*, Vol. II (New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, [1961] 1979), 19.

⁶² Redinha, *Coleção Etnográfica*; Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol II.

⁶³ Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Rosa Cruz e Silva, “The Saga of Kakonda and Kilengues. Relations between Benguela and its Interior, 1791-1796”, in José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy eds., *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery* (New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 249-263; Thomas J. Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008); Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*.

“Cassange”. Angolan ethnographers have commonly used the standardized “African spelling” (with “k”) in reference to African potentates, and the “Portuguese version” (with “c” or “q”) to describe areas occupied by Portuguese and Luso-Africans⁶⁴. Hence, “Kakonda” or “Kasanji” refer to the *sobados*, while “Caconda” and “Cassange” are used to identify the Luso-African settlements in the same regions.

In the case of Quilengues, a name derived from *Tyilengue* or *Otchilenge*, the use of the spelling with “k” instead of “q” suggests an African origin for the name of the region prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, thus obscuring the history of the making of Quilengues from the seventeenth century onwards. I argue that the geographical and even ethnographical meanings of “Quilengues” are largely outside impositions that did not exist prior to the arrival of the Portuguese in the region in the early seventeenth century. Hence, there was no original African version for “Quilengues” with “k” (such as Kisama and Quissama). Instead, Quilengues should be understood as a Luso-African corruption of local terms (such as *Tyilengue*, *Otchilenge*, *Chilengue* or even *Elenge*).

Another important issue involving the word “Quilengues” concerns its usage in the plural form. According to the references at hand, there is no single “Quilengue”, but rather only “Quilengues” (*os Quilengues*). This suggests that the multiethnic features of the region were well known even as early as the seventeenth century. It also suggests that Quilengues had always been a territory occupied by multiple important African rulers⁶⁵. Hence, the plurality of “Quilengues” is reflected in its own name.

Quilengues of Benguela

There was not only one Quilengues in West Central Africa. In the case of Angola and Benguela, it is not rare to find similar names in colonial documents referencing to different places. There are, for instance, at least three “Cubal” rivers in Benguela (Quicombo-Cubal, Cubal da Hanya, Cubal de Namibe), while the name “*Ngola*” can be found in the district of Quilengues and

⁶⁴ For instance, Augusto Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, série 26, (1908): 9-13.

⁶⁵ See also Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 190.

Huíla in contexts that were different from those used by the rulers of Ndongo (Angola)⁶⁶. Hence, beyond Quilengues of Benguela there was another “Quilengues” located between the rivers Bengo (or Zenza) and Ucuia, in the northern part of the Colony of Angola⁶⁷.

The region dubbed Quilengues in the northern part of the Colony of Angola, also called Quilengues-Ngongi, Quilengues de Golungo or Zenza e Quilengues, was part of the district of Zenza do Golungo⁶⁸. According to the memoir written on the governor of Angola, Luis Motta Feo (1816-1819), the district of Zenza e Quilengues was part of a large district to the north of the Cuanza River simply called Golungo⁶⁹. Yet, other sources attested it was a district created much earlier, in the sixteenth century. The mid-nineteenth century traveller and bureaucrat Francisco Travassos Valdez, for example, registered that the first governor of Angola, Paulo Dias de Novais, founded the district of Zenza e Quilengues in 1582⁷⁰.

In the nineteenth century, the Portuguese colonial administration divided Zenza do Golungo into three districts (Golungo Alto, Zenza e Quilengues and Dembos) in an attempt to better control it. In the late 1810s, Governor Motta Feo registered that the district of Zenza e Quilengues had a total of 741 houses and 7,117 *moradores* (inhabitants) and there were 71 vassal *sobas*⁷¹ in the region⁷². During the 1850s, according to Valdez, there were 5,000 inhabitants in the district, ruled by fourteen *sobas*⁷³.

⁶⁶ For more on the use of “*Ngola*” among the peoples of Quilengues and Huíla, see Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 193.

⁶⁷ The Portuguese historian Carlos Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII* (Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1972), 117, mistook the two Quilengues, placing the districts of Zenza and Quilengues within the Captaincy of Benguela.

⁶⁸ Manoel Antonio Brito, “Notícia de alguns dos districtos de que se compõe esta província” *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série II (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 83-86; João Vieira Carneiro, “Observações relativas a vários objectos que lhe parecem não exactos no 3º volume dos Ensaio sobre a Estatística das Possessões Portuguezas na África Occidental pelo Concelheiro José Joaquim Lopes de Lima” in *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série II (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 172-179.

⁶⁹ J. C. Feo Cardozo de Castello Branco Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia do vice-almirante Luiz da Mota Feo Torres: A história dos governadores e capitães generaes de Angola, desde 1575 até 1825* (Paris: Fantin, 1825), 362-363.

⁷⁰ Francisco Travassos Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, Volume 2 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1861), 287.

⁷¹ “Vassal *sobas*” were African rulers who associated themselves to the Portuguese colonial administration through the signing of vassalage treaties. These treaties were based on old medieval European traditions, but also incorporated African customs over time. For more about “vassalage” and “vassal *sobas*”, see Chapter 4.

⁷² Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 362-363; Raimundo da Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, [c.1835] 1963), 320.

⁷³ Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, Vol. 2, 286-287.

Although the southern region, in the upper Coporolo River, was already known as Quilengues since at least mid-seventeenth century, Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho, governor of Angola during 1764-1772, officially created the district of Quilengues of Benguela around the settlement of Salvaterra dos Magos in 1769. The district incorporated new territories over time. It became so extensive that it was often presented as two complementary territories: “Quilengues e Sambos” and “Quilengues e Huíla”. Quilengues e Sambos related to the highlands of Quilengues, the regions of Ganda, Bembes and Hanya. Quilengues e Huíla, on the other hand, represented the southern regions, including the *sobados* of Huíla, Humpata, Njau, Quipungo, Mulondo⁷⁴.

Quilengues e Sambos comprised an especially extensive territory in the interior of the Benguela. The lands of Sambos were located between the *sobados* of Huambo and Bihé, far into the lands of the Nano⁷⁵. Hence, the district of Quilengues e Sambos included a massive part of the Angolan central plateau, complicating all attempts to define precise borders for Quilengues. As such, Quilengues was part of the Nano, as the Nano was part of Quilengues. Yet, at least one colonial historian chose to include the region of Bihé along with both Quilengues, defining “Quilengues e Sambos, Quilengues e Huíla, e Bihé” as a single district within the jurisdiction of Benguela⁷⁶.

The district of Quilengues e Huíla included the lands in the interior of *Angra dos Negros*, which in the 1840s would become the district of Moçamedes (today Namibe). At the time of the publication of the memoirs of Governor Mota Feo (1825), there was already an incipient port in Moçamedes (13°S), but with no colonial apparatus, not even a military detachment. According to this governor, the deep involvement of the populations of Quilengues e Huíla in the Atlantic slave trade was the main reason behind the failure of alternative forms of economic development based on agriculture, fishing and mining. He concluded that the slave trade took away the necessary

⁷⁴ Torres, *Memórias contendo a biografia...*, 369; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 324-325.

⁷⁵ Porto, *Viagens e Apontamentos*, Vol. 1, 364 – note 110. See also Edward Weller, “Mapa do Itinerário do Major Serpa Pinto de Benguella ao Bihé, 1877-1878”, in Alexandre Alberto de Serpa Pinto, *Como eu atravessei a África: A carabina d’el-rei*, Parte 1 (Londres: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881); Antonio Augusto de Oliveira, “Carta de Angola, contendo indicações de produção e salubridade, 1885”, in *Comissão de Cartographia de Portugal* (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal).

⁷⁶ Raimundo da Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 324.

labour force and imposed a routine of violence and fear among the local populations, which hindered all attempts at effective colonization⁷⁷.

Colonial cartography of West Central Africa

The first problem in writing a history of Quilengues is determining its borders. Extant reports show different boundaries and describe altered political realities inside and around Quilengues. Such constant reshaping of the territory derived not only from internal disputes among African autonomous warlords (*jagas, sobas* and other potentates) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but also because of the Portuguese colonial project to conquer the so-called “hinterland”⁷⁸. Hence, the continuous process of land appropriation and reconfiguration of its borders makes it difficult for historians to identify the territorial extension of Quilengues over time, let alone its socio-political composition.

The Portuguese colonial project in Angola and Benguela was grounded in the reconfiguration of African territories through the imposition of new geographic markers. This new colonial geography relied on scientific measurements such as latitude and longitude, and thus abandoned African spatial perceptions and traditional landmarks⁷⁹. It was a symbolic conquest of the land. The Portuguese slowly mutated African lands into a European-occupied territory by sketching maps and drawing frontiers. Therefore, the maps of Angola and Benguela from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries relate more to a colonial project than to reality on the ground.

⁷⁷ Torres, *Memórias contendo a biografia...*, 371-375; Almeida, *Moçamedes*, 48.

⁷⁸ I chose not to use the term “hinterland” because it is a concept loaded with colonial bias. The “hinterland” was but a subordinate space to the “centre of power” emerging from the coast. It was usually used by the Portuguese to claim control over lands the colonial administration had little knowledge about. During the Conference of Berlin (1884-1885) the Portuguese tried to impose the concept of “hinterland” to guarantee control over virtually unlimited extensions of land to the interior of the continent, in a futile attempt to gain mandate over the territories between the “colonies” of Angola and Mozambique. For the “absurdity” of the concept of hinterland during the “Scramble of Africa”, see Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, “European Partition and Conquest of Africa: An Overview”, in *General History of Africa, Volume VII. Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935*, Albert Adu Boahen, ed. (Berkeley: UNESCO / University of California Press, 1985), 19-44. See also André Suchet, “The concept of hinterland in geography: A state of the art”, *Ería: Revista Cuatrimestral de Geografía*, Año 37, Vol. 2 (2017): 125-130; Maria Emília Madeira Santos, *Nos caminhos de África: serventia e posse (Angola, século XIX)* (Lisboa: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1998), 386-400.

⁷⁹ Isabel Castro Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença: Relações Portugal-África, séculos XV-XX* (Lisbon: Caleidoscópio, 2004), 10-12; Maria Emília Madeira Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes: da matriz africana à organização colonial do espaço”, *Africana Studia*, No. 9 (2006): 129-131.

It took time, however, for Portuguese cartographers to have enough data about the interior of Benguela to be able to erase the African markers from them. During the centuries of attempted penetration, it was of great strategic importance for the colonial administration to know the location of African polities, especially their enemies (often dubbed *jagas*). The representation of African authorities in colonial maps served also as an instrument of legitimization of recently created Luso-African settlements⁸⁰. Represented side by side in colonial maps, African traditional sites of power conferred legitimacy upon new Luso-African settlements often located in the same vicinity and inheriting the same name. This was the case of Kasanje (Cassange) in the interior of Angola and Kakonda (Caconda) in the interior of Benguela. These references to African powers were slowly replaced by an almost exclusively colonial version of the territory with the consolidation of colonialism in the twentieth century, which included the replacement of local names by Portuguese ones (Huambo, for example, was renamed Nova Lisboa).

Political entities in the interior of Benguela, like many others in southern Africa, did not occupy fixed and well-delimited territories. Their lands and borders were largely determined by the current sites of their *sobados* and by the roads that connected them⁸¹. It was not rare for a *sobado* to move to a new site with the emergence of a new *soba*⁸². In fact, military campaigns and slaving raids often ended with the burning of residences (*libatas*) and fortified corrals (*quipacas*⁸³), which served as an incentive for the relocation of the community following the reestablishment of peace. In 1796, for instance, the *soba* of Socoval requested authorization from the governor of Benguela to move his *libatas* to a new territory outside Quilengues to avoid recurrent violence perpetrated by slavers in the region (Chapter 4).

Thus, the borders of African territories, such as those in the interior of Angola and Benguela, were not static because the powers that defined them were “alive”. Frontiers changed

⁸⁰ Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes”, 134.

⁸¹ Luc Cambrezy, “De l’information géographique à la représentation cartographique. Une liaison subordonnée à une certaine vision de l’espace”, in *La cartographie en débat: Représenter convaincre*, Luc Cambrezy and René de Maximy, eds. (Paris: Karthala-Orstom, 1995), 138.

⁸² Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes”, 133.

⁸³ *Quipacas* were fortifications made of trunks of trees and thorny bushes, and covered with adobe, used by the Africans to protect themselves and their cattle. According to one description, *quipacas* were surrounded by tall walls with holes through which African warriors could aim and attack their enemies with arrows and guns, in case of a siege. Some had tunnels and hidden passages were used by African warriors to leave the fortification unnoticed to acquire supplies (including water from nearby rivers) and attack their enemies by surprise: Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 268. See also Estevam C. Thompson, “Kilombos, *quipacas* and *impuris*: African fortifications in the wars of conquest in Benguela” (forthcoming).

following the necessities of people. In areas where the environment could not be controlled to facilitate sedentarization, the borders of a particular political entity were constantly being reshaped. The prevalence of perennial rivers and the recurrence of long droughts in the interior of Benguela exacerbated the mobile character of these semi-nomadic agropastoralist societies. It is particularly difficult to identify the location of small and independent pastoralist polities in the *sertões*, such as the Mucuandos, because of their nomadic characteristics. One student of Angola's cartography has explained that territorial borders migrated with their peoples⁸⁴.

Although the colonial documentation persistently pronounces Portuguese authority over large portions of the interior of the Captaincy of Benguela, reality was that the knowledge and the effective control of the lands in the *sertões* belonged to Africans⁸⁵. The latter fully limited and conditioned the access of outsiders by controlling the supply of porters and guides (Chapter 5). Moreover, at least until the mid-nineteenth century, the roads that connected the interior to the coast were under the effective control of African authorities⁸⁶.

The maps of Benguela in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Cartography was largely used by the Portuguese colonial administration to classify and “organize” African populations in the interior of Benguela. Isabel Castro Henriques has argued that this exercise of identifying and registering the location of different “tribes” through ethnic and linguistic markers ultimately led to the creation of many of African “ethnicities”⁸⁷. Instead of the natural “chaos” of having multiethnic groups occupying the same spaces, colonial cartography sought to impose “order” by presenting local populations as belonging to “autonomous cultural units”. Thus, political and ethnographic maps of Angola and Benguela imposed an artificial classification upon African social and cultural landscapes.

Although the ultimate goal of colonial cartographers was to purge their work of African markers once they could replace them with scientific markers, or simply with Portuguese names,

⁸⁴ Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes”, 132.

⁸⁵ Isabel Castro Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença*, 68.

⁸⁶ Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes”, 133.

⁸⁷ Isabel Castro Henriques, *Território e Identidade: a construção da Angola colonial, c.1872-1926* (Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 2004), 34.

the maps of Angola from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still had African powers and knowledge impressed upon them. Over time, these references to African geographic and cultural markers were slowly replaced by colonial “discoveries” emanating from increasing scientific expeditions into the interior of the continent⁸⁸. Not surprisingly, Africanist scholars have denounced the uncritical acceptance by some historians that the “map” and the “territory” are in “perfect coincidence”⁸⁹.

I make use of historical maps of Benguela to track the changes in the spatial and ethnolinguistic composition of Quilengues over time, paying special attention to physical and cultural references for that territory and the peoples that inhabited it. Dozens of historical maps of Africa, Angola and more specifically Benguela, produced between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries, are available for analysis. By “reading” this historical cartography and reproducing the information on new georeferenced maps⁹⁰, it has been possible to create a new cartographical representation of the interior of Benguela. The analysis of old and new maps, followed by their comparison with other historical accounts, allows for a better understanding of the political, social, and cultural processes under scrutiny in this thesis. A small sample of the great number of historical maps are reproduced in the Appendices, as well as snapshots of parts of the selected maps (Appendices). Others are not included in the Appendices, but are cited in footnotes and in the Bibliography under Cartographic Sources.

The first map to be analyzed here is a general map of Africa from early eighteenth century (Appendix 1) drawn by the French cartographer Guillaume de L’Isle (1675-1726) and entitled “L’Afrique” (1708)⁹¹. This map presented innovations and a series of corrections compared to previous cartographic representations of Africa, like the disappearance of the mythical connection

⁸⁸ Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 488-494. See also Antonio Augusto de Oliveira, “Carta das possessões portuguezas da Africa meridional segundo as convenções celebradas em 1891”, *Comissão de Cartographia de Portugal* (Paris: Erhard Frères Rue Denfert-Rochereau, 1891).

⁸⁹ Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes”, 129-131; Henriques, *Território e Identidade*, 10-15; Ilídio do Amaral, “Algumas reflexões de um geógrafo em torno do tema: memória e História, A construção das identidades”, *IV Encontro Internacional sobre História de Angola*, Luanda (2010): 10.

⁹⁰ Together with geographer Maria Cristina Fernandes, I have used the information collected from the historical cartography presented in this dissertation to produce georeferenced maps of Angola and Benguela from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, which includes the location of Luso-African settlements and some major African polities. See Maps 1 to 4.

⁹¹ Guillaume de L’Isle, “L’ Afrique: Dressée sur les observations de Mrs. de l’Academie Royyale des Sciences, et quelques autres. & sur les memoires les plus recens” (1708), *Digital Collection of African Maps at the Stanford University Library*.

between the rivers Nile and Zambezi and of the existence of internal islands in the Monomotapa (Mwene-a-Mutapa)⁹². Nonetheless, it still contains several mistakes, such as the location of the kingdom of Benin (West Africa) neighboring the Kingdom of Loango, as well as the narrow internal distance between Angola and Mozambique.

The cartographer de L'Isle (Delisle) had access to some long-lost Portuguese map of the “kingdoms” of Loango, Kongo, Angola and Benguela, from which he acquired the data for his own map⁹³. He used a mix of French and Portuguese to write this information. The three major rivers of West Central Africa are represented in the map – Congo/Zaire, Cuanza (*Coanza*) and Cunene (*Cuneni*) – showing their trajectory into African territories in the far interior, such as the Kingdom of Matamba (Appendix 1.1). The map also brings information about the *presídios* of Angola: Muxima (*Muchinia*), Massangano (*Mafangano*), Cambambe, Ambaca (*Emuaca*), and Pungo-a-Ndongo (*Mapungo das Pedras*).

The territory of the Captaincy of Benguela (identified in this map as “Kingdom of Benguela”) is delimited by the rivers Longa to the north and Coporolo (*Gubororo*) to the south. The map shows the presence of three fortifications on the coast of Benguela: *Benguela Velha* (north), *St. Philippe ou Benguela* (central) and *Dante* (south), the latter being where the port town of Moçamedes was to be founded in 1840 (*Angra dos Negros*). Below Benguela, one finds the “country of Huíla” (“*Pays d’Ohyla*”), at the inner basin of the Cunene River, also described as “*Le Grande Riviere*”. Beyond the Cunene River, the lands are marked as belonging to *Muzumbo Acalunga*. Further south from this entire region highlighted in green, de L'Isle included the legendary “Kingdom of Mataman” or “Climbebi”⁹⁴.

In this same map, at the border of the so called “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela, far into the interior, one finds the “*Jagas ou Giagas*”, a reference to the Mbangala warriors who roamed the *sertões* and later founded the kingdom of Kasanji. They are located below the “Kingdom of Matamba”, ruled by the warrior-queen *Ginga* (*Nzinga*), who became leader of a “*Jaga*” (Mbangala) army. There is another land of “*Jagas*” across the Cunene River, north from the lands of *Muzumbo Acalunga* (also a *Jaga*), where de L'Isle wrote “*Iaga*”. As we will see in

⁹² Avelino Teixeira da Mota, “Os portugueses e a cartografia antiga da África Central, 1550-1800”, *Boletim da Academia de Ciências de Lisboa*, Vol. 35 (1963): 24.

⁹³ Mota, “Os portugueses e a cartografia antiga da África Central”, 24-26.

⁹⁴ For more about the “kingdom of Mataman”, see Chapter 2.

Chapter 2, the northern Mbangala warriors who settled in Kasanje were not the only ones moving about in the *sertões* of Benguela. Another branch of (southern) Mbangala bands migrated towards the Cunene River and the kingdom of Mataman (Cimbebasia) in the middle of the sixteenth century (Map 2).

Although this map does not have much information about the polities in the interior of Benguela, the Coporolo River, which happens to be the main access to Quilengues, is represented and identified as an important water way. The same does not happen with other important local rivers, such as the Marimbombo or the Catumbela. The reference to the “Kingdom of Mataman” is also important and suggests that the memory about the invasion of Cimbebasia by Mbangala bands of warriors had not yet been erased. The 1708 map clearly shows that the *sertões* surrounding the so-called “Kingdom of Benguela” were then occupied by a series of *Jaga* warlords, including “Muzumbo Acalunga”. This is also a reference to the Mbangala, as we shall see in Chapter 2.

The map of the kingdoms of Kongo, Angola and Benguela from 1754 (Appendix 2) produced by the French cartographer Jacques Nicolas Bellin (1703-1754)⁹⁵, a member of the *Académie de Marine* and of the *Royal Society of London*, contains the first cartographic reference to the “*Province de Jenje ou les Quillenjes*” (Appendix 2.1). It is a reference to Cadornega’s “Gemge” from 1680. Quilengues was located between the rivers “Gubororo” (Coporolo) and “Guiamboka”, and the margin of the upper Cunene River. The Coporolo is represented by Bellin as the largest river in the Captaincy of Benguela, an imprecise information that has the objective of highlighting its importance in connecting the interior and the coast. It crosses the entirety of the *sertões* from Quilengues to the Atlantic shore south of the land of “*les Quimbondos*”. At its mouth, the river receives two names: the local one, Gubororo, and its Portuguese version, “*Rio S. François*” (sic). This river crosses the lands of the *Jaga* Kakonda, attesting that “Kakonda” was originally located within the lowlands of Quilengues (in Bongo), not on the central plateau.

This 1754 map registers the existence of several political entities in the interior of Benguela, many of them classified as “*Jagas*”. *Jaga* Kakonda, *Jaga* Kalembe and *Jaga* Kahinka, are all located between the Coporolo River (north) and *Cabo Negro* (south). This region represents

⁹⁵ Nicolas Bellin, “Carte des royaumes de Congo, Angola et Benguela avec les pays voisins tiré de l'Anglois, 1754”, in *Digital Collection of African Maps at the Stanford University Library*.

the part of southern Quilengues that would become the districts of Moçamedes and Huíla in the mid-nineteenth century. Across the Cunene River (*Kuneni*), Bellin locates a certain *Jaga Kakoquo* and a large portion of land identified simply as the country of *Jaga Kasanje* (*Pays des Jagga Kassanji*). There is, nonetheless, another reference to the “residence” of yet another *Jaga Kasanje* above the Cuanza River (identified as *Quanza*).

On Bellin’s map, the Province of Huíla (*Province d’Ohila*) lies beyond the Cunene River and is identified as the domain of *Mazumbo Akalunga*. There is a short text in French informing that these were the closest lands to the sea (*qui son les plus proches de la mer*), although the territory is not bordering the coast. To the south of *Cabo Negro*, where de L’Isle identified the kingdom of Mataman in 1708, Bellin registers only the presence of “savages”. This suggests that the Mbangala expansion southwards had long disrupted the memory about Mataman, together with the political and social landscape of the region, and left it depopulated and surrounded by “*Jaga*” warlords.

The third map analysed is the most important Portuguese cartographic representation of the kingdoms of Kongo, Angola and Benguela in the eighteenth century (Appendix 3). It was drawn in 1790 by the Portuguese Lieutenant Colonel and Royal Engineer Luis Cândido Cordeiro Pinheiro Furtado (1750-1822)⁹⁶. He was the commander responsible for the expedition sent by Baron Moçamedes to *Cabo Negro* to map the southern coast from São Filipe de Benguela to *Angra dos Negros* by land and sea (Chapter 3). It was probably based on a preliminary map⁹⁷ with information about the interior of southern Quilengues (later Moçamedes and Huíla) collected by the 1785 expedition⁹⁸.

The information collected in 1785 about the routes and lands of the interior of Quilengues filled a blank spot in the maps of West Central Africa. The new data (*derrota*⁹⁹) was compiled

⁹⁶ Francisco Cândido Cordeiro Pinheiro Furtado, “Carta geographica da costa occidental da África” (1790), in Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, unpaginated.

⁹⁷ Francisco Cândido Cordeiro Pinheiro Furtado, “Mappa de huma parte da costa occidental de África compreendida entre a cidade de São Felipe de Benguela e a Anciada das Areas” (1785), *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* (Lisboa), AHU, CARTm, 001, D.278.

⁹⁸ For more about the process of production of Furtado’s map after the expeditions to southern Angola in 1785, see Gastão Sousa Dias, *Pioneiros de Angola: Explorações portuguesas no sul de Angola, séculos XVII e XVIII*. Coleção Pelo Império, No. 42 (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1937), 51-56. See also Chapter 3.

⁹⁹ Although the word “*derrota*” means “defeat” in modern Portuguese, in the eighteenth century it had a different meaning. According to Bluteau, *Diccionario da Lingua Portuguesa*, Vol. 1, 381, “*derrota*” meant “to take route to”, either by sea or land. It was also related to the “route” of armies (*rota do exército*). In the context of territorial

with existing cartographic information from Kongo and Angola, and led to the production of the most complete map of the region until the second half of the nineteenth century. The map made in 1790 was published in the 1825 memoir published on Governor Motta Feo¹⁰⁰. The English explorer and writer Thomas Edward Bowdich (1791-1824) reproduced most of the cartographic information compiled by Furtado in a map produced in 1822¹⁰¹ and published two years later in his book *An Account of the Discoveries of the Portuguese in the Interior of Angola and Mozambique* (1824).

For the first time, a map of Benguela registered some of the most important *sobados* of the interior with relative precision: Quizamba, Quilumata, Socoval, Caluquembe, Tinde, Quitata, Quiaca, Quipungo, Canina, Njau, among many others (Appendix 3.1). Furtado's 1790 map also contains detailed hydrographic data, including even some small perennial rivers in desert areas. The Coporolo River, once again, received especial attention. It stretches from the region of the *presidio* of Old Caconda (*Caconda Velha*) to the coast. The map also shows the Calunga River, one of Coporolo's main tributaries, and its connection to the settlement of Quilengues (*Cap. Mor de Quilengues*) and the powerful *sobados* of Socoval and Calunga.

On the coast, close to the mouth of the Coporolo River, Furtado registered the existence of a place called Muene Calunga's Cove (*Enseada de Muene Calg^a*), which suggests the river was used to connect the coast to the lands of *sobas* Calunga and Socoval, both suppliers of slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Calunga's Cove was close to Equimina beach, a place known as a point of contraband. Caravans with smuggled slaves from Quilengues could descend the Equimina River to meet contrabandists on the coast. In the 1790 map, the Equimina River receives a mixed name, "*São João de Quimina*".

South of *Cabo Negro*, Furtado's map shows the desert region inhabited by "savages" (Appendix 3.2). In the Cunene basin, the land of Humbe (*terras do Humbe*) is indicated with the added information that it was an area supplying slaves and ivory. On the other side of the Cunene River, one finds Big Humbe (*Humbe Grande*). Furtado describes it as territory prohibited to both

explorations, the term "*derrota*" was used in the sense of gathering information about the route taken, thus revealing the landscape. The data collected by these "*derrotas*" were among the most important sources of eighteenth and nineteenth century Cartography.

¹⁰⁰ For another version of this same map made in 1791, see Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 199.

¹⁰¹ Walker, "Map of the Coast and Interior of Congo, Angola and Benguela, 1822".

“whites” and Europeanized “blacks” (*negros calçados*). Throughout the entire map, small drawings of walled villages (*kilombos*) adorn the *sertões*, but the term “Jaga” has completely disappeared¹⁰².

Furtado’s map is the best reference for the interior of Benguela in the late eighteenth century, despite having a series of geographical and ethnographical errors. Among the latter, one finds Coporolo’s extension much larger than it should be, the location of the Mocorocas on a specific strip on land close the coast, and the position of Salvaterra dos Magos around the same latitude (15°S) as *Angra dos Negros*. Even with these mistakes resulting from technological limitations, and probably some miscalculation on the part of those who collected the data, there is no more precise map of Benguela before 1880. In fact, cartographic knowledge about the “kingdoms” of Kongo, Angola and Benguela decreased throughout the nineteenth century, since Cartography is a science deeply influenced by political and economic changes. I argue that the decrease in the importance of Benguela following the Independence of Brazil (1822) and the prohibition of the Atlantic slave trade (1830) led to the decline in cartographic knowledge about the interior of West Central Africa. The constant changes in the political landscape of the *sertões*, with the disappearance of some *sobados* and the foundation of new ones, demanded constant input of new data.

Two Portuguese maps produced and published in the middle of the nineteenth century exemplify this deterioration of knowledge about the *sertões* following the last period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. With its end in the 1850s, many traders left the region and there was little interest in Portugal to invest in Benguela. In fact, there was an increasing number of colonial officials in Portugal in the 1860s who opposed any colonial penetration in the interior of the West Central Africa. They even discussed the relevance of maintaining military outposts in regions distant from the coast, such as Malanje and Duque de Bragança, deep in the interior of Angola, or Quilengues and Caconda in the *sertões* of Benguela. These regions and the Luso-Africans who inhabited them, either in colonial settlements or in private encampments, were isolated from the coast and from each other, which made them highly dependent on the development of good relations with local *sobas* who controlled those lands. Colonial officials back in Portugal charged that Luso-African colonists under their command could not be trusted because of their involvement

¹⁰² See also Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 145.

in the slave trade. Hence, the geopolitical strategy of the Portuguese in Angola and Benguela in the 1860s was to retreat to the coast¹⁰³.

This loss of interest and knowledge about the interior of the “Portuguese colonial possessions” in West Central Africa is evident in cartographic works produced between the 1840s and 1860s. For instance, the map of the kingdoms of Angola and Benguela (Appendix 4) published in 1846 by the Portuguese colonial historian José Joaquim Lopes de Lima (1797-1852) has less information than Furtado’s maps from the end of the previous century¹⁰⁴. Moreover, the position of the settlement of Quilengues is at odds with previous maps, as is the location of Caconda, the only *presídio* in the interior of Benguela (Appendix 4.1).

The hydrographic data of Lima’s map is also less precise. The Coporolo River lost its real tributaries, and became connected to the Equimina River (now simply called “*São João*”) through an inexistent lake. The prominence of Equimina in this 1846 map suggests increased importance for this point of embarkation to smuggle slaves after 1830. The region of Humbe is portrayed somewhere beyond the Cunene River and comes with information about the prohibition of “whites” and Europeanized “blacks” (“*pretos calçados*”), a reason conveniently explaining the cartographer’s little knowledge about it (Appendix 4.2). It also informs that the region used to provide slaves, but now ivory was its main export. The label “*Jaga*” is now reserved exclusively for the ruler of Cassange, in Angola.

The map of the kingdoms of Angola and Benguela (Appendix 5) by Manuel Antonio de Castro (1860)¹⁰⁵ is even less precise than Lima’s, although it seems to be a reproduction of the latter. Like in the previous map, the locations of the *presídio* of Caconda and of the settlement of Quilengues are misplaced (Appendix 5.1). This map also shows a *Quimina* River in the region of Moçamedes (actually the Giraul River), which is a clear misplacement of the the Equimina River (also *São João de Equimina*). There is, however, another *São João* River that together with the Coporolo River flow into a lake to which there are no previous references. This could mean that, although much of the cartographic knowledge about the region had been lost, the Equimina River

¹⁰³ Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 386.

¹⁰⁴ José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, “Carta geographica dos reinos de Angola e Benguella, 1846”, in *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas na África Occidental e Oriental; Asia Occidental; China, e na Oceania*, Vol. 3 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1846).

¹⁰⁵ Manuel Antonio de Castro, “Mappa dos reinos de Angola e Benguela, 1860”, BNL, Cartografia, C.C. 21V. BND, purl/1498.

and the beach at its mouth remained important references for the contraband of slaves during the decades following the prohibition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Similar to Lima's map, the label "Jaga" appears in Castro as related only to Kasanje.

Renewed Portuguese colonial impetus during the 1870s and 1880s demanded the development of further cartographic knowledge about the interior of West Central Africa. These maps would also follow the new scientific methods and standards of the end of the century¹⁰⁶. Until this moment, even the borders of the main districts of Angola and Benguela had not been fixed, and were based on "limits of tolerance" recognized by both the Portuguese colonial administration and African authorities¹⁰⁷. To respond to this new colonial demand for maps of Africa, the Portuguese created the *Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa* during the International Congress of Geography held in Paris in 1875 and, at the same event, the Portuguese Commission of Cartography (*Comissão Permanente de Cartographia de Portugal*)¹⁰⁸.

With the advent of the Conference of Berlin (1884-1885), Portugal rushed to produce a series of new detailed maps of Angola and Benguela. The cartographer Antonio Augusto d'Oliveira was put in charge of the project. The first of these was the *Carta de Angola* (Appendix 6) from 1885 containing information on agricultural production and areas considered unhealthy for settlement¹⁰⁹. It is quite precise and contains good topographic and hydrographic data. The coast is covered with names of rivers, beaches, capes, bays and other sites of interest. The interior also have much information, as the map shows the location of both African polities such as Huambo, Bailundo, Huíla, and Humbe, and colonial administrative areas, including Dombe Grande, Caconda, and Moçamedes (Appendix 6.1). The district of Quilengues is accurately depicted, and the map shows the location of the *sobado* of Socoval (*Socobala*). The rivers Calunga and Coporolo are also accurately represented. Here, the Equimina River regained its real location and dimensions.

¹⁰⁶ Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 351-352.

¹⁰⁷ Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 391.

¹⁰⁸ Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 367-373; H. Gabriel Mendes, "As origens da Comissão de Cartografia e a ação determinante de José Julio Rodrigues, Luciano Cordeiro e Francisco Antonio de Brito Limpo: A história política das explorações africanas de Hermenegildo Capelo, Roberto Ivens e Serpa Pinto". *Centro de Estudos de Cartografia Antiga* (Lisboa: Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar, 1982), 1-44.

¹⁰⁹ Oliveira, "Carta de Angola, contendo indicações de produção e salubridade, 1885".

This 1885 map also brings information about the main agricultural and mineral productions of Angola, Benguela and Moçamedes, dividing these areas into counties (*conselhos*). The divisions presented for the “counties” of Benguela are, in fact, much more realistic than other official divisions, in terms of describing areas effectively occupied by “white” settlers. They were Benguella, Caconda, Catumbella, Dombe Grande, Egito and Quilengues. The recently created district of Moçamedes was divided into the counties of Bumbo (Capangombe), Gambos, Huíla, Humbe, Humpata and Moçamedes. The crops produced in the “counties” of Benguela consisted of cotton, coffee, sugarcane, tobacco, wheat, maize, manioc, potato, rice and pastures for the cattle. The mineral products were gold, iron, copper, brimstone, mineral salt and petroleum. The map also included information about the existence of important commodities extracted from trees, such as *liconde*¹¹⁰ (*imbondeiro*), palm oil (*palmas*), rubber (*licongue*), etc.

The map from 1885 still shows productive terrains on the coast and in the interior, as well as the areas considered not suited for European settlement. The valleys of Calunga and Coporolo in Quilengues were considered especially dangerous, as were the basins of the rivers Quicombo, Egito, Cavaco, Catumbela and Equimina. The region of Capangombe (Huíla) – in the upper Giraul River – was also considered insalubrious. The map still presents some ethnolinguistic labels mixed with information on small and large African political entities, such as Mucuando, Mucoroca, Quanhama, Caluquembe, Quipungo, Mulondo, and Handa. Finally, it included information about the recent expedition led by the colonial explorers Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens (1884), showing the regions they were penetrating at the time of the production of the map. This unexplored region, beyond the Cunene River, features as a blank spot in the middle of the map.

¹¹⁰ “*Liconde*”, “*licondo*”, “*aliconde*”, or “*licomte*” are Luso-African corruptions of the Bakongo word “*nkondo*”, the name of a large and fibrous African tree known as “baobab” in other parts of the continent. In Kimbundo, this tree is known as “*mbondo*”, which was later corrupted by the Luso-Africans in Angola and became “*imbondeiro*”. *Liconde* and *licomte* are also commonly used in reference to the fiber extracted from the bark of that tree. This fiber had different applications, from the production of textiles and paper to military purposes. In Angola, soldiers used a wisp of *liconde* (*lanadas de liconde*) in the sockets of their guns. See ANA, Códice 443, fl. 55, “Ofício para regente de Quilengues Antônio Pires Louzada”, (15 October 1800); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 70v-72, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (11 March 1801); ANA, Códice 525, fls. 40, “Ofício do Chefe do Estado Maior Jose Herculano Ferreira de Horta”, (9 July 1838). For more about *Liconde*, see also Manuel Alves de Castro Francina, “Viagem a Cazengo pelo Quanza, e regresso por terra”, *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série I (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 432; Joachim John Monteiro, *Angola and the River Congo, Vol. 1* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1875), 78; Conde de Ficalho, *Plantas úteis da África portuguesa* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1884), 100-102; Ben Zacheu, *Costumes angolenses* (Lisboa: Companhia Nacional Editora, 1890), 22, 31-33; E.G. Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh, in Angola and the Adjoining Regions*. (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1901), 24 - note 1.

In the following year, the Portuguese Commission of Cartography produced a major map of their possessions in Africa, with detailed information about the interior of Angola entitled “Carta da Africa Meridional Portuguesa” (Appendix 7) of 1886¹¹¹. It shares much of the data with the map from 1885, but now included the areas recently explored by Capello and Ivens. In fact, it included not only the trajectory of both expeditions led by these explorers (1877-80 and 1884-85), but also the routes taken by other explorers as well, including Serpa Pinto (1877-78), Silva Porto (1853-54 and 1882-83), Rodrigues Graça (1843-1846), and José Maria de Lacerda (1798), among others (Appendix 7.1). This map showed the “colonies” of Angola and Mozambique connected as one continental Portuguese possession, a representation that became known as the rose-coloured map (*o mapa cor-de-rosa*)¹¹².

The “British Ultimatum of 1890”¹¹³ destroyed the Portuguese rose-coloured colonial ambitions over the territories between Angola and Mozambique. In the same year, the Portuguese Commission of Cartography issued a map¹¹⁴ surrendering the central African territories under dispute to the British. Portuguese cartographers literally yielded their symbolic “pink territories” in central Africa to the British by recoloring the Portuguese possessions in blue. In 1891, the Commission issued yet another map of Portuguese southern Africa containing the new northern borders negotiated with the British and the Belgians in that year

In this latter map (Appendix 8) entitled “*Carta das possessões portuguesas da Africa meridional segundo as convenções celebradas em 1891*”¹¹⁵, the Portuguese resumed the use of pink colour to represent their African possessions. Although borders were still under dispute, Angola already resembles its current shape. The data about the interior is the same presented in the previous two maps (Appendix 8.1). The old territory of Benguela is now divided into Benguela

¹¹¹ Antonio Augusto de Oliveira, “Carta da Africa Meridional portuguesa, 1886”, *Comissão de Cartographia de Portugal* (Paris: Erhard Frères Rue Denfert-Rochereau, 1886).

¹¹² For more on the “rose-colored map”, see Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 400-423; See also Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2 (Luanda: Banco de Angola, 1948), 47.

¹¹³ This ultimatum consisted of a *memorandum* sent by Lord Salisbury to the Portuguese government on 11 January 1890 telling them to withdraw their colonial troops from the regions of Mashoba and Matabeleland (later Rhodesia) and the Shire-Nyasa region (Malawi). For more on the the British Ultimatum and the end of the “rose-coloured map”, see Marquês de Lavradio, *Portugal em África Depois de 1851: Subsídios para a História* (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1936); Miguel Patrício, “Do Ultimatum de 1890 ao Tratado Luso-Britânico de 1891”, *Revista do Instituto de Direito Brasileiro*, No. 10, Ano 2 (2013): 372-413.

¹¹⁴ This map is not reproduced here for lack of space. A published version appears in Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 422.

¹¹⁵ Oliveira, “Carta das possessões portuguesas”.

and Moçamedes. The district of Quilengues does not exist anymore, only the settlement, which was no longer called *Salvaterra dos Magos*. The hydrographic data distinguishes perennial from intermittent streams and is quite precise, despite some important omissions, such as the Calunga River, which is shown simply as Coporolo. The Equimina River is still present, although there is no mention of its name. The beach of Equimina is no longer identified either, once it had lost its importance as an alternative point of embarkation for smuggled slaves.

The environment and the landscape

When Europeans arrived in Benguela early in the seventeenth century, Africans had already long occupied the best territories inland, most of them located on the central plateau. Local communities had been roaming the interior of the continent for centuries, looking for the most suitable places for human settlement. Most of them chose to settle on the margins of lakes and intermittent rivers both on the plateau and in the lowlands¹¹⁶. Availability of water, however, was not the only important characteristic to determine the best site for the development of a community. Suitable soil for crops and land with natural pasture were also essential for the development of these agropastoralist communities in the interior of Benguela. Many of them also chose to settle close to the rocky hills on the edge of the plateau, in places easier to defend than the open plains and valleys¹¹⁷.

Although the areas surrounding rivers and valleys presented some of the necessary conditions for human settlement, they could also prove to be insalubrious due to the presence of mosquitoes carrying diseases like malaria¹¹⁸. Portuguese colonial documentation often portrays São Filipe de Benguela as an unhealthy coastal town where many Europeans perished. This unsound environment was believed to be a consequence of “corrupted air”. The truth is that the

¹¹⁶ Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 50; João Francisco Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes*, 4^a série (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 247; Alvin W. Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola* (Washington DC: National Academy of Sciences, 1963), 83-84; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 2.

¹¹⁷ Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 41; Guimarães Jr., *Memória sobre a exploração da costa ao sul de Benguella*, 12.

¹¹⁸ Despite being portrayed as a “healthy” region, especially in comparison with the coastal areas, cases of illnesses in Quilengues increased during the rainy season because the wet weather led to the proliferation of mosquitos. There was also a higher incidence of inflammatory eye diseases, considered to be the most common affliction of the inhabitants of Quilengues: Bordalo, “Viagens na África e na América”, 227-228.

site chosen by Luso-African colonists to build their coastal settlement was known by Africans to be an unhealthy place to live. That explains why foreigners found no major African settlement in the swampy coast. The most important African villages could be found neither on the coast of Benguela, nor on its immediate semi-arid backlands¹¹⁹.

São Filipe de Benguela was built close to a perennial stream of water locally called Marimbombo (renamed as Cavaco) that gave the Portuguese the wrong impression it could provide the necessary water for their settlement. The German physician Georg Tams visited the port town in the early 1840s and reported on the unwholesome environment he found there, which afflicted Europeans and Africans alike. Those who could, transferred their residences to areas in the interior (some as far as 30 days away) and only visited the port town when business demanded, returning to their houses elsewhere as soon as possible¹²⁰.

The *sertanejo* and ethnographer Antonio Francisco Nogueira, writing in the late 1870s, affirmed that all efforts to drain swamps, channel rivers and cut down bushes would not be enough to destroy the causes of Benguela's insalubrity: "The nature of the soil, the disposition of the mountains and the flow of rivers are not conditions easy to modify"¹²¹. Tams concluded that the only reason Europeans settled in the unhealthy coastal regions of both Luanda and Benguela was the Atlantic slave trade¹²².

To the north of São Filipe, there is larger river called Catumbela, where the dwellers of São Filipe de Benguela had farms (*arimos*) that provided provisions for the city, as well as good part of its potable water¹²³. Europeans also believed Catumbela to have "healthier air", which could help with the recovery of sick people. In 1808, for example, the governor of Benguela, Joaquim Vieira de Abreu e Paiva, moved to the region of Catumbela to recover from an illness¹²⁴.

The Coporolo River, located to the south of the city of Benguela, was one of the most important gateways to the lands occupied by *sobas* (*sobados*) and "*jagas*" (*jagados*). While the

¹¹⁹ Miller, "Angola central e sul por volta de 1840", 23.

¹²⁰ George Tams, *Visita às possessões portuguesas na costa ocidental da África*, Vol. 1 (Porto: Typographia da Revista, 1850), 119-122.

¹²¹ Antonio F. Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África: usos e costumes de alguns povos gentílicos do interior de Moçamedes* (Lisboa: Typographia Nova Minerva, 1881), 186.

¹²² Tams, *Visita às possessões portuguesas na costa ocidental da África*, Vol. 2, 86.

¹²³ Tams, *Visita às possessões portuguesas na costa ocidental da África*, Vol. 2, 112-113.

¹²⁴ ANA, Códice 445, n.p., "Carta do Regente de Quilengues Manoel Barbosa de Mello de 23 de Abril, recebida em 5 de maio de 1808", (23 April 1808).

Valley of Coporolo on the coast was considered a “corrupted” environment prone to diseases, the region of upper Coporolo, known as the Valley of Calunga, had better water and a lower incidence of disease¹²⁵.

Quilengues was at the intersection of the dry lands of the coast and the wet highlands, and thus presented both features. The Austrian botanist Frederico Welwitsch (1806-1872) depicted these three different landscapes of the interior of Benguela as follows: the first was characterised by aridity and lack of vegetation; the second for its freshness and the lux of their inhabitants; the third was marked by its variety and elegance¹²⁶.

Most of the country in the immediate interior of Benguela was sandy and arid, characterized by irregular rainfall¹²⁷. Great part of the lowlands of Quilengues lay on calcareous and sandy terrain made of lithosols and fersialitic soil (sometimes called lateritic soil), common to semi-arid regions that experience extensive periods of drought. It is a soil with poor organic matter, but becomes suitable for farming if combined with manure¹²⁸, which the peoples of Quilengues had plenty of access to due to the importance of cattle in their economy and society¹²⁹. Proper irrigation and treatment of the land makes this type of soil suitable for the cultivation of tropical products such as sugarcane, palm trees, cacao, and coffee, among others¹³⁰.

As the altitude increases, the terrain becomes siliceous rock and the soil paraferalitic (with high levels of iron). The mountain range that extends from Chela to the northern part of Quilengues is formed by granite cliffs, which at higher levels are covered with quartzite. On the plateau, the

¹²⁵ Falcão, *A Questão do Zaire*, 83-84, 105; Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 50; Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 4; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 3. See also Oliveira, “Carta de Angola, contendo indicações de produção e salubridade, 1885”.

¹²⁶ Frederico Welwitsch, “Apontamentos phyto-geográficos sobre a flora da província de Angolana África Equinocial”, *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série I (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 530.

¹²⁷ Bordalo, “Viagens na África e na América”, 227-228; Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 94; Jean-Luc Vellut, “The Congo Basin and Angola”, in *General History of Africa, Volume VI. Africa in the nineteenth century until 1880s*, J. F. Ade Ajayi, ed. (Berkeley: UNESCO / University of California Press, 1989), 303.

¹²⁸ Eduardo Rodrigues Baptista, “Terrenos e agricultura do districto de Moçamedes”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, 9ª série, No. 12 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1889), 579-592. See also Vellut, “The Congo Basin and Angola”, 303.

¹²⁹ Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 97, noted that cattle were the ordinary currency and the most common form of wealth accumulation in the interior of Benguela. See also Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 116.

¹³⁰ Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 69; Embrapa. “Recomendações técnicas para o cultivo de milho e de macunde em São Tomé e Príncipe”, *Série Documentos*, No. 11 (Planaltina: Embrapa/CPAC, 1984): 8; Oliveira, “Carta de Angola, contendo indicações de produção e salubridade, 1885”.

soil is composed of yellow and red clay, which is much more fertile than the soil in the lowlands. The existence of more rivers and higher annual pluviometric levels complete the positive scenario for agriculture on the highlands¹³¹.

Part of the coastal region was made of sandy hills, alternated by broad plains, covered by thorny vegetation, grass and some scattered *imbondeiros* (*Adansonia digitata*), locally known as *omukua*, and often called *baobab*¹³². The vegetation only became thicker close to the riverbanks. The mountainous regions were covered by bushes and large trees. There were also many palm trees. On the central plateau, the main characteristic was the great variety of vegetation. The number of rivers increased greatly on the highlands and gave birth to green meadows. It was a region that featured all the “splendour of the tropical zone”¹³³. A great part of the vegetation of Quilengues was composed of an open forest (*Brachystegia-lsoberlinia* woodland) known locally as *miombo*, or *mato-de-panda* in Portuguese¹³⁴.

Benguela has a dry and wet season. The botanist Welwitsch, who was part of a scientific expedition to Moçamedes and Huíla between 1853 and 1860, compared the climate of Benguela to that of Portugal, which he considered diametrically opposite, since in Benguela the hotter part of the year started in September. However, the period of rains was similar to that of Portugal, from September to the end of April. Hence, while in Portugal the rains fell during the colder part of the year, in Benguela it rained during the hotter season¹³⁵.

In Benguela, therefore, the rainy season extends roughly from October to April, and the dry season (*cacimbo*¹³⁶) from May to September¹³⁷. While in the lowlands the pluviometric levels

¹³¹ Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 66-83; Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 4; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 2. See also Ministério da Educação da República de Angola, *Atlas Geográfico*, Vol. I (Estocolmo: Esselte Map Service, 1982), 23.

¹³² Porto, *Viagens e Apontamentos*, Vol. 1, 367 – note 150.

¹³³ Welwitsch, “Apontamentos phyto-geográficos...”, 530.

¹³⁴ According to Vellut, “The Congo Basin and Angola”, 296, “*mato-de-panda*” was common in other areas of Angola and Kongo. It extended from the Congo/Zaire River to the north until around the Cabo Negro (latitude 16-17° south). See also Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 67-69; Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 6.

¹³⁵ Welwitsch, “Apontamentos phyto-geográficos...”, 583

¹³⁶ The word *cacimbo* is generically used by the Luso-Africans in reference to the Angolan winter. *Cacimbo* is actually the fog that covers the land in the early hours of the morning due to the dry and cold weather.

¹³⁷ In Kongo, the dry and cool season between May and September (often hungry dry season) was called “*Kimbangala*” and was considered the favorite one for war because conditions for traveling and fighting were better and because there was no agricultural activity: Anne Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 5; John K. Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition 1641-1718* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 9.

do not exceed 100mm in the rainiest month (March), in the highlands it reaches 350mm¹³⁸. The dry period was considered the best time for military expeditions because the roads were good and the rivers not flooded. During the rainy season, the weather could change quite quickly and catch caravans and troops by surprise, forcing them to camp wherever they were until conditions changed. The dry season was also the moment for wars between African potentates, especially in years of extended drought, when entire communities were forced to look for water and grazing grounds for their cattle, as well as fertile land for their crops¹³⁹.

As the latitude increases southwards, the weather becomes drier and the terrain more arid, until it finally turns into a desert around the *Cabo Negro* region, beyond the Coroca River (*Deserto de Moçamedes*)¹⁴⁰. In the interior of Moçamedes, the rainy season also starts in September and rain becomes heavier and more frequent during the months of February and March. The rains, however, have no regularity. Some years, it rains three or four times, in others, not a drop¹⁴¹. The Chela Mountain Range (*Serra da Chela*), part of the great African escarpment, divides the dry part of Moçamedes from the green highlands of Huíla¹⁴².

The major *sobados* of the Chela region were located in the highlands of Huíla, also called the “highlands of Munda”¹⁴³. Similar to the plateau, these higher grounds of Huíla had better soils, bigger trees and greater rainfall¹⁴⁴. The large herds of cattle, however, were kept in the drier plains of the lowlands of Huíla. Similar to Quilengues, this was the proper place for cattle ranching (*miombo*). South of the lands of Huíla, there lies the broad sandy floodplains of Humbe, which combines broken terrains suitable for grazing herds with flooded riverbanks that allowed for the development of agriculture¹⁴⁵.

¹³⁸ República de Angola, *Atlas Geográfico*, Vol. 1, 21.

¹³⁹ Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, 202.

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Corps of Engineers, “Map of Benguela, Africa, 1968”, *Army Map Service* (Washington D.C.).

¹⁴¹ Baptista, “Terrenos e agricultura do districto de Moçamedes”, 579.

¹⁴² Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 2.

¹⁴³ Munda is a location on the base of the Chela mountain range (18°-12°S), in the interior of Cape Negro: U.S. Corps of Engineers, “Map of Benguela, Africa, 1968”. See also Falcão, *A Questão do Zaire*, 84, 105; Hermanegildo Capello and Robert Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa: Descrição de uma viagem através do continente africano*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1886), 151; Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, 248;

¹⁴⁴ Duparquet, *Viagens a Cimbebasia*, 61-63; Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 65-66; Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 149-150; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 3.

¹⁴⁵ Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 3

Weather and access to permanent sources of water directly influenced the economies and alimentary habits of the peoples dwelling in the interior of Benguela. In the wetter lands of the plateau, there was full development of agriculture. In the dry lands, the economy and social life revolved around livestock. It was possible to find potable water in drier areas by digging the banks of dry rivers¹⁴⁶, and the peoples that occupied this environment, such as the Mucubaes and Mocarocas, dug wells in the sand (*cassímas*) to collect water for themselves and their cattle¹⁴⁷. Hence, while agriculture demanded a sedentary community with regular access to water, cattle were mobile and could be taken to other areas in case of droughts and in periods of war. Quilengues had a mix of these two economies, with both cattle and agriculture playing major roles.

Agropastoralist societies of Quilengues

The environmental particularities of Quilengues, including in this case the regions of Moçamedes (arid and semi-arid), Huíla (wet highlands), and Humbe (dry pastures and fertile floodplains), influenced the consolidation of different economies among the African communities that occupied this vast territory from the first millennium onwards. The peoples inhabiting Quilengues formed economies as diversified as the landscapes they occupied. These different environments predisposed the rise of sedentary agropastoralists in valleys and river basins, in contrast with full-fledged nomadic pastoralists living in the dry lands of southern Benguela. Sedentarization and stockbreeding sponsored the foundation of new institutions of governance in the beginning of the second millennium that launched a long historical process of centralization of political power all over West Central Africa.

Jan Vansina has argued that the process of centralization of political power among the agropastoralist societies of Quilengues, however, cannot be seen as an ineluctable outcome of sedentarization. Although ethnographers from the nineteenth century¹⁴⁸ have claimed that “monocephalic government” was imported into Quilengues from the kingdoms of the plateau –

¹⁴⁶ Guimarães Jr., *Memória sobre a exploração da costa ao sul de Benguela*, 6.

¹⁴⁷ Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, 241; Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, 201.

¹⁴⁸ Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*; See also Alfred Hauenstein, “L’Ombala de Caluquembe: Histoire, traditions, coutumes et rites des familles royales de Caluquembe, de la tribu des Ovimbundu (Angola)”, *Anthropos*, Bd. 58, H. 1/2 (1963): 47-120.

based on oral traditions from the *Otyilenge* (indeed from the Nyaneka of Quilengues) and from the Nkhumbi of Caluquembe – Vansina doubts that the agropastoralist communities of the lowlands of Quilengues simply incorporated institutions of governance from sedentary societies of the plateau. He wondered: “How was it possible for a whole complex system of governance to be transferred wholesale from a country of farmers to one where livestock was extremely important? It cannot be assumed then that the monocephalic form of governance from the *planalto* [plateau] was imported”¹⁴⁹.

For purposes of this study, I have adopted Vansina’s thesis that the different political entities of Quilengues were formed by a slow historical process involving the rise of powerful headmen with great amounts of livestock who spread their influence by loaning cattle to other headmen with whom they had developed kinship ties by marrying one of their “daughters”. In rough terms, this was an exchange of women for cattle. This position rejects the idea of a “wholesale transference” of political structures of governance (in this case the institution of *soba*¹⁵⁰) from the central plateau to the different peoples inhabiting the lowlands of Quilengues, an idea which featured as part of the collective imagination of the peoples of the region, as we will see below.

This long process of foundation of political entities in the interior of Benguela began with the introduction of cereal crops and the subsequent sedentarization of local communities, two basic steps for the creation of more complex forms of governance. The arrival of both cereal crops and cattle in the second half of the first millennium happened through the same corridors of migration connecting southern Zambia to the Okavango Delta, and from there to the southern portion of Benguela. From there, these novelties crossed the Cunene River and spread within the region, following the course of that and other important rivers, such as the Caculuar (Map 1). With the

¹⁴⁹ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 135-137.

¹⁵⁰ The title of “*soba*” (also “*somá*”, “*sova*” or “*homphá*”) derived from “*ohámbe*”, meaning “he who surpasses all others”, is a designation still in use among Herero and Ndonga peoples. Its use can be traced back to the eleventh century among the peoples of the central plateau, which suggests that the title was invented some time after the introduction of large herds of bovine cattle in southern Benguela. The hoarding of cattle and the expansion of the herds (through raising and raiding) allowed the *sobas* to attract more servants and clients: Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 141; Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 19; Carlos Estermann, “Notas etnográficas sobre os povos indígenas do Distrito de Huíla”, *Boletim Geral das Colónias*, Fevereiro (1935): 62. Besides the more generic title of “*soba*”, Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*, 125, registers different hereditary titles for different ethnic groups. The Hamba called their rulers “Gongas”, the Mulondo used the term “Pumbas”, the Nkhumbi used “Xiahungos”, the Ngambwe used “Pahos” and the Lupolo used “Nangollos”.

adoption of cereal agriculture, African villages increased from a dozen individuals to agglomerations with more than a hundred people. It was a cultural incorporation of great significance and that caused social and political transformation, comparable only to the introduction of pastoralism in the following centuries¹⁵¹.

The first cereal crops to be adopted by the peoples of the Cunene basin were sorghum (*massambala*) and millet (*massango*)¹⁵². They remained the two most important cereal crops in the interior of Benguela until the nineteenth century, although some other crops introduced by Luso-Africans became very popular among African communities, mainly beans (*mucunde*), maize (*epungu*) and manioc¹⁵³. Wheat was also produced in higher altitudes like Catala (Caconda), but was a commodity reserved for the consumption of Luso-Africans¹⁵⁴. Other agricultural products brought from abroad also remained restricted to Luso-Africans settlements and farms (*libatas*) of Quilengues¹⁵⁵, such as oranges, lemons and even grapes¹⁵⁶.

In the southern part of Quilengues, on the highlands of the Huíla, agriculture was highly developed and yielded bountiful crops¹⁵⁷. The region of Capangombe¹⁵⁸, at the foot of the Chela Mountain Range, had features similar to those of Salvaterra dos Magos and proved to be similarly

¹⁵¹ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 76-77; Kathryn M. de Luna, *Collecting Food, Cultivating People: Subsistence and Society in Central Africa* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2016), 75; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 5.

¹⁵² For more on *massango* and *massambala*, see *Lost Crops of Africa*, Vol. 1, Board on Science and Technology for International Development, F.R. Ruskin, ed. (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1996).

¹⁵³ Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, 192; Brochado, “Notícia de alguns territórios...”, 189-204; Milheiros, *Notas de Etnografia Angolana*, 65-69; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 44-45; Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 21; Vellut, “The Congo Basin and Angola”, 296-298.

¹⁵⁴ Making bread with local wheat for “white” settlers, for instance, became a major goal for the governor of Angola, Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho, in his project of colonization of the interior of Benguela in the eighteenth century: AHU, Angola, 1ª Secção, Cx. 56, Doc. 79, “Memórias do governador de Angola Francisco Inocêncio de Souza Coutinho ao novo governador D. António de Lancaster”, (26 November 1772). See also Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, 252; Ralph Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza: Ocupação e aproveitamento do antigo reino de Benguela, 1843-1942*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional. 1940), 237.

¹⁵⁵ According to the Angolan writer Antonio de Assis Jr., *Dicionário Kimbundu-Português: linguístico, botânico, histórico e corográfico* (Luanda: Argente, Santos e Cia, n/d [19--]), 127, the word *kilenge* means horticulture (*horticola*, *hortense*), and the expression *mukua kilenge* means “from the vegetable gardens” (*das hortas*).

¹⁵⁶ Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, 192; Antonio de Saldanha da Gama, *Memórias sobre as colônias portuguesas situadas na costa occidental d’África* (Paris: Typographia de Casimir, 1839), 74; Brochado, “Notícia de alguns territórios...”, 204; Baptista, “Terrenos e agricultura do districto de Moçamedes”, 579-607.

¹⁵⁷ Baptista, “Terrenos e agricultura do districto de Moçamedes”, 601-604.

¹⁵⁸ According to Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 139-140, there were three trails to ascend from Capangombe to Huíla. For more about Capangombe, see Duparquet, *Viagens a Cimbebasia*, 58-61.

productive in the nineteenth century. Sorghum and millet were also the two most appreciated cereal crops in Huíla. After the 1840s, Portuguese-speaking farmers, from places like Madeira and Pernambuco¹⁵⁹, introduced imported crops such as sugarcane, coffee, potato, grains, beans, oranges, tangerines, limes, lemons, apples, pears, quinces, and even olives and berries. There was also a small production of sugarcane brandy (*aguardente*) and potato spirits, which was locally consumed and traded. Nevertheless, this production of recently imported crops was reserved to very small portions of lands under the control of Luso-African settlers¹⁶⁰.

The fertile lands of the floodplains of Humbe in the inner Cunene Basin were mainly used as grazing grounds for large amounts of cattle. Only a portion was used for subsistence agriculture carried out by women, whether free or enslaved. These subsistence crops were consumed locally, while cattle, on the other hand, was a commodity much valued by Luso-Africans settled in the provinces of Huíla and Moçamedes¹⁶¹.

The great promoter of social and political change among the peoples dwelling the interior of Benguela, as we have seen previously, was the introduction of large herds of bovine cattle around the tenth century, which promoted the development of new structures of governance and the rise of *sobas* in the following century. Since then, cattle raising and cattle raiding¹⁶² became the most important economic activities of the communities living within Quilengues. The social, political and economic structures of these communities were profoundly transformed by the increase in stockbreeding, including farming itself. Management of large herds of cattle was integrated into, or rather juxtaposed on, the previous agricultural economy in a symbiotic way: while the cattle could feed on the stubble left after the harvest, it provided the necessary manure for the development of better crops¹⁶³.

¹⁵⁹ For more on these immigrants, see Gastão Sousa Dias, *Povoamento de Angola*, Cadernos Coloniais, No. 41 (Lisboa: Editora Cosmos, 1936).

¹⁶⁰ Baptista, “Terrenos e agricultura do districto de Moçamedes”, 579-607; Gama, *Memórias sobre as colônias portuguesas situadas na costa occidental d’África*, 79; Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 131-132.

¹⁶¹ Baptista, “Terrenos e agricultura do districto de Moçamedes”, 579.

¹⁶² For more about ritualistic cattle raids in southern West Central Africa, see Marta Salokoski, “Symbolic Power of Kings in Pre-Colonial Ovambo Societies” (Licentiate Thesis in Sociology / Social Anthropology, University of Helsinki, 1992); Marta Salokoski, “How Kings are Made – How Kingship Changes: A Study of Rituals and Ritual Change in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Owamboland, Namibia” (PhD Dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2006), 117-131. See also Chapter 4.

¹⁶³ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 76-77; Vellut, “The Congo Basin and Angola”, 303.

Livestock was not only a source of food and wealth, but was, as we saw above, the basis of the political and social networks among the peoples of the interior of Benguela. Those who owned much cattle built patron-client relationships with surrounding communities by loaning animals and developing kinship ties with those responsible for raising and protecting the herds¹⁶⁴. The division of cattle among surrounding allies and clients was also necessary to avoid the consumption of entire pastures at once and the spread of disease to healthy flocks. Cattle herding was quite labour intensive and demanded the participation of considerable numbers of individuals dedicated exclusively to it¹⁶⁵.

The possession and hoarding of livestock created a strong social hierarchy in which patrons controlled clients who herded cattle for them, while both groups ruled over their “cattleless servants”. Loaned animals gave material substance to the political structure of these societies¹⁶⁶. Social and political power was in the hands of the cattle owners because people’s livelihood ultimately depended on livestock. As Vansina puts it: “Everyone’s survival depended on herds, yet herds were owned by individuals and hence everyone else came to be dependent on them”¹⁶⁷. Since possessing cattle was the main strategy for the accumulation of wealth among these Africans, cattle hoarding was a means for social mobility. Exchanges and loaning of cattle also became essential for a wide range of social transactions, such as marriage or the payment of fines and debts¹⁶⁸.

Cattle raising was common among all the societies in the interior of Benguela, but those living on the lowlands had a longer tradition of herding than did the peoples of the central plateau¹⁶⁹. The peoples from Quilengues (“Muquilengues”) and Dombe Grande (“Mundombes”) were considered some of the best herders of the interior of Benguela. They raised not only bovine cattle, but also lots of sheep. The “Muquilengues” were also praised for their chickens. The

¹⁶⁴ Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 9.

¹⁶⁵ According to Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 108, many of these practices remained until at least the twentieth century in Quilengues. See also Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 129.

¹⁶⁶ Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 9.

¹⁶⁷ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 129.

¹⁶⁸ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 116; Thomas J. Desch-Obi, “Engolo: Combat Traditions in African and African Diaspora History” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, 2000), 22; Salokoski, “How Kings are Made”, 71-73. According to Jeremy Ball, *Angola’s Colossal Lie: Forced Labor on a Sugar Plantation, 1913-1977* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 105, cattle was still used as collateral in contracts between *sobas* and local subjects in Quilengues in the twentieth century.

¹⁶⁹ According to Milheiros, *Notas de Etnografia Angolana*, 64, the peoples from the south of Benguela had an “astonishing” (*espantoso*) love for their cattle, to the point they preferred them over their own families.

“Mucuandos”, nomadic peoples that occupied the dry portions between the coast and the territory of Quilengues, were also regarded as great herders of both cows and sheep, the latter especially adapted to the thorny bushes that covered the regions they inhabited¹⁷⁰.

Despite the fact that cattle were the base of political and economic power in different parts of the interior of Benguela, their utility was not similar everywhere. In the mid-twentieth century, the cultural geographer Frederick Simmons noticed that the people from the central plateau did not milk their cattle, using it only as source of beef, despite the fact they had plenty of “milkable animals”¹⁷¹. On the other hand, all peoples living south of the central plateau consumed dairy products¹⁷². Physiological limitation to absorb lactose played an important role in the development of cultural and social practices related to the consumption of dairy products or the exclusive use of cattle for meat. These practices later acquired lasting significance due to “subsequent sociopolitical developments in both the milking and non-milking areas”¹⁷³. Lactase persistence, or the capacity to process lactose, was thus a genetic trait that diffused among milk-drinking populations living in regions where cattle had been the main source of nutrition since its introduction, and especially in areas where early horticulture and the later introduction of cereal crops had been hindered by environmental conditions¹⁷⁴.

Most peoples of Quilengues drank milk and consumed sour milk gruels made with available grains (mainly sorghum) or tuberculous roots (manioc and sweet potato). They also produced butter (*glidi* or *gunde*), which they used as a condiment and to hydrate their skin and prepare complex hairstyles¹⁷⁵. On the highlands of the central plateau, where agriculture was fully developed, roots and grains largely replaced the consumption of milk and gruels and hence allowed

¹⁷⁰ Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 55, 91-92; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 3-5.

¹⁷¹ Frederick Simmons, “The Non-Milking Area of Africa”, *Anthropos*, Bd. 49, H. 1/2 (1954): 59.

¹⁷² According to Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 83-87, the *presídio* of Caconda represented the northern limit of milk-drinking societies in the interior of Benguela, and also the limit in which agropastoral societies prevailed. The boundary between milking and non-milking areas emerged around the twelfth century.

¹⁷³ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 87.

¹⁷⁴ For more on lactase persistent and social adaptation, see Pascale Gerbault et al., “Evolution of lactase persistence: an example of human niche construction”, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, Vol. 366, No. 1566 (2011): 863-877.

¹⁷⁵ Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 94; Milheiros, *Notas de Etnografia Angolana*, 19, 63; Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 98, 193; Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*, 262.

the spread of lactose intolerant individuals who raised sheep and bovine cattle but did not milk them¹⁷⁶.

Moreover, the agropastoralist communities of Quilengues did not dismiss the ancient practices of hunting, fishing and food-gathering. These activities were common and complemented agriculture and pastoralism¹⁷⁷. The peoples of Quilengues were regarded as great hunters, making use of fire and dogs as tactics for hunting big game¹⁷⁸. Local populations also gathered fruits such as *maquobe* (*laranja do mato*), *nombe*, *munhande*, *matundo*, and *gongo*, the latter used to make a kind of wine consumed annually between the months of February and April¹⁷⁹.

Joseph C. Miller calculated the enormous demographic impact of drought, diseases and famine in the interior of Angola and argued that if the slave trade had not taken millions of individuals from their homelands and killed an uncountable number of others in the process, the environment would have nonetheless hindered demographic growth¹⁸⁰. In the case of Quilengues however, as we will see in chapters 3, 4 and 5, the causes for the great famines experienced in the backlands of Benguela during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not only the irregularity in rainfall and extended periods of drought. The peoples who occupied these regions had long developed strategies to cope with the challenges of the weather and the ecology they inhabited, including practices such as transhumance¹⁸¹ and constant migratory movements. The main cause of widespread famines in Quilengues was, ultimately, the same one behind the underdevelopment of agriculture: war¹⁸².

¹⁷⁶ There was a belief among the peoples of the central plateau that milking animals would weaken them: Milheiros, *Notas de Etnografia Angolana*, 63.

¹⁷⁷ Vellut, "The Congo Basin and Angola", 296; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 24.

¹⁷⁸ Bastos, "Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguela", 94-95.

¹⁷⁹ Brochado, "Descrição das terras do Humbe, Camba, Mulondo, Quanhama, e outras", 189; Urquhart, *Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence in Southwestern Angola*, 121-123.

¹⁸⁰ Miller, *Way of Death*, 155-166. See also Miller, "Angola central e sul por volta de 1840", 19.

¹⁸¹ Transhumance are seasonal migrations very common among pastoralist and agropastoralist societies. These long-distance herding activities are prevalent in societies that occupy arid and semi-arid environments. For more on transhumance, see Jeffrey Nugent and Nicolas Sanchez, "Tribes, Chiefs and Transhumance: A Comparative Institutional Analysis", *Economic Development and Social Change*, Vol. 42, No. 1, October (1993): 87-113; Schuyler Jones, "Transhumance Re-Examined", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 11, No. 2, June (2005): 357-359.

¹⁸² Lacerda, "Observações sobre a viagem da costa d'Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797", 207; Bordalo, "Viagens na África e na América", 227-228; Miller, "Angola central e sul por volta de 1840", 18. While referring to the lands of the Humbe, Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*, 265, affirmed that there was no hunger among these peoples, and they only lacked food because of extended periods of drought (*grandes secas*) and war, the latter classified as their "greatest calamity".

Ethnicity and migration in Quilengues

The political development of small communities in Quilengues after the introduction of large herds of cattle around the tenth century and the rise of institutions of governance in the following one as evidenced by the rise of the title of *soba* led to the foundation of large villages and the improvement in contacts between different political entities (*sobados*). The intensification in farming and herding, as well as the growth of societies, led to an increase in travel and trade. Travelers fostered not only the exchange of goods, but also of ideas and practices. The result was the development of social and cultural complexity throughout the interior. The *sertões* of Benguela, however, were not made of a unified society, but of a series of communities knitted together by institutions of governance¹⁸³.

This section will deal with the imposition of the ethnic label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” to identify the peoples that inhabited Quilengues and how its use erased not only their cultural particularities, but also their previous common history as descendants of the Mbangala warriors with whom they shared common cultural features and who their neighbours recognized as members of the same group. The Mbangala, however, were not an ethnic group, but rather marauding bands of warriors that roamed the interior of Benguela attacking kinship-based societies and causing mayhem since at least mid-sixteenth century. Their fast spread and the power of their military institution (*kilombo*) caused a profound impact on their victims, who were forced to adapt to new strategies of war and adopt their tactics and military organization in order to survive the wave of social and cultural transformations caused by the rise of these bands of marauders with no ethnic affiliations (Chapter 2).

In the 1950s, the Alsatian ethnographer and Catholic missionary Carlos (Charles) Estermann consolidated the use of the label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” to identify multi-ethnolinguistic groups in the interior of Benguela who had common cultural and historical ties to one another due to their relations with the Mbangala. This label has since then been criticized for homogenizing different ethnolinguistic groups in Quilengues and for erasing their ties to the Mbangala.

By the time of the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast of Benguela at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the sociopolitical landscape of Quilengues was composed of clusters of

¹⁸³ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 2-3, 69-100.

villages of varied sizes and ethnolinguistic groups. While some comprised several hundred people, others had less than fifty individuals. A *sobado* was defined by its collection of tributary peoples and the size of its herds. Hence, the *soba* valued and depended on his subjects. We may say that the territory of a *sobado* had less relevance than its population and herds of cattle since the constant changes in the political alliances of a *soba* provoked changes in its size and borders¹⁸⁴.

Ethnographers and anthropologists from the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century were baffled by the ethnolinguistic complexity of the interior of Benguela, and struggled to classify and “organize” this plural reality. Although most succeeded in presenting their individual visions of the ethnolinguistic landscape of Benguela, whenever one attempts to combine this ethnographic literature into one text, the resulting product is as confusing as reality itself, due to overlapping definitions about who these peoples were¹⁸⁵.

The ethnolinguistic complexity of Benguela is also depicted in a series of ethnographic maps from the twentieth century. Similar to the political maps discussed above, these were ideologically driven discourses and did not represent reality on the ground. They are imprecise representations of African territories aimed at organizing reality into colonial standards. A series of these ethnographic maps are available and are referenced in the Bibliography (Cartographic Sources).

The most complete work on the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi of Quilengues is present in the second volume of the three-part work by Carlos Estermann (1896-1976), entitled *The Ethnography of Southwestern Angola: The Nyaneka-Nkumbi Ethnic Group*, published in Portuguese in 1961 and in English in 1979¹⁸⁶. Also significant is his 1935 article “Notas etnográficas sobre os povos indígenas do Distrito de Huíla” published in the *Boletim Geral das Colónias*¹⁸⁷. Estermann arrived in Angola in 1924 and by 1933 occupied the position of Vicar of Chela and head of the Catholic missions in Huíla. He died in Angola in 1976.

¹⁸⁴ Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes”, 132.

¹⁸⁵ For some examples, see Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*; Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Distrito de Benguela”; Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*; Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II; Redinha, *Coleção Etnográfica*.

¹⁸⁶ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II.

¹⁸⁷ Estermann, “Notas etnográficas sobre os povos indígenas do Distrito de Huíla”, 41-69.

While writing his volume on the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi, Estermann consulted the writings of other missionaries, including Father Afonso Maria Lang, who worked in the Huíla Missions from 1890 to 1942. Another missionary, Father Eugenio Dekindt, provided both colleagues with precious information about these “tribes”. The writings of Fathers Aucopt and Villain were consulted as well. Estermann also made use of the notes left by Count Rohan-Chabot, who led a scientific expedition to Huíla between 1912 and 1913. Finally, he referred to Antonio Francisco Nogueira’s *Raça Negra* (1881).

The label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” given by Estermann to the peoples that occupied the large territory of Quilengues (including Huíla and Humbe) presents a series of theoretical and practical limitations. Besides being a colonialist term, its adoption tends to homogenize the societies it encompasses. As historian Thomas Desch-Obi puts it, the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi label is “problematic in that it is neither indigenous nor inclusive”¹⁸⁸. Although I do not adopt it to identify the different peoples of Quilengues, it is important to understand its meaning and analyse the supposed connections between these two groups, which also have several subdivisions, as we shall see below.

The Nkhumbi, as the name suggests, came originally from the lands of Humbe, in the inner Cunene basin. According to Estermann, the main Nkhumbi “sub-tribes” were located along the Caculuvar River, down to its confluence with the Cunene, in the region of the *sobado* of Humbe (Map 3). Mulondo, to the north of Humbe, was also an important Nkhumbi community. Other Nkhumbi peoples (including Ndongona, Kwakwa and Ambo) occupied the lands on the east banks of the Cunene River and the Cuvelai Delta ¹⁸⁹. For the ethnographer Jose Redinha (1905-1983), the Nkhumbi was an ethnic group composed of agropastoralist societies, which included the Humbis, Donguenas, Hingos, Handos, Quipungos and Quilengue-humbis¹⁹⁰. In Nogueira’s classification, the “Ban-Kumbi” were divided into five groups, with the main one being the “original” Ban-Kumbi, plus the Ba-Kamba, Ba-Mullondo, Ba-Handa and the Ba-Dipá-Xinbungo¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁸ Desch-Obi, “Engolo”, 2-3.

¹⁸⁹ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 7-9.

¹⁹⁰ Redinha, *Coleção Etnográfica*, 39.

¹⁹¹ Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*, 255.

The Nyaneka, on the other hand, were mainly located in Huíla (Mwila), Handa and Gambos (Ngambwe), with some presence in the regions of Jau (Njau), Quihita (Kihita) and Pocolo. Estermann includes the areas of Humpata, Quipungo (Tyipungu) and Hoque, the latter inhabited mainly by the Handa¹⁹². According to Nogueira, the “Ba-Nhaneca” were composed of seven distinct peoples: Ban-Gambue, Ban-Xipungo, Ban-Lupollo, Ban-Jau, and Ban-Pata (all independent polities), plus the Ba-Habe and the Ba-Xihita (tributaries of the Ban-Gambue)¹⁹³.

As mentioned before, some oral traditions allege that the Nyaneka migrated from the north, meaning they originated from the central plateau, and not from the Cunene basin. In Nogueira’s view, both groups migrated from the plateau after being expelled by the Ovimbundu (“Bin-Bundu” or “Ba-Nano”). He also believed the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi spoke Umbundu (*on-bundo*). Nogueira extracted this information from local oral traditions¹⁹⁴. But as I argued earlier, based on Vansina’s research, this tradition of transference of the peoples from the highlands of the central plateau to the lowlands of Quilengues seems to refer to later migratory movements, probably in the nineteenth century.

Migratory movements and transhumance¹⁹⁵ sponsored the rise of different identities that with time consolidated as “ethnic” labels. This happened with the Nkhumbi that left the lands of Cunene basin to “become” Nyaneka in Huíla. Other Nyaneka groups followed along the rivers Coporolo and Catumbela until they reached the coast, where they merged with pre-existing Ndombe communities. Mixed clusters of Nyaneka and Nkhumbi peoples thus occupied the interior of Benguela by the time the first Portuguese slavers arrived in the region. They controlled the lands around the rivers in the interior, such as Coporolo and Calunga, and opened the trading routes that connected Humbe to Quilengues, which helped the consolidation and development of some important *sobados* located along the way, such as Quipungo¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹² Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 7-9; Redinha, *Coleção Etnográfica*, 41; Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 401

¹⁹³ Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*, 255.

¹⁹⁴ Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África*, 255-256; Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 401. Umbundu is also called the “Bunda language from Benguela” by some ethnographers. The peoples of Quilengues and Dombe would then speak a dialect of the Bunda language: Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 6-8.

¹⁹⁵ According to Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 430, the Nyaneka (*Vanyanekas*) were not nomadic people, since only their herders migrated seasonally (transhumance) to find grazing grounds for their cattle.

¹⁹⁶ Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 8, 41.

The development of this great number of ethnolinguistic groups in the interior of Benguela resulted from a long process of slow migratory movements that lasted centuries. When referring to massive migratory movements, however, one should not imagine people crossing territories and climatic zones “as the crow flies”¹⁹⁷. These migratory movements did not head in a direct path to their destiny, but were rather a series of resettlements in new environments that demanded slow adaptation and occasionally retreat to previously occupied areas. Recurrent movements of expansions and constrictions marked the “rhythm” of history in the lowlands, as well as in the highlands¹⁹⁸.

Transhumance and other forms of seasonal migration were methods for spreading language and ethnic identities to new regions. The displacement of herds from the grazing grounds closer to home during the dry seasons led to the occupation of new areas with green pastures by the agropastoralist communities of Quilengues. In years of extended droughts, herders from agropastoralist societies could stay up to eleven months away from home. These grazing expeditions led people from the lowlands to look for pasture on the wetter lands of central plateau, which led to cultural exchanges between the peoples ascending from Quilengues and Huíla and the Mbundu populations of the central plateau¹⁹⁹. This created a superficial homogeneity among different ethnic groups that led ethnographers and anthropologists to apply the generic label of “Ovimbundu” to groups such as the Ndombe and the Tyilenge²⁰⁰.

In his classic work about the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi, Estermann presented a list of ten “tribes” that supposedly composed this ethnic group²⁰¹:

1. The Nyaneka (*Ovanyaneka*), subdivided into the Mwila (*Ovamwila*) and the Ngambwe (*Ovanguambwe*).
2. The Nkumbi (*Ovankumbi*), including the Kamba (*Ovakamba*), the Tyiteve (*Ovatyiteve*), and the Mulondo (*Ovamulondo*).
3. The Ndongona (*Ovandongona*).
4. The Hinga (*Ovahinga*).
5. The Kwankwa (*Ovakwankwa*).
6. The Randa of Mupa (*Ovahanda*).

¹⁹⁷ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 42.

¹⁹⁸ Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 2. See also Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 17.

¹⁹⁹ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 83-85.

²⁰⁰ Candido, *African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 242-243, has argued that the use of the ethnic label “Ovimbundu” is proper for the twentieth century. Milheiros, *Notas de Etnografia Angolana*, 10, used the term “Umbundu” as an “ethnic label”, instead of the language they speak.

²⁰¹ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 7.

7. The Randa of Quipungo (*Ovahanda*).
8. The Tyipungu (*Ovatyipungu*).
9. The Tyilenge-Humbi (*Ovatyilenge-Humbi*).
10. The Tyilenge-Muso (*Ovatyilenge-Muso*).

The two last “tribes” in Estermann’s list settled on the margins of the Calunga River, near where a Luso-African settlement named Salvaterra dos Magos would be built in the eighteenth century. The Tyilenge-Muso (*Quilengue-Muchó*) considered the Tyilenge-Humbi (*Quilengue-Honó*) to be invaders. The first group (Muso) was regarded by ethnographers from the beginning of the twentieth century as the “Tyilenge of pure race”²⁰². According to José Redinha, the Tyilenge-Muso (*Quilengues-musos*) were part of the Herero “race”, together with Chavicuas, Dumbos, Guendelengos, Ndombes e Cuandos. All of these Herero descendants were famous for their bold and rapacious character (*caráter atrevido e rapinante*), which led them to engage in constant conflicts with neighboring communities²⁰³. They were grouped around two main *ombalas*²⁰⁴: Socoval and Impulo²⁰⁵. The *sobado* of Socoval was the most important political entity of Quilengues from at least the beginning of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century (Chapter 4).

The Tyilenge-Muso would have arrived first in Quilengues. They were mainly stock-herders who, like other Herero groups such as the Cuando (“Va-kwandu” or “Mucuandos”), arrived from arid coastal areas. The Tyilengue-Humbi were agropastoralist that slowly moved north from the highlands of Huíla (Chela) until they reached the lowlands of Quilengues, or Mbuelo (Map 1). Both “tribes” did not occupy well-delimited territories, but were rather intertwined with one another and with other ethnic groups. As Estermann explains: “it is not easy to mark out the area of this tribe [Tyilengue-Humbi], since it is not continuous but is cut up by enclaves of Tyilenge-Muso and even of Kwandu, a people that does not belong to this ethnic group”²⁰⁶. According to Augusto Bastos, the Tyilengue-Humbi were among the African groups that better adapted to the presence of the Portuguese, along with “Biheños, Bailundos and

²⁰² Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 45-46.

²⁰³ Redinha, *Coleção Etnográfica*, 42.

²⁰⁴ According to Porto, *Viagens e Apontamentos*, Vol. 1, 239 – note 1, 361 – note 87, the term “*Ombala*” was used to identify the “capital” of the *sobados*. See also Desch-Obi, “Engolo”, 47-52.

²⁰⁵ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 9-10.

²⁰⁶ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 10.

Cacondas”. From the point of view of colonialists, these were precisely the “tribes” better suited for “assimilation” and with better chance of becoming “civilized”²⁰⁷.

The existence of the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi ethnic group has been recently questioned and deconstructed by African anthropologists from communities forced under this label²⁰⁸. As Rosa Melo has argued, the amalgamation of groups like Handa, Muila, Ngambwe and Muso together with the Nyaneka and the Nkhumbi is not beneficial for any of them, because it erases the cultural particularities of each of these groups²⁰⁹. This includes the manifested opinion of local people about which ethnic group they belong to²¹⁰.

The rejection of the term “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” by those belonging to the communities whom this “ethnic” label is supposed to identify reinforces the argument for the use of another term to refer to the peoples that occupied Quilengues since at least the seventeenth century. Despite containing its own limitations, the adoption of the term “Mbangala” (also *Bangala*) unveils a common historical process experienced by multiple small societies from the interior of Benguela²¹¹.

The “*Bangala*”

The Mbangala were marauding bands of warriors that spread out from Quilengues in multiple migratory movements starting sometime in the sixteenth century²¹². Some Mbangala bands moved northwards thorough the geographical corridor of Seles (between the plateau and the coast) and met Europeans on the left margin of the Cuvo River by 1600. Some of them sold their

²⁰⁷ Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 47-50.

²⁰⁸ The anthropologist Rosa Maria Amélia João de Melo identifies herself as belonging to the Handa “ethnicity” and has written about the cultural practices of this group. See Rosa Maria Amélia João Melo, “Mulher é aquela que comeu o boi: o *efuko* e a construção do género no grupo étnico Handa”, *Lusotopie*, XII, Nos. 1-2 (2005): 139-160.

²⁰⁹ Frieda-Nela Williams, *Precolonial Communities of Southwestern Africa: A History of Owambo Kingdoms, 1600-1920*, 2nd Ed. (Windhoek, National Archives of Namibia, [1991] 1994), 82-89, identify the peoples of the Ovamboland as closely related to the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi.

²¹⁰ Rosa Maria Amélia João Melo, “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi: uma carapuça que não serve aos Handa, nem aos Nyaneka, nem aos Nkhumbi”, *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, Nos. 7-8 (2005): 159-161, 173.

²¹¹ Joseph C. Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1972): 561, makes a brief analysis of the Portuguese corruption of the Bantu term “Bângala” into “Imbangála”.

²¹² John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 102, summarises the Mbangala as “marauding bands, headed by military officers who lived by permanently pillaging the countryside. They grew and replenished their losses through incorporating people, especially adolescent boys, whom they captured in their raids, and at least initially were said to practise infanticide and cannibalism”.

services to the Portuguese as both slave hunters and mercenaries in the wars of conquest against the kingdoms of Ndongo and Kongo. Other bands spread through the lands of Kisama and Libolo. A second wave of migrant warriors left Quilengues and marched up the central plateau, spreading amongst the peoples of Nano and Ngalange. A third wave of Mbangala warriors attacked the peoples living on the inner Cunene basin, a territory known then as Mataman, later founding Humbe-Inene (Map 2).

Although they are often recognized for their military abilities and warfare superiority in relation to other African polities²¹³, the main characteristic of the Mbangala was their rejection of the lineage-based institutions of the societies from which they originated. This radical rejection of the lineage led to the symbolic destruction of all family ties within their main institution, the *kilombo*. In practical terms, this symbolic destruction of lineage meant the rejection of their natural offspring and the incorporation of youngsters kidnapped from raided communities into their bands of warriors. Soon, stories of infanticide, human sacrifice and cannibalism became the main European reference to the Mbangala, which tainted the use of the term. The term “Mbangala” had also a pejorative meaning among certain African communities, who identified them as “thieves” and “vagabonds”, since their major activities were raiding villages, stealing cattle and destroying palm trees in order to make wine. Despite its pejorative meaning, I have chosen to adopt the term “Mbangala” because of its historical importance in the context of this thesis.

In the introduction of his book about the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi, Estermann affirmed that the Mbangala (*Bangala*) possessed a “fairly well-defined ethnic unity” and an observable “linguistic cohesion”²¹⁴. Despite such apparent “cohesion” in the composition of this large aggregate of peoples that occupied Quilengues, there was no unifying term broadly accepted by ethnographers to define this “ethnic” group, as was the case of the Ambo (*Ova-Ambo*)²¹⁵. Therefore, Estermann decided to identify this group of people(s) by the generic term “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi”.

There were, however, two terms largely used by neighboring polities to identify the peoples that composed the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi “ethnicity”: *Ova-Mbuelo* and *Ova-Mbangala*. While the

²¹³ Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 13, points out that the Mbangala militaristic qualities gave their warlords overwhelming advantages over more traditional leaders (*sobas* and *macotas*) who had been trained to display skills related to agriculture (such as rainmaking) and not war.

²¹⁴ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 1.

²¹⁵ Not to be mistaken with Huambo, from the central plateau, sometimes written in the same way.

term *Mbuelo* (low country) was used among the Mbundu peoples of the central plateau²¹⁶ to refer to their neighbors “from below”, the Kwanyama (from the Cuvelai Delta) used the term *Mbangala* to designate those who inhabited the lands to the west, in the inner Cunene basin. Estermann declined to use the term *Mbuelo* because he realized this classification included different ethnolinguistic groups, including Herero²¹⁷.

Estermann believed at first that “*Bangala*” should be the term of choice for ethnographers that, like himself, wanted to put some “order into the varied and complicated nomenclature of southern Angola”²¹⁸. He had previously adopted it in his 1935 essay about the “indigenous” peoples of Huíla²¹⁹. In that article, Estermann classified the peoples in the interior of Huíla as being members of the Bantu “race”, divided into three ethnic groups: the *Ova-Ambo*, the *Ova-Herero* and the *Ova-Mbangala*. The ethnographic map published in this same article divided the “*Bangalas*” into nine “tribes”: Hingas, Handas, Donguenas, Humbis, Mulondos, Capelongos, Nyanecas, Tyipungos, and Handas [again]²²⁰.

In the introduction to his 1961 book on the Nyaneke-Nkhumbi, Estermann mentioned his previous choice to use the term “*Bangala*”. He explained he had adopted it in his 1935 article because he then believed it was a reliable label to identify “tribes” of the interior of Benguela that shared cultural and historical similarities²²¹. Still, he later dropped its use to avoid confusion

²¹⁶ “Mbundu peoples of the central plateau” was an eighteenth-century generic label given to the peoples living in the interior of Benguela, especially in the highlands of Nano. In the nineteenth century, they would be identified as “Ovimbundu” (Umbundu speakers): Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 292-293. “Mdundu” was also a generic label used in the interior of Angola to identify the people of the kingdom of Ndongo. Nevertheless, as Adriano Parreira, *Economia e sociedade em Angola na época da rainha Jinga, século XVII* (Lisboa: Estampa, 1990), 175, notes that the kingdom of Ndongo was not a territory reserved to a single “ethnicity”, hence there should be no automatic association between Ndongo and Mdundu either.

²¹⁷ Carlos Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola: The Non-Bantu Peoples. The Ambo Ethnic Group*, Vol. I (New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, [1957] 1976), 140, argued that “Bangala was the generic term used by the Ambo to refer to the peoples beyond the Cunene. Bwela designates the Ngangela”. According to Desch-Obi, “Engolo”, 3, the term “Bangala” was problematic for being “too inclusive”.

²¹⁸ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 2.

²¹⁹ In a previous article, Estermann, “Notas etnográficas sobre os povos indígenas do Distrito de Huíla”, 44, defended the use of the term “Bângala” as a “very convenient generic term”. The colonial explorer and ethnographer Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Ethnographia e história tradicional dos povos da Lunda* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1890), 85; used this same term in reference to the Mbangala of Kasanji, who he mistakenly considered descendants of the peoples of Lunda. He recorded that the term “*Kibangala*” (*Quibangala*) was the singular form (one individual), while “*Akibangala*” (*Aquibangala*) was the plural form. See also Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 98.

²²⁰ Estermann, “Notas etnográficas sobre os povos indígenas do Distrito de Huíla”, 49. See also Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. I, 92.

²²¹ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 2, indicates that “For that reason I did use it in a little essay and in the ethnic outline that accompanied it (Estermann, 1935)”.

between the “*Bangala*” from Benguela and the “*Imbangala*” from Angola (Malanje), the latter believed to be descendants from the legendary Lunda warrior Kinguri. As we will see in the next chapter, this historiographical error has endured for centuries and led scholars to separate these two Mbangala groups (northern and southern) as different “ethnicities”.

Estermann mentioned that other ethnographers²²², including Gladwyn M. Childs, had used the term “*Bangala*”, always in quotation marks, to identify the peoples occupying the southern portion of the interior of Benguela. In his books about the Ovimbundu (Umbundu speakers)²²³, Childs affirmed that they belonged to the same linguistic group as their southern neighbors: the Ambo, the Herero and the “*Bangala*”. Their northern and eastern neighbors, however, belonged to other linguistic groups²²⁴. He then added, in a footnote, that a further attempt to establish connexions with neighbouring “tribes” was in order. Childs showed that the Nganda, the Ndombe, the Humbi and the Cilengi all belonged to the “*Bangala*” group. The Kalukembe, in turn, although part to the “Ovimbundu” had more similarities with the “*Bangala*” than with their own ethnic group²²⁵.

Estermann understood that the term “*Bangala*” was connected to an “unconscious historical memory” spread among the peoples of Huíla, but he could not reconstruct such history²²⁶. For Childs, the *Bangala* not only occupied the district of Huíla, which in the twentieth century included Quilengues, but also adjoining districts²²⁷. While Estermann completely dropped the use of the term “*Bangala*” in favor of the ethnic label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi”, Childs kept using

²²² See also Hermann Baumann and Diedrich Westermann, *Les peuples et les civilisations de l'Afrique*, L. Homburger trans. (Paris: Payot, 1948).

²²³ Gladwyn M. Childs, *Umbundu Kingship and Character: being a description of social structure and individual development of the Ovimbundu of Angola, with observations concerning the bearing on the enterprise of Christian missions of certain phases of the life and culture described* (London: International African Institute / Oxford University Press, 1949); See also Gladwyn M. Childs, *Kinship and Character of the Ovimbundu* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

²²⁴ A broad linguistic family called *Njila* gave origin to the majority of the languages in the interior of Angola and Benguela, including Nyaneka, Nkhumbi, Ndombe, Umbundu and Kimbundu, among others. The similarity between the languages of the *sertões* of Benguela arises not only from centuries of interactions between the societies of Mbuelo and Nano, but also because they all belong to the same ancestral *Njila* language: Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 6.

²²⁵ Childs, *Kinship and Character of the Ovimbundu*, 169, 175 – note 4, 176-179. According to Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 198 – map 22, “The Jaga Corridor”, Kalukembe (Caluquembe) was on the northern limit of the milk-drinking populations of Benguela.

²²⁶ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 2.

²²⁷ Childs, *Kinship and Character of the Ovimbundu*, 179. In a previous article, Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 277, had accepted the use of the label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” given by Estermann to identify the “Bangala” groups.

the term “*Bangala*” for those southern groups inland from Benguela, and “*Imbangala*” for the northern ones from Angola²²⁸.

Historians interested in the linguistic complexities of the peoples in the interior of Benguela, such as Jan Vansina and Thomas Desch-Obi, have argued for rise of the Mbangala in the region of Quilengues. Vansina (2004) showed that the main clues for solving this issue came from linguistics and from the methodology of “words and things”²²⁹. This included not only the denomination of *Bangala* given by their neighbors, but also their relation to their mythical leader Kinguri (from *nguri*, the “lion”). Although the term “*nguri*” was understood for centuries as originating from the “Jaga language” of Mbangala bands supposedly migrating out of Lunda (Chapter 2), ethnographers such as Alfred Hauenstein did not find the term “*nguri*” among the Nkhumbi or in standard Umbundu (the language of the peoples of the central plateau). However, he confirmed that the term was used among the Nyaneka and in the lands of Hanya (Hanha), on the northern limits of Quilengues²³⁰.

Vansina analysed the vocabulary gathered by Antonio Nogueira among the Nkhumbi in the 1850s, in which the term “*Chimbangala*” translated to “vagabond” or “vagrant”. Although this term did not exist in Umbundu, it could be found among the Nyaneka with a similar meaning, “robber” (*salteador*). The term was also used in Kwanyama (*Quanhama*) to designate both Nkhumbi and Nyaneka “tribes”²³¹. Vansina further cited the 1797 report by Paulo Pinheiro de

²²⁸ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 2; Childs, *Kinship and Character of the Ovimbundu*, 179, 186. Although Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 277, had previously accepted the label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi”, he maintained the use of the term “Bangala” (with quotation marks) in his book.

²²⁹ For more on this methodology of “words and things”, see Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 3-33; Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 5-11.

²³⁰ Alfred Hauenstein, *Les Hanya: description d'un groupe ethnique Bantou de l'Angola* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1967), 248.

²³¹ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 197 – note 109; Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 13-15.

Lacerda²³², in which the colonial explorer stated that while the “*Quimbundos*”²³³ did not eat human flesh, the “*Quimbangalas*” did²³⁴.

Finally, Vansina identified the ethnonym “*Bangala*” with the toponym “Benguela”²³⁵. Hence, the “kingdom of Benguela” would be the land of the *Bangala*. There are other terms in Portuguese (from Brazil) that follow this same pattern of connections. For instance, the term “*banguela*” translates to “toothless”²³⁶, which is a reference to the ritual of extracting frontal teeth (*okukulwa*) done by the *Bangala* warriors and inherited by other peoples of Benguela²³⁷. We may also include in this list of related words the term “*bengala*”, which in English translates to “cane”. According to Henrique de Carvalho, the *sobas* had tall curved sticks named *bengalas*, carried by one of his officials (*merininho*) during the collection of tributes, which were used both as a symbol of authority and as a club to hit those who refused to pay tributes²³⁸. As historian Desch-Obi showed, *Bangala* warlords used carrying sticks and “elegant canes” as both symbols of power and actual weapons²³⁹.

²³² Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda, “Notícia da cidade de São Filipe de Benguela e dos costumes dos gentios habitantes daquele sertão” (10 November 1797), *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes*, 5^a série (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1845), 488.

²³³ This is another case in which the term “Quimbundo” is misused to identify the peoples of Nano (Banano, Mbundu or Ovimbundo).

²³⁴ As we will see in the next chapter, the Mbangala bands were infamous for rituals involving the consumption of human flesh. See Chapter 2.

²³⁵ Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 197 – note 109. Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 561, had previously dismissed the relations between the terms “Imbangala”, “Banguela” and “Benguela”.

²³⁶ The term “*banguela*” cannot be found in eighteenth-century Portuguese dictionaries and it is not much used in Portugal, but rather in Brazil. The Portuguese prefer to use the term “*desdentado*” for “toothless”.

²³⁷ For more on the *okukulwa*, see Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 43; Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguela”, 44; Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 33, 124, 170, 521; Milheiros, *Notas de Etnografia Angolana*, 44-58, 143. According to Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 174, 194, it was possible to identify from which “family” an individual belonged in Huíla just by checking the different forms of teeth extractions practiced by each group. According to Melo, “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi”, 165-167, this practice is still important for members of some communities in the interior of Benguela today. According to Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680*, vol. 3 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, [1680] 1972), 225 – note 17, 276, 338, 403, 451, the *jaga* removed their teeth very carefully by hitting some small stick with rocks, suggesting they were valious ingredients for witchcraft rituals. He also recorded that peoples of the interior of Angola (*Ambundo*) celebrated the first appearance of their children’s lower teeth, but if the upper teeth grew first the child could be killed.

²³⁸ Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 98.

²³⁹ According to Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 145, sticks were seen as weapons of honor among the Kunene peoples (that is the Mbangala), and its use symbolised male domination over cattle and lesser people. According to Carvalho, *Ethnographia e história tradicional dos povos da Lunda*, 86, the *soba*’s auxiliary (*meirininho*) responsible for the collection of tribute carried a “cane” (*bengala*) with which he hit those who refused to pay. See also Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 98.

Desch-Obi also temporarily adopted the use of the term “*Bangala*” to identify the peoples of southern Benguela, from the Huíla highlands to the floodplains of the Cunene River. In his 2000 PhD dissertation, he researched an African martial art, *Engolo*, which the historian believes originated in the region of Quilengues (Kilengues) and was associated with Mbangala warriors. Similar to Estermann, Desch-Obi complained that he could not find another term to identify this large group of peoples that belong to “a common historical sphere of extended cross-cultural interaction”. He noticed that “the term Bangala may have fallen out of use by their own descendants who mixed with subjugated pastoralists, but the term is still employed by their Kwanyama neighbors who were subjugated by them”²⁴⁰. As with Childs, this historian adopted the term “*Imbangala*” for those from Angola, in order to avoid misunderstandings.

In his book *Fighting for Honor* (2008), Desch-Obi replaced the term “*Bangala*” by “Kunene peoples”, which he defined as composed by the Handa de Mupa, Handa de Kipungu, Mutana, Mulondo, Kiteve, Kamba, Kilenges-Humbe, Kilengues-Muso, Ngambwe, Mwila (Nyaneka), and Kipungu. He excluded the Ndongona, Hinga and Kwakwa, considering them another branch of the Cimbebasian languages²⁴¹. Desch-Obi disclosed that the reason for dropping the term “*Bangala*” was not technical, but rather the concern in using a term that can be considered pejorative nowadays. He also avoided using Estermann’s label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” for being erroneous and colonialist²⁴².

Though Estermann’s main intention was to coin a term that could cope with the complexity of the ethnic identities in the southern interior of Benguela, his label “Nyaneka-Nkhumbi” has actually homogenized this complexity while erasing the history of their interactions. Before permanently dropping the use of the term “*Bangala*” to identify the peoples of southern Benguela, Estermann exposed his frustration: “To repeat, it is with regret that I have dropped a term [*Bangala*] having such historical flavor, so easy and practical to use”²⁴³.

²⁴⁰ Desch-Obi, “Engolo”, 2.

²⁴¹ For more on the classification of Cimbebasian languages, see Anita Pfouts, “Economy and Society in Northern Namibia 500 BCE to 1800 CE: A Linguistic Approach” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, 2003).

²⁴² Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 229 – note 4.

²⁴³ Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*, Vol. II, 3.

The main problem for the use of Mbangala (*Bangala* or *Imbangala*), however, is related to historiographical misunderstanding about the “origins”²⁴⁴ and composition of these bands of warriors. Different from the Mbangala groups who settled in Malanje (Matamba and Kasanje), but remaining connected to their history through the use of their “ethnic” label of “*Imbangala*”, those who remained inland from Benguela – on the central plateau, in the lowlands, or on the inner Cunene basin – mixed with local societies, thus “diluting” their identity and their historical ties to the Mbangala warriors²⁴⁵.

Conclusion

The territory of Quilengues was a Luso-African invention that varied in size and ethnic composition throughout the centuries, a transformation recorded in colonial reports and cartographic sources. It featured as the largest district of the Captaincy of Benguela in the eighteenth century, composed by a multitude of decentralized communities that shared several cultural features despite their linguistic and political idiosyncrasies. The diverse landscapes and environmental conditions presented by each part of this extensive territory gave rise to different economies and social organizations.

This chapter has tracked information about the political and ethno-linguistic composition of Quilengues using a variety of historiographic, ethnographic and cartographic sources, which evidence the multiplicity of peoples and political entities living within this region. The peoples living within Quilengues did not form an “ethnicity” (Kilenge) until at least mid-nineteenth century, and organized themselves into decentralized and independent polities connected with each other through lineage structures and temporary political alliances. Since the tenth century agropastoralist communities spread out in constant migratory movements (expansions and constrictions), as their members searched for water and grazing grounds for their cattle. In time,

²⁴⁴ I choose to put the word “origin” in quotation marks to highlight that there is no singular place or time for the beginning of a complex historical process such as the rise of the Mbangala. Similarly, I avoid calling Quilengues their “homeland” to avert any fixation of the institution of the *kilombo* (nomadic by definition) as if an immobile point in a map.

²⁴⁵ I adopted the idea of the “dilution” of Mbangala bands into local lineage-based communities from John K. Thornton, “Religious and Ceremonial Life in the Kongo and Mbundu Areas, 1500-1700”, in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, Linda M. Heywood, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 82. Jan Vansina, “The Foundation of the Kingdom of Kasanje”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1963): 368, points to the Mbangala “mixing” with local “pacific, sedentary, agricultural people.”

war and ritualistic raids also connected the inhabitants of the highlands of the central plateau (*Nano*) and those of the lowlands of Quilengues (*Mbuelo*), the latter identified by local traditions and linguistic studies as related to the multiethnic group of the Mbangala (*Bangala*).

As we will see in the next chapter, the rise and expansion of the Mbangala bands out of Quilengues features as one of the most important historical process of West Central Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and one of the most misunderstood.

Chapter 2

Early history of Quilengues

The Mbangala were bands of marauders and mercenaries that spread throughout the so-called “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were composed of nomadic warriors with no kinship association, who organized themselves around a military and religious institution called “*kilombo*”; hence, the Mbangala can also be considered a martial cult. Different from other African polities that drew their authority and political organization from ancestor veneration, through lineage-based rituals and structures of power supported by kinship ties, the *kilombo* of the Mbangala was structured around initiation rites and on the denial of ancestry. The head of each Mbangala band had to prove his power and skills as military leader by presiding over rituals such as cattle raiding, kidnapping of individuals from other groups and the sacrifice of animals and humans.

This Chapter 2 will discuss the “origins” and composition of early Mbangala warrior bands and their expansion throughout West Central Africa²⁴⁶. It begins by differentiating the Mbangala from other groups of “cannibal warriors”, who according to stories spread by European mariners and Christian missionaries had come from a single “nation of savages” in the “torrid lands” of Inner Ethiopia. I highlight, in particular, the role played by the Jesuit Baltasar Barreira in the consolidation of the legendary connection between these “cannibals” of the kingdoms of Kongo and Angola with those from *Serra Leoa*²⁴⁷. Inspired by these legends, European chroniclers combined different reports of attacks of various bands of warriors (Mande, Gala, Jaga, Zimba, Mbangala) in unrelated parts of Africa (*Serra Leoa*, Zambeze, Kongo, Angola, Benguela) into a single tale. The wars against these “cannibals” were always justifiable in the eyes of missionaries and slave traders.

Secondly, this chapter will tackle two major historiographical misconceptions about the Mbangala. The first one concerns their classification as part of the Jaga, another group of “cannibal

²⁴⁶ The themes addressed in this chapter were developed as I thought of the consequences of some misconceptions about the history of the Mbangala, especially regarding what I call “the fall of Kinguri” (see below). I attempt to develop a new narrative for their rise and expansion from Quilengues to different parts of Angola and Benguela in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by refining the arguments of other historians and anthropologists.

²⁴⁷ According to George Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), xii, *Serra Leoa* corresponded to the coastal territory between Cape Verga and the Sherbro River and should not be mistaken with modern-day nation of Sierra Leone.

warriors” who invaded Kongo in the second half of the sixteenth century and whose name became a Luso-African label used to identify some of their African enemies (“*os jagas*”), as well as a title for Mbangala warlords, such as *Jaga Kasanje*. The second misconception relates to oral traditions about the “Exodus of Kinguri”. It concerns centuries of debates about the connections between the Mbangala of Kasanje and the Lunda through the mythical hero “Kinguri, the lion”: the Mbangala of Kasanje, labelled *Imbangala* in the historiography, are still often considered the “original” Mbangala group and the direct descendants of the followers of Kinguri, who had left the Lunda commonwealth²⁴⁸ with their leader and later settled in the western (left) banks of the Cuango River, where they founded the *kilombo* of Kasanje.

The fall of the “Exodus of Kinguri” thesis has put in question the chronology of the rise of various polities in Central Africa, such as Lunda, Luba, Kioko (*Quioco*), Songo, Shinje and Minungo, since the supposed Mbangala migration out of Lunda and the establishment of contacts with the Portuguese has served as the historical reference for the elaboration of such chronologies. I argue that the debunking of the myth of Kinguri’s exodus and its unveiling as a nineteenth-century addition to the oral traditions of both the Lunda and the Mbangala of Kasanje have jeopardized all previous analysis about the “origins” and composition of the so-called *Imbangala*. It also serves as a warning to historians about the complexity of working with oral traditions and the dangers in validating such traditions as historical events without fully comprehending their geneses.

After dealing with those two major misconceptions about the history of the Mbangala, I will tackle their expansion, taking into consideration historical accounts and linguistic analysis to propose that the Mbangala bands left the region of Quilengues in migratory waves that took them to diverse parts of West Central Africa. I argue that there are historical references for at least three simultaneous Mbangala migratory movements out of Quilengues, starting in the second half of the sixteenth century. As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, some of these bands marched

²⁴⁸ The Lunda “empire” was, in fact, a confederation of states or a commonwealth, to which the Portuguese usually referred as the states of the *Muatiānvua*. The term *Mwaant-a-Yaav* (or *Mwata Yanvo*) was a reference to the title of the ruler of the Lunda commonwealth since at least the eighteenth century: Jan Vansina and Eva Sebestyen, “Angola’s Eastern Hinterland in the 1750s: A Text Edition and Translation of Manoel Correia Leitão’s Voyage, (1755-1756)”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 26 (1999): 355; Beatrix Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, *Translocality: The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*, in Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 180; John K. Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West, c. 1700-1852”, *Zambian Journal of History*, Vol. 1 (1981): 3.

northwards, while others moved south (Map 2). Although this is my own attempt to provide a new explanation for a theme already subjected to much discussion, my hypothesis for the rise and expansion of the Mbangala has been partially presented by several other authors, some of whom struggled to interpret the data available to them based on the myth of Kinguri's exodus. In fact, my contribution is but an attempt to refine some ideas already presented by other scholars.

“A nation of savages”

The Mbangala bands that roamed the interior of the so-called kingdoms of Angola and Benguela in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are often mistakenly called “*jagas*” in several historical accounts, as well as in part of the historiography. The confusion between these two bands of roaming warriors from West Central Africa resulted from the combination of different Portuguese accounts about “vicious” attacks led by different warrior bands in Kongo/Angola, as well as in other parts of the continent. The Jaga and the Mbangala were treated as one single group for centuries, which led to misconceptions about their identities, “origins” and compositions²⁴⁹.

The Jaga warriors became notorious for invading the kingdom of Kongo in 1568²⁵⁰, forcing the *mani-Kongo* to flee with his court²⁵¹ and request help from his Portuguese allies settled in

²⁴⁹ Joseph C. Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, *Cahiers d'études africaines*, Vol. 13, No. 49 (1973): 121, showed that twentieth-century historians such as Robert Collins (*Africa History: Text and Reading*, 1971) still reproduced the sixteenth-century belief that the Jaga moved south after the invasion of Kongo to become the Mbangala in Angola. Collins never reviewed his position and reproduced the exact same opinion criticized by Miller in the 1970s in a more recent book: Robert O. Collins, *African History in Documents: Central and South African History*, 5th ed. (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2015), 5-6.

²⁵⁰ For more about the Jaga invasion of Kongo, see Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680*, vol. 1 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, [1680] 1972), 12-13 – note 1.

²⁵¹ According to Lopes/Pigafetta, the king of Kongo (*mani-Kongo*) had to flee to an island in the Zaire River (Horse Island) after the destruction of his capital (mbanza-Kongo). He was accompanied by his main “nobles” and by the Portuguese priests who lived in his court. His remaining subjects sought refuge in the mountains, many of who died for lack of food and “other necessities”. The Jaga raided and destroyed the city, setting everything on fire, including the church before leaving. Many subjects of the *mani-Kongo* were sold to Luso-African slavers, including “some of royal blood”: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 96-98. See also Anne Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 69-70.

Luanda²⁵². The Jaga marched into Kongo from the east²⁵³, probably departing from the lands of Yaka²⁵⁴, in the lower Cuango River²⁵⁵ (Map 2). The information that the Jaga came from Yaka seemed to be confirmed by oral traditions collected in the nineteenth-century about the origin of the Mbangala from Lunda (also east of the Cuango River, but to the south of Yaka)²⁵⁶. These oral

²⁵² The Portuguese sent Captain Francisco de Gouveia in 1570 to help the forces of the *mani-Kongo* expel the Jaga from their kingdom: Manuel Ferreira Ribeiro, *Homenagem aos heróis que precederam Brito Capello e Roberto Ivens na exploração da África Austral, 1484-1877* (Lisboa: Lalléant Freres, 1885), 8-9; Luciano Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses: da Mina ao Cabo Negro, segundo Garcia Mendes Castello Branco. Coleção de documentos, 1574-1620*, vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1881), 9. Hermanegildo Capello, and Robert Ivens. *De Angola à contra-costa: Descrição de uma viagem através do continente africano*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1886), 26, called Francisco de Gouveia “the victor of the Jaggas” (*vencedor*). In fact, it took several years for a combined Kongo-Portuguese military force to succeed in driving the Jaga out of mbanza-Kongo. The victory over the Jaga was largely credited to the Portuguese use of firearms, according to contemporary reports, because the invaders panicked at the sound of gunshots and ran away from the battlefield: Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 121; John K. Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, *Cahiers d'études africaines*, Vol. 18, No. 69 (1978): 223-224; Anne Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1981): 192; John K. Thornton, “The Art of War in Angola, 1575-1680”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 30, No. 2, April (1988): 373-375.

²⁵³ Lopes/Pigafetta affirmed the Jaga came from the east through the province of Mbata (*Batta*): Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 96. See also Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 149; Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 197; Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 223-224; Joseph C. Miller, “Thanatopsis”, *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. 18, No. 69/70 (1978): 230.

²⁵⁴ According to Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 224, the Jaga were related to the Yaka. According to Gladwyn M. Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 274, “Iaca” was one of the names used to identify the Jaga who invaded Kongo. See also Conde de Ficalho, *Plantas úteis da África portuguesa* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1884), 47.

²⁵⁵ Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680*, vol. 3 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, [1680] 1972), 189-193, 278, connected the *Majacas* (*Mayaka* or *Muyakas*) to the Jaga of Kongo. Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 197-198, raised the possibility that the Jaga invasion resulted from the developing slave trade of Makoko, ruler of the Tyo, in the region of the middle Congo/Zaire River dubbed Stanley Pool by the Europeans. The Jaga would thus be ancestors of the *Majacas*, a group located in the lower middle Cuango River. Hilton also highlighted Cadornega’s reference about the *Majacas* as “ferocious and valorous people” among the “nations of the kingdom of Kongo”. See also Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 275; Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 145-146. According to Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 224-225, the *Majaka* were a splinter group of the original Yaka of the sixteenth century. Other references to the *Majacas* can be found in João de Andrade Corvo, *Estudo sobre as províncias ultramarinas*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Academia Real de Ciências, 1883), 47; Visconde de Paiva Manso, *História do Congo: Documentos*, Obra Posthuma (Lisboa: Typographia da Academia, 1877), 267-268, 286.

²⁵⁶ Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 75-76, 103-106, and 113-114, maintains that the “Jaga” who invaded Kongo in the sixteenth century originated in the empire of Mwene Muji, which at that time controlled the right bank of the Kwango River. Mwene Muji broke up in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and the kingdom of Yaka emerged from the southern end of its ruins, as sixteenth and seventeenth century written sources show and nineteenth century oral tradition peripherally supports. The term “Jaga” in Portuguese was then used to define any group of rootless people, including in c. 1570 sources in Kongo to describe raiders who lived north of the Congo River in a completely different direction from the invaders. The Mbangala were also classified, in this system, as being *jagas*, although they had no connection with the invaders of Kongo either from the east or the north. They also had no connection with the Lunda Commonwealth, which had not yet achieved more than local success by the 1680s. As with Vansina and Desch-Obi, Thornton posits that the Mbangala probably originated in Quilengues and that by the early seventeenth century they were found widely in the Umbundu speaking area, including in Kakonda, Sumbi, Songo, and here and there in the central highlands. Once on the move, their ranks filled quickly with non-Umbundu speakers, so that by the time Kasanje consolidated in its final home, it was largely Kimbundu-

traditions preserved by both the Lunda and the Mbangala of Kasanje told of the exodus of Kinguri (the “lion”), who left Lunda with a group of followers and moved into the “kingdom of Angola”, where they made contact with Luso-Africans. The descendants of Kinguri later founded a permanent *kilombo* in Kasanje and became known as the *Imbangala* (see more below).

The Mbangala bands, however, only became a threat to the peoples living in the interior of the kingdom of Angola (Ndongo) decades after the disappearance of the Jaga who invaded mbanza-Kongo²⁵⁷. Thus, most of the references to “*jagas*” in the seventeenth and eighteenth century should be understood as references to different Mbangala warlords. The Portuguese began to refer to the Mbangala bands they met in the seventeenth century as “*jagas*” because of some similarities displayed by both groups²⁵⁸. Both of them were described as “skillful and vicious warriors” from the east who raided the western lands, burning all villages they found in their path. They both also disrupted the social order and created waves of refugees who spread throughout West Central Africa. Above all, both groups were accused of devouring a great part of their enemies and prisoners of war.

The characterization of African warriors as “cannibals” was a common element in stories told by Portuguese mariners and missionaries who visited Africa from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. European readers avidly consumed these stories containing taboos such as

speaking. Thornton’s interpretation of the rise of the Mbangala, as bands of warriors and not as an ethnic group originating in Quilengues, thus reinforces my own understanding of their relevance for the history of Benguela and its interior. Moreover, as the complementary sources presented in this chapter also show, we can now date the Mbangala presence and follow some of their migratory movements throughout the interior of Benguela from at least the late-sixteenth century.

²⁵⁷ “*Mbanza*” or “*banza*” are terms used to define cities; hence, mbanza-Kongo was the “capital” of Kongo: Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Franz Weiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985), 115; Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 275.

²⁵⁸ According to José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguesas na África Occidental e Oriental; Ásia Occidental; China, e na Oceania*, vol. 3 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1846), xxxv, the “*Jagas*” or “*Jacas*” were nomadic warriors from the interior of Africa who constantly relocated their military encampments (*quilombos*), spreading war throughout the continent and eventually working as mercenaries for the Portuguese. See also Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 129; John Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe* (Edinburgh: Bell & Creech, 1775), 257-258.

human sacrifice²⁵⁹ and cannibalism²⁶⁰, which consequently helped to shape their representations about Africans as “savages”²⁶¹. Moreover, the characterization of all Africans as “cannibals” served European colonial ambitions in the continent by giving them a supposed moral and civilizational superiority²⁶².

Although Africans were often portrayed as cannibals in historical accounts from the sixteenth century onwards²⁶³, Europeans have also been accused of practicing both

²⁵⁹ Many of the stories about human sacrifice could also have been exaggerated by European outsiders. David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London: John Murray, 1857), 317, argued that people in the *Mwaant yaav* refuted the stories of human sacrifice described by Manuel Caetano Pereira, a Portuguese merchant who visited the region in 1796.

²⁶⁰ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 135, argued that cannibalism on the scale required to produce the effects attributed by the Portuguese to the Jaga has never been documented anywhere in the world, which would configure proof that the majority of these stories were fabrications.

²⁶¹ Isabel Castro Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença: Relações Portugal-África, séculos XV-XX* (Lisbon: Caleidoscópio, 2004), 234-235, has argued that the “African cannibal” is a European creation from the sixteenth century onwards. She does not deny the existence of the practice in Africa, but points out that Europeans only began paying attention to such practices after hearing stories of cannibalism from Spanish travellers in the Caribbean, from where the word “cannibal” originated. She has shown that no European traveller who sailed to Africa before the sixteenth century reported cases of cannibalism among the peoples with whom they made contact. These included Diogo Gomes (1456), Cá da Mosto (1455-1457), Eustache de La Fosse (1479-1480), Duarte Pacheco Pereira (1506-1508) and Valentim Fernandes (1506-1517). Other historians do not believe in real practices of cannibalism among the people of Kongo, attesting only for the existing of symbolic cannibalism: Antonio Luis Alves Ferronha, “Comentário: uma questão de olhar”, in *Relação do Reino do Congo e das terras circunvizinhas*, Filippo Pigafetta, ed. (Lisboa: Alfa, 1989), 130, used a history on Kongo written by an anonymous author (which can be found in the archives of the National Library in Lisbon) to dismiss reports about cannibalism. See Anônimo, *História do Reino do Congo*, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa: ms. 8080, secção de reservados: Book 1, Chapter V. According to Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 121-149, stories about cannibals, especially those concerning the Jaga, were Portuguese fabrications. See also Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto, “Em torno de um problema de identidade: os ‘Jagas’ na História do Congo e Angola”, *Mare Liberum*, No. 18/19 (1999-2000): 193-241.

²⁶² Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença*, 225-244, has argued that the Portuguese preserved the “ghost” of African cannibalism alive in their representations of Africa to justify their colonial intervention in places like Angola. They sought to naturalize cannibalistic practices of certain groups as inherent to all Africans. The representation of the “African cannibal” in the Portuguese mentality and political discourse lasted well into the twentieth century, as shown by Henriques’ work. She reinforced her argument by pointing out that in the year 2000 a Portuguese politician and member of the European Parliament, Carlos Candal, used the term “cannibal” in reference to an Angolan minister. See also Isabel Castro Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola. Dinâmicas Comerciais e Transformações Sociais no Século XIX* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica e Tropical, 1997), 38. Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 134 – note 2, also argued that cannibalism was used by apologists of the Atlantic slave trade and the Portuguese colonial presence in the African continent.

²⁶³ Lopes/Pigafetta are responsible for the first report about cannibals in Africa: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 28, 96. See also Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença*, 235. Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, Vol. 1, 16-17, also mentions the early-sixteenth century *capitão-mor* Balthasar Rebello Aragão as a major advertiser of stories about Jaga cannibals.

anthropophagy²⁶⁴ as a strategy of survival²⁶⁵, and symbolic cannibalism²⁶⁶. Moreover, the Atlantic slave trade could be understood as another form of cannibalism of African bodies, once the slave market “devoured” the slaves²⁶⁷. Moreover, slavers were often perceived as witches in Kongo, while the belief in “white cannibals” or “white man-eaters” was widespread in Atlantic Africa²⁶⁸.

Stories about “African cannibals” were also often used by slavers as an argument in favor of the Atlantic slave trade. They justified their commercial activity as rather merciful in face of certain cannibalism. Hence, apologists of the trade argued that captives had a better fate in the hands of European slave traders than in those of their African captors²⁶⁹. As Joseph C. Miller explains:

“Both private merchants and public officials used it [cannibalism] to defend the morality of the slave trade by pointing to the bellies of the ‘Jaga’ as the only alternative fate awaiting the oppressed Mbundu and Kongo villagers. Gory description of ‘Jaga’ feasting on the flesh of loyal subjects of the Portuguese Crown effectively carried the message that the slave trade, bad as it was, might save its victim from an even worse end”²⁷⁰.

²⁶⁴ Some scholars prefer to use the term “anthropophagy” instead of “cannibalism” because of the strong negative connotation of the latter. However, others defend the use of “anthropophagy” to refer to any form of consumption of human flesh, including cases of extreme survival, reserving the term “cannibalism” for the ritualistic consumption of human flesh. For more about this discussion, see Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença*, 225 – note 1.

²⁶⁵ Although there are no stories about African cannibals before the sixteenth century, there is at least one known report of Portuguese victims of a shipwreck in the coast of Mozambique in the late fifteenth century who captured and ate African individuals in order to survive: Bernardo Gomes de Brito, *História Trágico- Marítima*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Officina da Congregação do Oratório, 1735), 122-123; See also Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença*, 235 – note 19.

²⁶⁶ Both the symbolic and real acts of eating human flesh were elements of witchcraft rituals: John K. Thornton, “Cannibals, Witches and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World”, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 2, April (2003): 208. For more about the socialization of anthropophagic practices and the transition from real to symbolic cannibalism in Western societies, see Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença*, 226-231.

²⁶⁷ The “illegal” enslavement of African individuals was somewhat morally comparable to devouring enemies: Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, vol. 6, 23. Also, cannibalism was deeply rooted as an “idiom for exploitation” in the mentality of the peoples of West Central Africa: Thornton, “Cannibals, Witches and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World”, 275.

²⁶⁸ Some slaves believed that Europeans were going to devour them once they arrived at their destination: Philip Curtin, *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1967), 331; Thornton, “Cannibals, Witches and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World”, 273-286; See also Rosalind Shaw, *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002), 226-232.

²⁶⁹ This is the argument used by an anonymous Brazilian apologist of the slave trade in the first paragraph of his 1838 defence of the Atlantic slave trade: Anonymous, *Memória sobre o commercio de escravos, em que se pretende mostrar que este tráfico he para elles, antes hum bem do que hum mal* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Villeneuve e Cia, 1838), 5. See also Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 134 – note 2.

²⁷⁰ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 133-134. See also Henriques, *Os Pilares da Diferença*, 239-240; Ferronha, “Comentário: uma questão de olhar”, 130.

Despite attempts on the part of European writers and scholars to naturalize cannibalism as a common cultural trait among Africans²⁷¹, the act of eating an enemy was not taken lightly. Indeed, cannibalism was considered a taboo and a hideous crime by most African societies, as was the case in the kingdom of Kongo²⁷². Hence, we may dismiss Portuguese descriptions of African warriors feasting on the flesh of their victims²⁷³, as well as the representations of African butcher shops with human parts for sale²⁷⁴, as exaggerations²⁷⁵ intended to confirm the European biased narrative about a supposed “African savagery”²⁷⁶.

²⁷¹ David Birmingham, *Central Africa to 1870: Zambezia, Zaire and the South Atlantic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 34, has highlighted that some anthropologists who study the Mbangala tend to treat their cannibalism as a fixed cultural trait that could be traced to source. According to Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 276, “Cannibalism is said to be a custom of Jaga Cassanji, but not of the whole group, as Battell had reported. Umbundu tradition ascribed cannibalism to the founders of some of their kingdoms, and until this day Umbundu kings were required to ‘eat the old one’”.

²⁷² In 1613, the *mani-Kongo* complained that the governors of Angola were sending “*jagas*” (that is Mbangala mercenaries) into his lands after slaves: Joseph C. Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1972): 566. In 1617, the ruler of Kongo also wrote to the Vatican similarly complaining that the Portuguese were hunting slaves in his kingdom with the help of the *Giagas*, meaning Mbangala bands. He further alerted the Pope that his fellow Christians had made an alliance with a “nation of such barbarous people” who fed on human flesh: “Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo V”, No. 100 (25 December 1617), in *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* (henceforth MMA): *África Ocidental, 1611-1621*, 1st series, Vol. 6, Antonio Brásio, ed. (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955), 290. These complaints from rulers of Kongo continued throughout the seventeenth century. See also José Rivair Macedo, “Jagas, canibalismo e ‘guerra preta’: os Mbangalas, entre o mito europeu e as realidades da África Central do século XVII”. *História*, São Paulo, Vol. 23, No. 1 Jan/Jun (2013): 63-64; Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 138.

²⁷³ According to Portuguese explorers, the ritual of acceptance of a new warlord (*Jaga*) among the Mbangala of Kasanje involved a series of sacrifices and a feast of human flesh, called the “banquet of Kinguri”: Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, *From Benguella to the Territory of Yacca, 1877-1880*, Vol. 1 (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, [1881]1882), 300-301. Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 3, 225, informs that the Jaga appreciated a drink made with human internal parts [or brain?] (*miollos de gente*) mixed with herbs.

²⁷⁴ According to Lopes/Pigafetta, “they [Jaga] have shambles for human flesh, as we have of animals, even eating the enemies they have killed in battle, and selling their slaves they can get a good price for them; if not, they give them to the butcher, who cuts them in pieces, and then sell them to be roasted or boiled”: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 28. A similar description can be found in the document entitled “A Angola Portuguesa e as regiões circunvizinhas: descrição topográfica e histórica da ocupação portuguesa”, (c. 4 August 1630), in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 212. According to João dos Santos, *Ethiopia Oriental: vária História de cousas notáveis do Oriente*, Mello Azevedo, ed. (Lisboa: Escripório da Empreza, 1892), 229, there were reports of similar shops selling human flesh in Eastern Africa, among the Zimba of the Tete River. See also Henriques, *Os Pílares da Diferença*, 235-236.

²⁷⁵ See the English physician and abolitionist Thomas Masterman Winterbottom, *An account of native Africans in the neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, Vol. 1 (London: Printed by Whittinham, 1803), 166. See also Philip Curtin, *The Image of Africa* (London: MacMillan, 1965), 210, who dismissed most of the stories of cannibalism as European exaggerations and affirmed the people he met in Sierra Leone appeared “struck with horror when questioned on the subject [of cannibalism]”.

²⁷⁶ The *jagas* could also use the widespread fear of cannibals against their enemies and even allies. According to Beatrix Heintze, “Propaganda concerning ‘Man-Eaters’ in West-Central Africa in the Second Half of the Nineteenth

A cacophony of stories about other vicious attacks of “cannibal warriors” in different parts of Africa added to the confusion about *jagas* and Mbangala bands. Sixteenth-century Portuguese mariners began spreading tales about “African cannibals” as if they belonged to the same “nation of savages”²⁷⁷. Missionaries, colonial officials and other travellers reported attacks in different parts of the continent, including the Mane in *Serra Leoa*, the Gala in Abyssinia, the Zimba in the Zambezi, the Jaga in Kongo, and the Mbangala in Angola and Benguela, with an increasing certainty that they had a common origin²⁷⁸. These “savages” supposedly shared the same cultural and military features²⁷⁹, which included violent warfare tactics and their supposed taste for human flesh²⁸⁰.

A good part of the interior of the African continent remained unknown to outsiders and virtually out of reach for European colonial forces until the late nineteenth century. This lack of access reflected upon their overall knowledge about the central lands of the continent. Although European cartographers had been perfecting their understanding about the shape of Africa and its coastal territories for centuries, regions far in the interior were still a blank spot in their maps (Appendix 1).

European cartographers and geographers often divided the African continent into two large territories, both generically labelled *Æthiopia* (Ethiopia Superior and Ethiopia Inferior), meaning “land of the blacks”²⁸¹. According to their understanding of the interior of the African continent, which dated back to Ptolemy, great part of Ethiopia Inferior was in the “Torrid Zone” (below the

Century”, *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde*, No. 49 (2003): 127, the Mbangala were well aware of this fear, and used it to leverage their commercial and diplomatic negotiations. See also Isabel Castro Henriques, *O pássaro do mel: Estudos de História Africana* (Lisboa: Colibri, 2006), 39-56. Thomas J Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 24, argues that the symbolic practices of infanticide and cannibalism made the Mbangala appear as “nonhumans or superhumans in the eyes of their opponents”, allowing them to “frighten their opponents into submission without serious opposition”. See also Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 201.

²⁷⁷ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 122; Jan Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 34 (2007): 132-143.

²⁷⁸ Jared Staller, “Rivalry and Reformation Politics: Reflections on Andrew Battell’s Jaga Materials Printed by Samuel Purchas from 1613 to 1625”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 43(2016): 19.

²⁷⁹ Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 275; Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 66-67.

²⁸⁰ According to Walter Rodney, “A Reconsideration of the Mane Invasions of Sierra Leone”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1967): 223, the fact that the Jaga, Mane and Zimba peoples had cannibalistic practices made the Portuguese identify them as one group.

²⁸¹ Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe*, 253-254.

Equator) and formed a vast country inhabited by a nation of “*Æthiopian* cannibals”²⁸². This supposed “country of savages” was bordered by Abyssinia to the north and limited by the Mountains of the Moon (*Montes Luna*²⁸³) to the south, in the Mwene-Muji Empire²⁸⁴. The kingdom of Kongo²⁸⁵ was located to the west of the so-called “Torrid Zone”, while the lands of Zanzibar (*Zanguebar*) laid to the east. The tales about the “warrior cannibals of Inner Ethiopia”²⁸⁶ stated they roamed the whole continent spreading war and destruction²⁸⁷.

²⁸²“História da residência dos padres da Companhia de Jesus em Angola, e cousas tocantes ao Reino, e Conquista”, No. 132 (1 May 1594), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 4, 546 – note 1. See also Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe*, 257.

²⁸³ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 137 – map 2, 139, suggested the “Mountains of the Moon” could be located in Matamba, in the region currently called “*Baixa de Cassanje*”.

²⁸⁴ According to Lopes/Pigafetta, the Jaga lived on the borders of the “Kingdom of Moenhe Muge”. According to eighteenth-century maps, the Empire of *Mwene-Muji* (*Monemugi* or *Mono-Emugi*) occupied great part of the so-called “Torrid Zone” of Inner Africa: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 62, 96. See also Appendix 1. *Mwene-Muji* became legendary among European travellers and explorers for its isolation, as it remained closed to outsiders until the late nineteenth century. According to late eighteenth and early nineteenth century sources, it was composed by the kingdoms of Mujaco, Makoko, Cingiro, Cambate, Alaba and Monemugi proper: *Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, Including the Latest Discoveries and Improvements of All Nations*, Vol. 15 (London: Vernor, Hood and Sharpe, 1807), 168; See also Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1614), 669, 703; John Walker, *Elements of Geography and of Natural and Civil History* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1795), 494; Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe*, 257-258; In the *Atlas Geographus*, Africa, Vol. IV (London: Printed by John Nutt, 1714), 607-609, the “Empire of Monemugi” is portrayed as neighboring the “Torrid Zone”, not as part of it. For a recent take on Mwene-Muji, see Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 63-64.

²⁸⁵ According to Lopes/Pigafetta, the kingdom of Kongo was composed of six provinces: Bamba, Sogno, Sundi, Pango, Batta and Pemba: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries; drawn out of the writings and discourses of the Portuguese Duarte Lopes, 1591*, Margarite Hutchinson, ed. (London: John Murray, [1591] 1881), 43.

²⁸⁶ According to the division adopted by eighteenth century geographers, *Inner Ethiopia* or *Ethiopia Inland* was a vast country that comprehended the greatest part of *Ethiopia Inferior*: Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe*, 257.

²⁸⁷ Francisco Breyner (Conde de Ficalho) pointed out the similarities in the attacks perpetrated by the Gala in Abyssinia, the Zimba in Mozambique, the Jaga in Kongo and the Sumba in Sierra Leone. He also suggested there must have been some major historical event in Inner Ethiopia in the mid-sixteenth century to put in motion the peoples who lived in the core of the continent and cause them to advance onto more peaceful and cultured societies who lived closer to the coast: Conde de Ficalho, *Plantas úteis da África portuguesa*, 50-51 – note 1. A few decades earlier, Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas...*, vol. 3, 200 – note 1, had made a similar argument.

The reference to the Mbangala mythical founding hero as “the lion” (*nguri*)²⁸⁸ and his origins in the “mountain of the lion”²⁸⁹ was also responsible for much of the confusion surrounding the “origins” and composition of the Mbangala bands. Throughout the sixteenth century, Portuguese sailors and missionaries travelling the Atlantic coast of Africa began connecting the stories about the Jaga/Mbangala of Kongo and Angola with the Mane warriors²⁹⁰ of *Serra Leoa* (Portuguese for “mountain of the lion”), thus confirming a supposed common origin for both bands of warriors²⁹¹. As the legends about “African cannibal warriors” spread among European travellers and missionaries, the Jaga/Mbangala became increasingly associated with the Mane²⁹², who were also called Sumba²⁹³.

Superficial similarities between the Jaga/Mbangala and the Mane/Sumba soon became pseudo-proof of their association²⁹⁴. For example, the ethnic label “Mane” was linked to the Kikongo term “*mani*” (ruler), while the Sumba of *Serra Leoa* and the Sumbi who inhabited the

²⁸⁸ Although historians and anthropologist often translate the term *nguri* as “lion”, the Angolan writer Antonio de Assis Jr., *Dicionário Kimbundu-Português: linguístico, botânico, histórico e corográfico* (Luanda: Argente, Santos e Cia, n/d [19--]), 47, 134, presented different translations for terms associated with “ancestry” and “origins”. In his view, *nguri* means “father”, “procreator”, progenitor”, “that which produces a generation”. He also translates it as “trunk” and “root”, as well as “large mammal that eats rotten meat” and “large wolf”, which reminds the description of a hyena, not a lion. The term *unguri* means “originality”, “place of departure” or yet “of such origin”. The term *kinguri* is translated as “ancestral trunk”, “person who originated the family”, “genitor”, “precedent” or yet “place of origin of the roots of a plant”, “that which procreates and germinates” and finally “ascendant”. The linguist István Fodor *Introduction to the History of Umbundu: L. Magyar’s Records (1859) and the Later Sources* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983), 222, also translates *onguri* as “wolf”, but this time from *Umbundu*.

²⁸⁹ As Christopher C. Wrigley, “Myths of the Savanna”, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1974): 134, has pointed out, it is not rare to find references to “mountains of lions” all over Africa. For instance, a range of hills located between the “two Imbangala states of Kasanje and Matamba” was called “Nguri”. See also John Barbot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South-Guinea and of Ethiopia Inferior, vulgarly Angola* (London: Churchill, 1732), 96.

²⁹⁰ The Mane (*Mani*) were warrior bands who conquered the territory previously occupied by the Sape people (today’s Sierra Leone and Republic of Guinea): Rodney, “A Reconsideration of the Mane Invasions of Sierra Leone”, 219. According to Almada/Köpke, the Sape people (*Sapes*) became strong warriors in order to resist the attacks of the Mane (also called Sumba), who invaded their lands in the sixteenth century. Although the Sape were not accused of practicing cannibalism (as did the Mane, the Jaga and the Mbangala) they had the tradition to file their teeth (similar to the Mbangala), which the Mane did not: André Álvares de Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde, desde o rio Sagana até aos baixos de Sant’Anna, 1594*, Diogo Köpke ed. (Porto: Typographia Commercial Portuense, [1594] 1841), 80.

²⁹¹ Lopes/Pigafetta connected Kinguri and his origins on “the mountain of the lion” to “*Serra Leoa*” in West Africa: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 6.

²⁹² Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 157-158 – note 96. See also Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 122-126; Staller, “Rivalry and Reformation Politics”, 19.

²⁹³ According to Rodney, “A Reconsideration of the Mane Invasions of Sierra Leone”, 223, most of the early writers distinguished between the Mane proper and their armed forces, the Sumba: “Those forces [Sumba] were said to be cannibals, the word ‘Sumba’ meaning precisely ‘an eater of human flesh’”.

²⁹⁴ According to Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 344, the idea that the Jaga came from *Serra Leoa* was later extended to the Mbangala.

coast of Benguela were associated as one group²⁹⁵. Even the final syllables “gala” from the word Mbangala were presented as evidence of a supposed connection with the Gala who terrorized Abyssinia²⁹⁶.

The priest and the cannibals

The main person responsible for the association between Jaga/Mbangala and Mane/Sumba, and later other “cannibal warriors” of Africa, was Baltasar Barreira (1538-1612), a Jesuit missionary who spent years in both West Central Africa (Kongo/Angola) and West Africa (Sierra Leone/Guinea²⁹⁷) in the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The stories of cannibal warriors spread by Father Baltasar would inspire many other writers from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. A closer look into his life sheds light on the creation of such stories and the commercial intentions behind them. I argue that the spread of stories about “cannibal warriors” was used as a justification for the conquest and enslavement of these “savages”.

Father Baltasar Barreira was a missionary deeply involved in the Atlantic slave trade and in the Portuguese wars of conquest in the African territories where he served²⁹⁸. He was convinced that the evangelization of Africans in Angola and *Serra Leoa* would only be an effective enterprise under the weight of Portuguese arms and with the protection of its military fortifications²⁹⁹. He

²⁹⁵ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 123 – note 6; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 66-67. According to Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680*, vol. 2 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, [1680] 1972), 43-44, the Sumbi were the cannibal bands who in 1645 massacred the forces led by Domingos Lopes de Sequeira somewhere between the rivers Cuvo and Longa. See also Ralph Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza: Ocupação e aproveitamento do antigo reino de Benguela, 1843-1942*, Vol. 2 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1940), 421, 459-460.

²⁹⁶ Father João Bermudes was responsible for the first descriptions of the attacks perpetrated by the Gala against the Portuguese in Abyssinia: Ernest G. Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh, in Angola and the Adjoining Regions* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1901), 149-153. The connection between Bangala and Gala was also established by Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Ethnographia e história tradicional dos povos da Lunda* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1890), 86. See also Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 123.

²⁹⁷ Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes: Containing the History of the World in Sea Voyages and Land Travells by Englishmen and Others*, vol. 9 (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), 260, explains that Guinea is a name given to all the Atlantic coast of Africa, from Senegal (16° N) to Angola (13° S). It is usually divided into two parts, and Lower Guinea (from Angola to Kongo) and Higher Guinea (from Kongo to Senegal), with the latter also called Upper Guinea. The islands of Cape Verde (called Arsinarium by Ptolemy) are located in Higher Guinea.

²⁹⁸ Linda M. Heywood, *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 40.

²⁹⁹ Baltasar Barreira entered the Company of Jesus in 1556 and lectured a course on “humanities” for more than a decade in Évora. He became famous among his fellow Jesuits in Portugal for his dedication to the sick during the plague of 1569, which affected him as well. Having survived the plague after intrusive surgery, Barreira was sent to recover in the Azores Islands in 1570. He integrated a group of Jesuits who were responsible for the foundation of a

lived in West Central Africa for ten years, working to evangelize the people of the region³⁰⁰. He not proselytized in Angola, but travelled to the kingdom of Kongo as well³⁰¹. When he visited mbanza-Kongo, called São Salvador do Congo by the Portuguese, in the end of the sixteenth century³⁰², the memory about the vicious attack perpetrated by the Jaga was still fresh in everyone's mind³⁰³. This was around the same period that Duarte Lopes visited the kingdom of Kongo³⁰⁴.

The Jesuit served the first governor of Angola, Paulo Dias de Novais, as adviser and intermediary with African rulers³⁰⁵. He became a passionate proponent of the defeat and conquest of Ndongo³⁰⁶, as well as the burning of idols³⁰⁷ and the conversion of all African rulers to Christianity through baptism³⁰⁸. He played a very important role in the invasion of Cambambe in

religious school in the Azores. In 1579, at the age of 41, Father Barreira travelled to the African continent for the first time. He was sent to Angola to replace deceased Jesuit missionaries who had accompanied the first governor, Paulo Dias de Novais: José Augusto Duarte Leitão, "A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola, 1580-1592, *Lusitania Sacra*, 2ª série, No. 5 (1993): 46-49, 91.

³⁰⁰ "Carta do Padre Manuel Rodrigues ao Geral da Companhia", No. 97 (29 July 1579), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 261-262; See also Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal: A fundação da Província Portuguesa*, Tomo 1, Vol. 1 (Porto: Apostolado da Imprensa, 1931), 473.

³⁰¹ "Carta do Padre Baltasar Afonso para o Padre Miguel de Sousa", No. 46 (4 July 1581) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 198-207; "Informação sobre o Reino de Angola e das suas minas de prata e sal", No. 140 (Séc. XVI), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 368-373.

³⁰² Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal*, Tomo 1, Vol. 1, 473; Leitão, "A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola", 50.

³⁰³ The expulsion of the Jaga led to the acceptance of vassalage on the part of the *mani-Kongo*: Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, vol. 1, 9; Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Franz Weiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985), 85 – note 29.

³⁰⁴ Rodney, "A Reconsideration of the Mane Invasions of Sierra Leone", 223; Miller, "Requiem for the Jaga", 123; See also Fernão Guerreiro, *Ralaçam annual das cousas que fizeram os padres da Companhia de Iesus nas partes da Índia nas partes da Índia Oriental e no Brasil, Angola, Cabo Verde, Guiné, nos annos de seiscentos e dous e seiscentos e três* (Lisboa: Jorge Rodrigues Impressor, 1605), 270.

³⁰⁵ "Carta de Paulo Dias de Novais e dos conquistadores de Angola" No. 119 (26 June 1587), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 4, Vol. 15, 311-313.

³⁰⁶ According to Leitão, "A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola", 58-60, Father Barreira understood that it was very difficult to ensure the subjugation of the *sobas* only by force of arms and considered their conversion to Christianity through baptism the best chance to maintain control over them. Thus, he presented himself to African rulers as a "*nganga*" (spiritual healer and diviner) of a stronger God.

³⁰⁷ "Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira para o Provincial", No. 65 (20 November 1583) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 4, Vol. 3, 256-259. Father Baltasar also preached in favor of the burning of idols in *Serra Leoa*: Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, 95.

³⁰⁸ Father Barreira proudly informed his superiors that he was able to baptize 400 individuals in Ndongo in just one day, which was followed by the burning of uncountable idols: "Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira para o Padre Sebastião de Moraes", No. 47 (31 January 1582) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 208-211.

1580-1581³⁰⁹, when he organized reinforcement troops to rescue Governor Novais³¹⁰. His participation in the conquest of Cambambe made him famous among Luso-Africans and Africans alike, to the point where one of the defeated *sobas* (Songa) asked for Father Barreira to baptize him personally³¹¹. All of these wars generated a great amount of captives for the Atlantic slave trade.

When Luso-African troops defeated the Ndongo forces in the “battle of Talandongo” (1583)³¹², Father Barreira’s presence in the frontline was considered miraculous and decisive for their victory³¹³. Governor Novais recognized the importance of the Jesuit’s service to the conquest of Angola by donating vast portions of land along the northern (right) banks of the Cuanza River to the Company of Jesus³¹⁴.

During the following years, Father Barreira maintained his support for the destruction of Ndongo³¹⁵. His participation in the wars of conquest and the slave trade was so intense that his superiors in Lisbon began to think it was excessive³¹⁶. Governor Novais, on the other hand,

³⁰⁹ “História da residência dos padres da Companhia de Jesus em Angola, e cousas tocantes ao Reino, e Conquista”, No. 132 (1 May 1594), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 4, 568.

³¹⁰ Ndongo warriors defeated the Luso-African troops commanded by Governor Novais in their first attempt to conquer Cambambe in 1580, despite help sent by the *mani-Kongo* to their Christian allies upon Father Barreira’s request. Many of the defeated soldiers abandoned their commander in Cambambe and retreated to Luanda. As he watched the Luso-African troops entering the city, Father Barreira “insurgued against defeatism” and recruited the necessary men to rescue the governor in Cambambe. Reinforcements left Luanda in June of 1581 accompanied by the priest, who was praised by Governor Novais as “a military hero and godsend”: Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 49-57. See also “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira para o Provincial”, No. 65 (20 November 1583) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 256-259; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Afonso”, No. 79 (19 January 1585) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 311-313.

³¹¹ Songa was baptized and renamed Dom Paulo, while his son became Constantino and his brother Dom Tomé. Dom Paulo became a powerful ally of the Portuguese, commanding an army of more than five thousand warriors: “Carta de Francisco de Sotomaior a El-Rei D. João IV”, No. 122 (4 December 1645), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 9, 398-411. See also Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 57-58; Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 31.

³¹² “História da residência dos padres da Companhia de Jesus em Angola, e cousas tocantes ao Reino, e Conquista”, No. 132 (1 May 1594), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 4, 567-568.

³¹³ “Carta dos Padres da Companhia ao Governador de Angola”, No. 192 (1 November 1678), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 13, 455-464. Even the death of seven Luso-African soldiers was attributed to the moment the priest ceased interceding with the blessings: Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 60.

³¹⁴ “Carta de doação de Paulo Dias de Novais ao Padre Baltasar Barreira”, No. 102 (11 July 1583), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 279. See also Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 29; “Carta de Sesmaria de Paulo Dias de Novais”, No. 107 (15 Ago 1584), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 4, 433-439; Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 60 – note 85.

³¹⁵ “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira”, No. 86 (14 May 1586) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 328-331.

³¹⁶ In 1585, the Provincial de Portugal, Sebastião de Morais, complained that Father Barreira was deeply involved with Governor Novais and the “war of conquest of Angola”: Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 66. Father Barreira defended that Angola was the most secure place in Africa to buy slaves: Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 40.

defended his presence in Angola and his involvement in the military campaigns as God's grace³¹⁷. Beyond the donation of lands, the governor "gave" the Jesuits seven *sobas*, which meant that these African rulers should pay tribute to the Jesuits as their "vassals"³¹⁸. This generated much envy on the part of the other *conquistadores*, who pressured Father Barreira "to return the *sobas*"³¹⁹. However, according to the Jesuits, these same *sobas* rebelled in order to remain under the "vassalage" of the missionaries, and the *conquistadores* were forced to withdraw their ambitions and request the Jesuits to keep their *sobas* under control³²⁰.

Father Barreira returned to Lisbon 1593, after a short passage in Brazil³²¹. During his period in Portugal, he wrote a memoir of his time as head of the Jesuit Mission in Angola, in which he showed overall disappointment with the experience. He argued that there was little chance for the mission's success in the region, not only because of the lack of interest on the part of many African rulers to convert to Christianity³²², but also because of the local priests and their rejection to work with the Jesuits. Ironically, the priest-slaver accused his colleagues of being "idiots" and caring only for "worldly goods"³²³.

In 1595, Father Barreira was in Madrid³²⁴ defending his ideas about the conquest of Angola when a delegation from the kingdom of Kongo arrived at the capital. Since Father Barreira had been chosen as a possible candidate to become the first Bishop of Kongo and Angola, king D.

³¹⁷ The supposed "grace" came in the form of resupplies, since Father Barreira acquired gunpowder from the Luso-Africans settled in São Thomé for the Portuguese forces in Massangano: "Carta do Padre Baltasar Afonso", No. 68 (16 April 1584) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 265-266; "Carta do Padre Baltasar Afonso", No. 70 (23 June 1584) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 269-270.

³¹⁸ The Jesuits received 300 slaves annually from their "vassal" *sobas* as taxes, besides their share of captives after the military campaigns: Leitão, "A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola", 71.

³¹⁹ "Requerimento do Padre Baltasar Barreira a D. Francisco de Almeida, No. 124 (15 September 1592), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 323-327.

³²⁰ "Requerimento dos conquistadores de Angola sobre os sobas dos padres Jesuitas", No. 118 (26 June 1587), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 308-310; "Carta de Paulo Dias de Novais e dos conquistadores de Angola" No. 119 (26 June 1587), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 311-313.

³²¹ Some sources affirm that Father Barreira was summoned back to Lisbon in 1589, while others claim he was forced to return to Portugal at the end of 1592 because the new governor, João Furtado Mendonça, feared the power and influence he had in Angola: Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal*, Tomo 1, Vol. 1, 473; Leitão, "A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola", 50, 84 – note 203.

³²² Part of Father Barreira's disappointment was related to the limited reach of his teaching his African congregation, due to their "ignorance" about the afterlife and for their resistance to the idea of hell as a real place: Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, 26.

³²³ "Lembranças do Padre Baltasar Barreira para o Padre Provincial dos Jesuítas" No. 128 (1593), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 341-342. Miller, "Requiem for the Jaga", 147, has argued that missionaries, especially the Jesuits, were often in conflict with the regular religious orders. Although he makes this argument for Kongo, this was also the case for Angola, as evidenced by Father Barreira's own words.

³²⁴ Madrid was then capital of the Iberian Union (1580-1640).

Filipe II proposed that he should accompany the Kongolese delegation in their return to Africa. The proposal, however, was met with resistance on the part of the delegation. Some feared the priest would try to impose his control over Kongo as he had done in Angola³²⁵. Father Baltasar Barreira would never return to West Central Africa³²⁶.

Father Barreira was sent, nonetheless, on a new mission to the African continent at the beginning of the seventeenth century, as head of a group of missionaries tasked with opening a religious school in Cape Verde to train missionaries from continental Africa³²⁷. He was also to establish contacts and keep good relations with the neighboring rulers of the continental lands. The Jesuits ultimate goal was to create a Catholic community that could rival both the visiting Protestant merchants and the local Muslim communities in West Africa³²⁸. He arrived in Cape Verde in July 1604³²⁹ and by the end of that same year laid foot in *Serra Leoa* for the first time³³⁰. Father Barreira subsequently visited Cacheu, Bissau, Guinala, Biguba, Pogomo, and Buré³³¹. Similar to what he did in Angola, the priest tried to persuade the king of Portugal to conquer the territory of *Serra Leoa*³³².

³²⁵ Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 87-88.

³²⁶ One can argue that he never meant to return to West Central Africa, since he had already advised his superiors to give up on Christianising the dry lands of Angola and to send missionaries to Kongo, Brazil or another place where their work could be more fruitful: “Lembranças do Padre Baltasar Barreira para o Padre Provincial dos Jesuítas” No. 128 (1593), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 15, 341-342; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Provincial da Companhia de Jesus”, No. 34 (20 February 1606), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 97-113.

³²⁷ “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Provincial dos Jesuítas” No. 90 (12 February 1609), MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 97-113; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Padre Andre Alvares”, No. 95 (9 May 1609), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 348-353; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Provincial de Portugal, No. 102 (6 May 1610), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 406-408.

³²⁸ Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 89.

³²⁹ “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Provincial de Portugal”, No. 18 (22 July 1604), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 41-49; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Padre Antonio Mascarenhas”, No. 15 (16 March 1604), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 35-37. See also Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal*, Tomo 1, Vol. 1, 473; Graça Maria Correia de Castro, *O percurso Geográfico e Missionário de Baltasar Barreira em Cado Verde, Guiné, Serra Leoa* (Lisboa: Sociedade Histórica da Independência de Portugal, 2001), 42.

³³⁰ “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Assistente Padre João Álvares”, No. 24 (14 May 1605) in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 70-72; Castro, *O percurso Geográfico e Missionário de Baltasar Barreira*, 86.

³³¹ “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Padre Manuel de Barros”, No. 20 (28 January 1605), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 52-59; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Provincial da Companhia de Jesus”, No. 34 (20 February 1606), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 97-113; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira”, No. 203 (6 October 1605), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 7, 624-628; See also Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, 73, 80.

³³² “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Padre João Álvares” No. 45 (1 August 1606), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 159-174; “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Padre João Álvares” No. 101 (8 January 1610), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 399-405; See also Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, 81.

By the end of the following year, he had baptized the “king” of *Serra Leoa*, Dom Felipe de Leão, and several of his “nobles”³³³. In 1607, another ruler of *Serra Leoa*, “king” Fatema, was also baptized as Dom Pedro³³⁴. In that same year, Father Barreira launched an expedition into Futa Jalon in an attempt to baptize Mansa Canda, but the local ruler refused conversion³³⁵. Samuel Purchas saw with contempt the Jesuits’ presence among “Wizards and Sorceress” of *Serra Leoa*, and accused Father Barreira of making “wicked abuse of Baptism” as a tool of conversion, especially when baptising “sometimes seven hundred” slaves at once, who were “washed without any Doctrine of Christian duties premised, and presently transported to Brazil or India, ignorant of all things”³³⁶.

While in *Serra Leoa*, Father Barreira also established contact with the neighboring “king” Farma of Logos, who showed interest in having a priest in his “kingdom” and promised to build a church for that end³³⁷. A report sent to Portugal after the priest’s death evidences that Barreira was deeply involved in the slave trade and was responsible for trading imported goods with the people of Logos³³⁸. After the Jesuit’s death, Farma complained to the new priests that they did not bring him any merchandise, like Father Barreira used to do: the new priests replied that their main concern was to convert and save lives, not to trade³³⁹.

³³³ “Carta ânua do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Provincial de Portugal”, No. 100 (1 January 1610), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 363-398; “Carta do Rei de Serra Leoa a El-Rei de Portugal”, No. 36 (25 February 1606), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 126-127; See also Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 4th ed. (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1626), 721.

³³⁴ “Carta do Padre Baltasar Barreira ao Provincial da Companhia de Jesus”, No. 34 (20 February 1606), MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 97-113. According to Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vol. 9, 266, king Fatema was the last member of the “man-eating nation”, and became a zealous Christian after his conversion. See also Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 90; Castro, *O percurso Geográfico e Missionário de Baltasar Barreira*, 114-118.

³³⁵ Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, 95.

³³⁶ “Carta do Padre Manoel de Almeida ao Provincial da Companhia de Jesus”, No. 72 (11 June 1607), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 278-282.

³³⁷ Father Baltasar believed the conversion should start by the “gentile king”, who was the one who could enforce the faith over his people: Castro, *O percurso Geográfico e Missionário de Baltasar Barreira*, 37-38; Jocasta Juliet Oliveira Martins, “As cartas do Padre Baltasar Barreira: fontes para o estudo da religião na Costa da Guiné (século XVII)”, *Temporalidades*, V. 6, No. 3, (2014): 144.

³³⁸ Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 72, also suggested that Father Barreira was involved with the slave trade during his years in Angola and that he acquired goods from Brazil at a good price because of tax exemption given to the Jesuits.

³³⁹ Father Baltasar Barreira never returned to Europe, having died in Cape Verde in 1612. In a report to his superiors in Portugal from October of 1613, Father Sebastião Gomes informed that Barreira’s death caused great commotion, because he was deeply loved and admired by his local followers: “Carta do Padre Sebastião Gomes ao Provincial de Portugal”, No. 127 (October, 1613), in MMA, 2nd series, Vol. 4, 512-514, 520, 528, 540. See also Rodrigues, *História*

Father Barreira was the main person responsible for comparisons between different warrior bands, implying they had a common source. He registered that the same “*Jacas*” in Kongo were called “*Grindas*” in Angola, “*Zimbás*” in India, that is East Africa, and “*Galas*” in the Ethiopia of Prestes John. In *Serra Leoa*, according to the Jesuit, these cannibal warriors had taken the name of “*Çumbas*” (Sumbas) or “*Manes*”³⁴⁰.

The classic sources about the “cannibal warriors” of Inner Ethiopia

As I have argued earlier, the amalgamation of different warrior bands into one single army of “Jaga cannibals” was combined with the myth of the “nation of savages” from Inner Ethiopia to provide justification for the conquest of African territories and the enslavement of their peoples. After all, wars against the *jagas* were “just” because they were a diabolic and impious people³⁴¹. Father Barreira was involved in both activities (conquest and slave trade) in Angola and Kongo, as well as in Cape Verde and *Serra Leoa*. His stories about the Jaga/Mbangala and the Mane/Sumba influenced some of the most important sources about both West Africa and West Central African from the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. They were often incorporated into those narratives by their editors³⁴², who had access to reports from explorers and missionaries in Africa³⁴³. They include André Álvares d’Almada (edited by Diogo

da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal, Tomo 1, Vol. 1, 473; Leitão, “A missão do Padre Baltasar Barreira no Reino de Angola”, 90.

³⁴⁰ Guerreiro, *Ralaçam annual das cousas que fizeram os padres da Companhia de Jesus...*, 255. See also Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde*, 107-108; Barbot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South-Guinea and of Ethiopia Inferior*, 96-97; Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, Vol. 1, 46-47 – note 1; Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 46; Conde de Ficalho, *Plantas úteis da África portuguesa*, 46-51; R. Avelot, “Les Grands Mouvements de Peuples en Afrique: Jaga et Zimba”, *Bulletin de Géographie Historique et Descriptive*, Nos. 1-2 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1912), 75.

³⁴¹ “A Angola Portuguesa e as regiões circunvizinhas: descrição topográfica e histórica da ocupação portuguesa”, (c. 4 August 1630) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 212.

³⁴² According to Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 131, Pigafetta added much information to Lopes’ report based on other sources available to him, including the connection between the warriors of Guinea (Mane) and Kongo (Jaga). See also Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 345. Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 177-178 – note 6, believed the same was true for the references to Sierra Leone found in Andrew Battell’s description of his time living among the Mbangala. Although Battell might have referred to the origins of Kinguri in the “mountains of the lion” (*Serra do Leão*, in Portuguese) the association with Sierra Leone in West Africa was an addition by his editor, Samuel Purchas. See also Beatrix Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII* (Viseu: Kilombelombe, 2007), 40.

³⁴³ I agree with Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 345, that Jesuit missionaries, even more than sailors, played a major role in the spreading of these stories about the Jaga in *Serra Leoa*, as well as in Angola.

Köpke³⁴⁴) and Duarte Lopes (edited by Filippo Pigafetta³⁴⁵) at the end of the sixteenth century, as well as Andrew Battell at the beginning of the seventeenth century (edited by Samuel Purchas³⁴⁶ and Ernest Ravenstein³⁴⁷).

Although he did not mention Father Barreira by name, Samuel Purchas (in another of his books) regarded the Jesuits as responsible for the belief the Mane came from the Jaga and that they were comparable to the Grindas, Zimbabwas and Galas, similar to the classification provided by Father Barreira. The Jaga would have left their homeland in around 1550 and “pierced to these parts of Sierra Leone”³⁴⁸. Besides all the warrior bands cited by Father Barreira, the Jaga/Mbangala were compared to many other African groups, such as the Zulu, the Anziku, the Teke, the Mayaka, the Baga, the Azande, the Fang, the Ashanti, the Fanti, the Dahomey, the Benin, the Chaga and the Masai³⁴⁹.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the belief in a single source for all “savages” who raided Kongo and *Serra Leoa* became part of the “common lore of the Portuguese maritime community” and its “clerical adjuncts”³⁵⁰. This information was reproduced among Portuguese writers until the nineteenth century³⁵¹ and cited by historians of West Africa³⁵² and West Central Africa³⁵³ in the twentieth century. Let us take a closer look at the information on the “jagas” provided by Lopes/Pigafetta (1591), Almada/Köpke (1594), Battell/Purchas (1614), Battell/

³⁴⁴ Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde*, 107-108.

³⁴⁵ Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 157-158 – note 96.

³⁴⁶ Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 2nd ed., 699.

³⁴⁷ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 19.

³⁴⁸ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vol. 9, 266. See also Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 345.

³⁴⁹ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 149; Conde de Ficalho, *Plantas úteis da África portuguesa*, 46-47; Avelot, “Les Grands Mouvements de Peuples en Afrique”, 75-216; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 66-67; Paola Ivanov, “Cannibals, Warriors, Conquerors, and Colonizers: Western Perceptions and Azande Historiography”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 29 (2002): 138; Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 43; T.C.I. Ryan, “The Economics of Human Sacrifice”, *African Economic History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1975): 1; Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 130, 144-145; Staller, “Rivalry and Reformation Politics”, 17; Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, 69-71.

³⁵⁰ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 123.

³⁵¹ Barbot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South-Guinea and of Ethiopia Inferior*, 96-97; Conde de Ficalho, *Plantas úteis da África portuguesa*, 50; Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 84 – note 2.

³⁵² Peter Kup, *A History of Sierra Leone, 1400-1787* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 129-130; Rodney, “A Reconsideration of the Mane Invasions of Sierra Leone”, 223; Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, 43.

³⁵³ David Birmingham, “Speculations on the Kingdom of Kongo”, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol. 8 (1965): 10; Jan Vansina, “More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1966): 422; Staller, “Rivalry and Reformation Politics”, 19.

Ravenstein (1901), and Cavazzi (1687) to see how these legends about “cannibal” warriors have influenced these important sources.

According to Lopes/Pigafetta, the Jaga was a “cruel and murderous race” made of “very savage and warlike people” who came from the lands on the boarder of the Mwene-Muji Empire³⁵⁴. There is also reference to the Nile River crossing the Jaga homeland and the mythical lake in Inner Africa³⁵⁵, which was believed to be the source of both the rivers Nile and Zambezi³⁵⁶. After the attack on Kongo, the Jaga would have returned to their homeland in the core of Africa³⁵⁷.

Pigafetta registered that Lopes also compared the Jaga to the Arabs, because of their nomadic lives and long-distance migrations³⁵⁸. “They went wandering up and down, putting to fire and sword, and spoiling and robbing every part of the country through which they passed, till they reached Kongo”. Moreover, the Jaga were admired for being very courageous and valiant in battle, and feared for their viciousness and cannibalistic habits³⁵⁹.

According to Almada/Köpke, the Mane/Sumba who invaded *Serra Leoa* were a derivation of the Jaga warriors who had invaded mbanza-Kongo in 1568. In their version of the events, the Jaga left their homeland somewhere in Inner Ethiopia, close to the mythical source of the Nile River, to attack Kongo: but instead of retreating home afterwards, they marched north to *Serra Leoa*. Legend had it that the Mane/Sumba represented just the vanguard of the huge Jaga army,

³⁵⁴ Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 158-159. According to Corvo, *Estudo sobre as províncias ultramarinas*, Vol. 1, 47, the Jagas came from the Empire of Mwene-Muji. Others defended that the territory of Mwene-Muji belonged to the Zimbaz: Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, xvi; Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 46.

³⁵⁵ According to Lopes/Pigafetta, the Jaga were also called *Agag* in Inner Africa: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 62. See also Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 2nd ed., 669; João Antonio Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Graciano Maria de Luguzzano ed., Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, [1687]1965), 125; Conde de Ficalho, *Plantas úteis da África portuguesa*, 49.

³⁵⁶ The existence of this mythical lake of the Nile (in reality, a wrong assessment of the lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa) was a mistake that endured well into the nineteenth century, even after European explorers had confirmed its non-existence. The Irish Geographer William Desborough Cooley (1795-1883) was a passionate defender this mythical central African lake: William Cooley, *Inner Africa Laid Open* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1852); See also Richard Burton, *The Lands of Cazembe* (London: John Murray, 1873), 45 – note 1; Richard Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, 2 Vols. (London: Longman, Green Longman and Roberts, 1860); Richard Burton and James McQueen, *The Nile Basin* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1864); Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 161.

³⁵⁷ Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 99.

³⁵⁸ The Jagas were praised for their “extraordinary mobility”: Alfredo Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação e início do estabelecimento dos Portugueses no Congo, Angola e Benguela, extraído de documentos históricos* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1933), 304.

³⁵⁹ Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 62

despite the fact they had been active in *Serra Leoa* for more than 40 years. The rest of their troops were still on their way from Kongo to West Africa³⁶⁰.

About a decade later, Köpke added a note in his book about the legendary lands of Inner Ethiopia from where the “cannibal warriors” migrated to attack the peoples living in areas closer to the sea. He reproduced the information found in the writings of Father Barreira, equating the Sumbas (*Çumbas*) from *Serra Leoa* (also called Mane) with the *Iacas* from Kongo, the *Gindas* from Angola, the *Zimbas* from India and the *Gallas* from Ethiopia of *Prestes João*. According to this description, these marauders cooked their enemies with palm oil and palm heart before eating their flesh. They were also accused of destroying the palm trees to make wine, which is a strong reference to the Mbangala way of life³⁶¹.

In the version presented by Battell/Purchas in the early seventeenth century (later re-edited by Ravenstein), the *Gagas* (or *Gindes*) came from *Serra Leoa* and “dispersed themselves as general pestilence and common scourge through most parts of Ethiopia”. Ravenstein noticed, however, that Purchas might have been the one responsible for the insertion of this information about the origins of the Jaga based on what he had read in Lopes/Pigafetta³⁶².

In an appendix to his book, Ravenstein deals more extensively with the Jaga, showing different theories for their “origins” and composition. According to his understanding, the Jaga (known as *Bangala* in Angola) were predatory man-eating bands who invaded agricultural districts near the seacoast. He did not believe in the theory they were part of “inland tribes” or related to other bands of warriors of Africa. Ravenstein opined that Lopes was wrong to affirm that the Jaga came from Inner Ethiopia (Mwene-Muji), but that this was in fact the homeland of the *Zimbas*, a different group who invaded East Africa (Kilwa and Mombasa) in the end of the sixteenth century. Finally, he considered the idea that *Jagas*, *Iacas*, *Gindes*, *Zimbas*, *Galas* and *Sumbes* belonged to the same nation of savages “an absurd confusion”. Ravenstein also referred to the legends of

³⁶⁰ Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde*, 81-85; Rodney, “A Reconsideration of the Mane Invasions of Sierra Leone”, 223.

³⁶¹ Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde*, 107-108. See also Rodney, “A Reconsideration of the Mane Invasions of Sierra Leone”, 223. Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 178, argued that the Mbangala “destructive methods of obtaining palm wine distinguished them from local peoples, who tapped the standing trees rather than felling them”.

³⁶² Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 19 – note 4, 33, 83 – note 3. See also Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 177-178 – note 6; Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 145.

Kinguri as collected by Henrique Dias de Carvalho and Antonio Rodrigues Neves. In the end, he confessed his inability “to evolve the truth of these conflicting statements” about the origins of the Jaga, concluding that “Jaga” was a title assumed “by the leaders of predatory hordes of very diverse origin in order to inspire terror in the hearts of peaceful tribes”³⁶³.

The Italian Capuchin missionary Giovanni Cavazzi, who collected oral traditions from the Mbangala of Matamba, also wrote about the origins of the Jaga/Mbangala, more specifically about the warriors who migrated from the central plateau of Benguela into the interior of Angola, and later settled in the lands of Matamba (*Baixa do Cassange*, nowadays Malange)³⁶⁴. Cavazzi presented two main “opinions” about the origins of the Jaga. The first one asserted they originated in one of the provinces of Mwene-Muji, close to the mythical source of the rivers Nile and Zaire. This opinion was based on the fact they used to be called “*Jacas*” or “*Ngajacas*”, a group that would have come originally from Inner Ethiopia³⁶⁵. He included the children of Ethiopia (“the Troglodyte peoples, the Rozographs, Isographs and the barbarous and inhuman Cinici”), the Cafre and the Mumba as members of the peoples of Kongo (*Moxicongos*)³⁶⁶.

The second opinion asserted that the Jaga were bands of thieves from West Africa (10° N), originating around a mountain range close to the Atlantic coast locally known as the “mountains of the lion”. Cavazzi adopted a combination of those two opinions. He stated that although the second opinion that they came from *Serra Leoa* seemed more plausible, the first opinion about their origins in Inner Ethiopia allowed a better explanation for the “Jaga” presence on both the eastern and western coasts of Africa³⁶⁷.

Similar to the Jesuit Father Barreira, the Italian Capuchin combined references about several bands of African warriors, in this case *Jacas*, *Ngajacas*, *Aiaca*, *Nsidos*, *Njindos*, *Muzimbo* and *Quibângalas*, into one single group that roamed throughout much of the continent and

³⁶³ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 149-153. See also Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 344.

³⁶⁴ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1. See also Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi, “Missione evangelica al Regno de Congo, 1668” (MSS Araldi, Modena. 3 vols: A, B, C). <http://www.bu.edu/afam/faculty/john-thornton/john-thorntons-african-texts> (last access, 11 September 2020).

³⁶⁵ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 174.

³⁶⁶ Cavazzi, “Missione evangelica al Regno de Congo, 1668”, Book I, Chapter 1. See also John K. Thornton, “New Light on Cavazzi’s Seventeenth-Century Description of Kongo”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 6 (1979): 253-255.

³⁶⁷ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 174-175.

perpetrated attacks in West Africa, East Africa and West Central Africa³⁶⁸. There are, however, important differences in Cavazzi's version, since the Capuchin acquired most of his knowledge about the “*jagas*” from his contact with Queen Nzinga-a-Mbande³⁶⁹ and the Mbangala of Matamba, who claimed they had migrated out of the central plateau and not from Lunda, as in the latter oral traditions about Kinguri. In Cavazzi's version about the origins of the Jaga/Mbangala, their leader was called Zimbo (*Ximbo*) and there is no mention about Kinguri. This will be an important detail to bear in mind while reading about the Mbangala waves of migration out of Quilengues (see below).

In Cavazzi's version of events, Zimbo and one of his wives, Temba-a-Ndumba, led their followers (called *Muzimbo*³⁷⁰) from their homeland in Inner Ethiopia to attack the kingdom of Kongo, killing men as well as beasts and turning that kingdom into a desert. After the attack, they marched to Eastern Ethiopia (Abyssinia), following the Zambezi River (and the mythical connection to the Nile) until they reached the home of the Mumba people. Since the Mumba were also a “naturally barbarous nation”, it did not take much for them to abandon their nomadic life and join the “*jagas*”, forming a 15-thousand strong army. Together, they marched through the Empire of Mwene-Muji (*Monemugi*), “putting everything to fire and sword”³⁷¹, until they reached the Eastern Ocean and the Portuguese fortress of Tete³⁷².

³⁶⁸ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 175.

³⁶⁹ Queen Nzinga-a-Mbande (also Njinga, Jinga, Ginga) was a seventeenth-century Mbundu monarch who ruled Ndongo and Matamba. She was the daughter of Mbande-a-Ngola-Kiluanji, sovereign of Ndongo, and sister of Ngola-a-Mbande. Nzinga-a-Mbande's first appearance in the historical record dates back to 1621-22, when she arrived in Luanda as Ngola-a-Mbande's emissary, during which she established an alliance with the Portuguese and engaged in diplomatic relations with them by accepting baptism from Jesuit priests: she was renamed *dona Ana de Sousa*. For more about Nzinga-a-Mbande, see Joseph C. Miller, “Nzinga of Matamba in a New Perspective”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol 16, No. 2 (1975): 201-216; Roy Arthur Glasgow, *Nzinga: Resistência Africana à Investida do Colonialismo Português em Angola, 1582-1663* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1982); Adriano Parreira, *Economia e sociedade em Angola na época da rainha Jinga, século XVII* (Lisboa: Estampa, 1990); John K. Thornton, “Legitimacy and Political Power: Queen Njinga, 1624-1663”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1991): 25-40; Inocência Mata, ed., *A rainha Nzinga Mbandi: história, memória e mito* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2012); Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*; Selma Pantoja, “Njinga a Mbande: Power and War in 17th-Century Angola” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2020), 1-28; Estevam C. Thompson, “Nzinga, Queen”, in *Encyclopedia of African Colonial Conflicts*, Timothy Stapleton, ed., Vol. 2 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 508-512.

³⁷⁰ According to Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 175 – note 3, 177, *Muzimbo* (plural *Azimbo*) was the name given to the followers of Zimbo before they settled in Matamba.

³⁷¹ This is the same expression used by Lopes/Pigafetta when referring to the “Jaggas”: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 96.

³⁷² Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 124-125. See also Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 3, 222-230.

While in Eastern Africa, the Jaga (under Zimbo's leadership) also invaded the island of Kilwa (*Quilwa*) with the help of a traitor, killing over three thousand people and enslaving the rest of the inhabitants of the island. Afterwards, they moved to attack the Mombasa Island (*Mombace*), which was occupied by Muslims (*Moors*), but were halted by a stronger resistance. Only after the interference of Portuguese ships, which Cavazzi interpreted as divine intervention, were Zimbo and his warriors successful in their invasion. After this second victory, Zimbo's troops moved north and invaded Melinde, but they managed to hinder the advance of the Jaga warriors with the help of the Mosegunij³⁷³.

After being defeated, Zimbo retreated with his remaining troops through the "country of the Cafres beyond the beaches of Mozambique"³⁷⁴ until they reached the Cape of Good Hope. From there, Zimbo would have marched northwards until he reached the inner Cunene basin and settled around the Chela Mountain Range (17°S). According to the tradition Cavazzi collected from the Mbangala of Matamba, Zimbo sent his "generals" in different directions to conquer new lands and rebuild his army. One of them, Ndonji (*Donji*), marched up the central plateau with his troops until he reached the land of the Ngangela (*Ganguela*). Ndonji's wife, Mussassa, bore him a daughter who he named Temba-a-Ndumba after Zimbo's wife³⁷⁵. She would become queen of the Mbangala on the central plateau, and responsible for the creation of the *yijila*³⁷⁶ (laws) and the ritual of the *maji-a-samba*³⁷⁷.

³⁷³ Cavazzi, "Missione evangelica al Regno de Congo, 1668", Book I, Chapter 1; Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 122-124. Similar information can be found in Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vol. 9, 244-245.

³⁷⁴ The lands of Cafre (*Cafri*) today belong to parts of Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and the interior of Mozambique and Tanzania. It is represented as a blank area in many maps, at times containing the mythical lake of the Nile and its islands.

³⁷⁵ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 174-178. See also David Birmingham, "The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1965): 145; Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 121-122; Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 189.

³⁷⁶ The *yijila* (singular *kijila*) were the laws of the *kilombo* regarding the destruction of lineage and ancestry. These included the prohibition of bearing children inside the *kilombo* (in order to avoid the rise of lineage structures), which European missionaries often interpreted as an order to kill all children: Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 180. See also Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 162-163; Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 120-127.

³⁷⁷ The *maji-a-samba* was a ritual supposedly implemented by Temba-a-Ndumba among the Mbangala of the central plateau that had the double objective of reinforcing their commitment to the destruction of lineage structures and protecting their warriors against all enemies, whether in the physical or in the spiritual world. Temba-a-Ndumba put her own child into a large mortar and pounded the infant until she reduced it to a mass of flesh and blood. She added roots and herbs to it and boiled to obtain a "magic" unguent. After smearing the *maji-a-samba* on themselves, the Mbangala warriors would have their bodies "closed" and protected from all harm: Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos*

Cavazzi's version with Zimbo as head of the Jaga/Muzimbas³⁷⁸ became an important reference for historians and geographers in the following centuries. Samuel Purchas, for example, compared the Zimbos to the Jaga, but did not mistake them as being one single group³⁷⁹. The Portuguese historian José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, in turn, reproduced much of the Capuchin's version in his mid-nineteenth century work. He used the terms "Jagas" and "Zimbos" synonymously³⁸⁰, registered that the "Zimbos" were responsible for the invasion of Kongo³⁸¹, and, at the same time, used the name "*jagas*" to refer to the Mbangala bands that roamed the southern lands, including the "kingdom of Benguela" (*Províncias do Sul*)³⁸².

In his book published in 1845, the Italian physician and explorer Tito Omboni, who visited Angola between 1834-1835 and probably had access to a pre-published version of Lopes de Lima's work, reproduced most of Cavazzi's information about the Jaga/Mbangala being led by Zimbo. This included the invasion of the kingdom of Kongo, their presence in West Africa and East Africa, as well as the foundation of a *kilombo* on the margins of the Cunene River, in the land of Humbe. Tito's version also included the migration of the Mbangala from the Cunene basin to the central plateau, the stories about Queen Temba-a-Ndumba, and their later occupation of the lands of Matamba³⁸³.

The late nineteenth century Portuguese explorers Hermanegildo Capello and Robert Ivens also adopted Cavazzi's version of the origin of the "*jagas*" (*Jaggas*) and their leader Zimbo, who they dubbed the "African Attila". They believed that the "*jagas*" were formed of different tribes, and that they were responsible for the assassination of one of the first Christian missionaries in

três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola, Vol. 1, 177-178. See also Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 162-163; Thornton, "Legitimacy and Political Power", 32; Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 121-124.

³⁷⁸ Cavazzi probably learned about the stories of the *Muzimbas*, the "cannibal warriors" in Eastern Africa, from the seventeenth-century Portuguese chronicler Father João dos Santos. Father Santos recorded that across the Tete River there were casts of "Cafres", called *Zimbos* or *Muzimbas*, who ate human flesh. He also wrote on the existence of butcher shops selling human flesh in East Africa, similar to stories spread by sailors and missionaries on the western coast of Africa: Santos, *Ethiopia Oriental*, Vol. 1, 229, 322-325.

³⁷⁹ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vol. 9, 244.

³⁸⁰ Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas...*, vol. 3, 1 – note 1. See also Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portuguezes*, Vol. 1, 9.

³⁸¹ In a note about the Jaga, Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas...*, vol. 3, xxxv – note 1, affirmed that they were called "Zimbos" in Kongo and that some of them had settled down in places like Kasanje and Bailundo.

³⁸² Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas...*, vol. 3, 3-4.

³⁸³ Tito Omboni, *Viaggi nell'Africa occidentale* (Milano: Stabilimento Civelli, 1845), 146.

Angola in the 1530s. They also believed that Zimbo and his followers settled down on the margins of the Cunene, where he founded a *kilombo* that would later become the capital of Humbe³⁸⁴.

In fact, Capello and Ivens refuted the thesis that the “*jagas*” came from the east, as reported by Duarte Lopes and Álvares d’Almada. Rather they argued in favor of traditions showing old relationship between the “*jagas*” and the Nkhumbi (“*Ban-kumbi*”)³⁸⁵. Capello and Ivens had been influenced by the writings of the Portuguese ethnographer Antonio Nogueira³⁸⁶, who highlighted cultural similarities between the Nyaneka (“*Ban-nhaneca*”) and the Nkhumbi (“*Ban-kumbi*”), that is the Mbangala³⁸⁷.

While discussing the origins of the peoples that occupied the Cunene basin, Capello and Ivens mentioned the existence of a powerful state in the region of Ovampo and the Cubango called “*Ma-tchona*” that had been conquered by Zimbo. The “*jagas*” raided them, enslaving and selling as many as they could to the Portuguese, while forcing the rest to flee to desert areas³⁸⁸. This last reference related to the Mbangala invasion of Cimbebasia and the destruction of Mataman, as we shall see below.

Death and resurrection of the Jaga

Although twentieth-century scholars have dismissed all references about a “nation of savages” in Inner Africa as the homeland of “African cannibals”, as well as the supposed connections between warrior bands from Guinea/Serra Leoa and Kongo/Angola³⁸⁹, there remains

³⁸⁴ Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 43, 216-217. See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 2, 152-153.

³⁸⁵ Capello and Ivens were aware that Nyaneka and Nkhumbi were descendants of the Mbangala (*Jaggas*), but confessed that they were confused by the information regarding the *Jagga* as coming from areas so far north from the lower Cunene. It was puzzling for them that the peoples who lived in the area between the Cunene basin and the Chela Mountain Range shared similar cultural features with the *Imbangala* (including burial ceremonies and the practice of circumcision). They proposed that the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi were direct descendants of the “*Jaggas*”: Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 324-326.

³⁸⁶ Antonio F. Nogueira, *A raça negra sob o ponto de vista da civilização da África: usos e costumes de alguns povos gentílicos do interior de Mossamedes* (Lisboa: Typographia Nova Minerva, 1881).

³⁸⁷ Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 217-219.

³⁸⁸ According to Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 326, the *Ma-tchona* mixed with the Damara and the “Bushmen”, the latter a reference to the Herero peoples. This is a clear reference to the invasion of Cimbebasia by the southern Mbangala bands and the destruction of the Mataman people (see below).

³⁸⁹ For an analysis on how twentieth-century historians rejected the connections between Guinea/Serra Leoa and Kongo/Angola, see Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 344-345.

much misunderstanding about who were the Jaga that terrorized West Central Africa since the sixteenth century. Indeed, the different versions of the history of the Jaga warriors who invaded the kingdom of Kongo in 1568 became so imbricated and so confusing at times, their own existence has become a matter of discussion.

In the 1960's, David Birmingham³⁹⁰ and Jan Vansina³⁹¹ quickly recognized the distinctions between the Jaga and the Mbangala. Miller's 1969-1970 research on the Mbangala further confirmed that they were distinct groups. He showed that superficial similarities between different groups became pseudo-evidence for their common origin and that European preconceived representations of "African savages" played an important role in the consolidation of the "Jaga myth". Miller argued that all reported appearances of "*jagas*" south of the Cuanza were in fact accounts of Mbangala bands³⁹².

Historians of Kongo, such as John K. Thornton and Anne Hilton, praised Miller for finally separating the Jaga from the Mbangala after centuries of confusion. He had shown that the term Jaga in sixteenth-century Kongo did not mean the same as "*Jaga*" or "*jagas*" in seventeenth-century Angola³⁹³. It became also clear that many of the elements in the tales about "*jagas*" derived from contemporary images of Africa³⁹⁴.

Nonetheless, in the process of distinguishing them from the Mbangala, Miller almost "eliminated" the Jaga. In a controversial article published in 1973, the same year during which he submitted his doctoral dissertation³⁹⁵, he deconstructed the tales about the Jaga and the comparisons with other groups of "cannibal warriors" and concluded they were a European invention³⁹⁶. In his opinion, slave smugglers actively engaged in avoiding the royal duties on slave exports from Kongo and Angola had invented the myth of the "Jaga cannibal warriors" to justify

³⁹⁰ David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours Under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 64-65

³⁹¹ Vansina, "More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda", 421-429.

³⁹² Miller, "Requiem for the Jaga", 121. See also Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 7.

³⁹³ Thornton, "A Resurrection of the Jaga", 223.

³⁹⁴ Hilton, "The Jaga Reconsidered", 191-202.

³⁹⁵ Joseph C. Miller, "Kings and Kinsmen: The Imbangala Impact on the Mbundu of Angola" (PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972).

³⁹⁶ Miller, "Requiem for the Jaga", 121, argued that "few myths about Africa or Africans have achieved greater fame on the basis of less evidence than stories of the sixteenth and seventeenth century 'Jaga' invasions of Kongo and Angola". He went on to affirm that "careful analysis of the sources for early Kongo and Angola history suggests that no such 'Jaga' ever existed outside the imaginations of missionaries, slave dealers, and Government officials who created these mythical cannibals to justify or conceal their own activities in Africa".

the obvious difference between the large number of slaves captured in the interior and the smaller numbers officially declared at the customs houses on the coast. “The missing slaves, of course, left Africa illegally, but the illicit traders explained the discrepancy by accusing the ‘Jaga’ of having eaten them”³⁹⁷.

Miller considered Duarte Lopes the originator of the myth of the Jaga, pointing to his involvement in the slave trade in Kongo as his reason for spreading the tale about the invasion of cannibal warriors and the participation of the Portuguese in their expulsion from mbanza-Kongo³⁹⁸. Moreover, in his analysis, the tales about the Jaga gained a new meaning in the late nineteenth century, when Portugal attempted to establish the legal basis for its claim for rights over commerce at the mouth of the Congo River against the challenges of its European adversaries. The Portuguese argued that the *mani-Kongo*, Dom Álvaro I, had declared his subservience to them in a vassalage treaty after Gouveia’s rescue mission in the 1570s³⁹⁹. Hence, in order to guarantee exclusive access to the Congo basin amidst the “scramble”, the Portuguese resurrected the Jaga⁴⁰⁰.

Historians of Kongo reacted to Miller’s requiem for the Jaga. Thornton published an article in 1978 claiming that Miller had “gone a bit too far”⁴⁰¹ in removing them from the history of the kingdom of Kongo⁴⁰². He dismissed Miller’s hypothesis that the Jaga came from Tyo or Matamba, because of the direction taken by the bands during the invasion through Mbata, and asserted that there was no reason to doubt their origins in the lands of Yaka, along the Cuango River⁴⁰³. In 1981, it was Anne Hilton’s turn to reconsider the position of the Jaga in the history of Kongo. Although she agreed with Miller’s arguments showing that many elements of the descriptions and stories told by sailors and missionaries about the Jaga derived from European stereotypes, she did not believe it was sufficient to prove the Jaga invasion was a fabrication⁴⁰⁴.

³⁹⁷ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 134.

³⁹⁸ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 148.

³⁹⁹ On the acceptance of vassalage by the *mani-Kongo* after the expulsion of the Jaga, see Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 85 – note 29; See also Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, Vol. 1, 9.

⁴⁰⁰ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 135.

⁴⁰¹ Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 223. For a recent discussion of the Jaga invasion of mbanza-Kongo, see Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 74-83.

⁴⁰² For Miller’s reply to Thornton, see Miller, “Thanatopsis”, 229-231.

⁴⁰³ Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 223-224.

⁴⁰⁴ Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 192.

Miller had dismissed the reports about the origins of the Jaga coming from the east and located the enemy within the kingdom of Kongo, indicating other centers of power (Nsundi and Mbata) that could have been responsible for the invasion. These invaders would have managed to destroy mbanza-Kongo with the help of yet other local groups, including the Mbangala of Matamba and the Tyo (Teke or Anziku⁴⁰⁵) from the Congo/Zaire River, next to Stanley Pool⁴⁰⁶. They could also be identified as the Makoko, who in the mid-sixteenth century were “Tyo speakers”. In the seventeenth century, they became the Muyaka (*Majaca*), whose ancestors according to Hilton might have been implicated in the invasion of Kongo in 1568⁴⁰⁷.

Hilton also dismissed the participation of the Mbangala of Matamba in the Jaga invasion, pointing out for the unlikely existence of a slave-trade route between mbanza-Kongo and Matamba (*Baixa de Cassanje*), which, according to Miller⁴⁰⁸, could have triggered a dispute between the parts. Moreover, she reinforced the validity of the Lopes/Pigafetta description of the invasion from the east (Mbata), thereby agreeing with Thornton’s position⁴⁰⁹.

Furthermore, Hilton dismissed Miller’s idea that the “Jaga myth” was an invention of slavers trying to improve their commercial position or trying to escape the taxes charged over their business. They had actually acquired more freedom to deal slaves after the expulsion of the Jaga from Kongo, as the *mani-Kongo* lost control over the coastal regions. In effect, she also showed that, overall, the power of the *mani-Kongo* did not diminish with the presence of Portuguese slavers in areas formally under his control. Although he had lost his monopoly over the slave trade at the coast, the development of the Atlantic trade and the opening of new slave-routes from Makoko to

⁴⁰⁵ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 130, 144-145; Birmingham, “Speculations on the Kingdom of Kongo”, 3; Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 332. For more about the Teke/Anziku, see Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 18, 242; Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 91 – note 1; Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII*, 294-295; Staller, “Rivalry and Reformation Politics”, 17.

⁴⁰⁶ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 139-145; Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 191. According to Lopes/Pigafetta, Portuguese slave traders (mostly from São Thomé) profited highly by capturing those fleeing the conflict: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 97.

⁴⁰⁷ Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, 69-71, also pointing out that the Makoko were known to the Portuguese, who would not have mistaken them. In fact, even Pigafetta had already made the distinction between the Makoko and the Jaga, as seen above. Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 225, highlighted that the Mayakas (*Majacas*) were considered fierce “like the Jaga”, but were not part of the same group.

⁴⁰⁸ Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 140.

⁴⁰⁹ Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 193-195, argued that if the attack had come from Matamba, Wandu would have been the first village to be raided, like it happened in the seventeenth century, and not Mbata. If the attack came from Makoko (Tyo), Nsundi would have been the first village raided.

Luanda through mbanza-Kongo compensated for any possible loss and strengthened the authority of the *mani-Kongo*⁴¹⁰.

By the end of the twentieth century, historians of West Central Africa had reinterpreted the participation of the Jaga in the history of Kongo separate from that of the Mbangala bands. It became common understanding that all the “*jagas*” located south of the Cuanza River were indeed different Mbangala warrior bands organized around the *kilombo*, although there was still much debate about the origins of these Mbangala and their movement of expansion throughout the kingdoms of Benguela and Angola⁴¹¹.

The geographer Ernest Ravenstein (Battell’s second editor) had already cracked part of the century-old puzzle about the composition of the “*jagas*” when he affirmed that “*Jaka*” was a military title, and “by no means the name of a people”⁴¹². Portuguese colonial historians agreed that the “*jagas*” were not a “distinct family”, but a “collective of individuals from different tribes”⁴¹³ who had been brought up and trained to make war, and nothing else⁴¹⁴. As Thornton explained, the Portuguese “had the tendency to apply the name of the first invaders to all subsequent invasions which appeared the same, and ultimately, to all ethnic groups, even if they were unrelated to the original invaders”⁴¹⁵.

This discussion led historians to understand and use the terms Jaga, “*Jaga*” and “*jagas*” in different and (at times) complementary ways. Firstly, there were the “original” Jaga, that is the bands responsible for the invasion of Kongo⁴¹⁶. The term “*jagas*” (plural form) became a generic

⁴¹⁰ Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 200-202. See also Jan Vansina, “Long-Distance Trade-Routes in Central Africa”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1962): 382.

⁴¹¹ John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 101-102; Pinto, “Em torno de um problema de identidade”, 193-241; Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 189. For a recent alternative view on the rise of the Mbangala bands, see Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 103-106.

⁴¹² Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 149.

⁴¹³ Hence, this discussion was not started in the 1960s, as suggested in Fábio Baqueiro Figueiredo, “Tradição, invenção, história: notas sobre a ‘controvérsia Jaga’”, *Perspectiva Histórica*, No. 8, julho/dezembro (2016): 72, who also refers to the Jaga were some sort of “ethnic designation”.

⁴¹⁴ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 207. According to Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 3, 400, the Jaga Kasanje’s *kilombo* was made of people from various ethnicities and languages. See also Lima, *Ensaio sobre a estatística das possessões portuguesas...*, vol. 3, xxxv – note 1; Pinto, “Em torno de um problema de identidade”, 193-241; Staller, “Rivalry and Reformation Politics”, 12.

⁴¹⁵ Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 224.

⁴¹⁶ According to Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 226, the different forms of referring to the “Jaga” in, Portuguese, Italian and Kikongo (*Jaga*, *Giaca* and *Ayaka*) bear clear connection with the *Yaka* (from Niara and Cuango). Nevertheless, he also connected the Mbangala of Kasanje (*Imbangala*) to this term.

reference for groups of “cannibal warriors”, mainly the Mbangala, but also Zimbás, Sumbás, Galas in other parts of the continent⁴¹⁷, while “*Jaga*” (singular form) came to be understood as the title for Mbangala warlords (such as *Jaga Kasanje*)⁴¹⁸. Moreover, the term is sometimes reserved for the enemies of the Portuguese and Luso-Africans⁴¹⁹, the antonym of *soba*⁴²⁰. The term “*jagas*” could yet be used to define any mercenaries who sold their service to the highest bidder⁴²¹.

Cadornega’s History of Angola contains good examples of the many contexts and uses of the terms “*Jaga*” and “*jagas*”. Overall, the Portuguese fought on the side of the “*sobas*” (allies) and against the “*jagas*” (enemies)⁴²², but the reality of African warfare could prove much more complex than this⁴²³. The Portuguese depended on the support of “*jagas*” for their protection away from their coastal centres of power⁴²⁴. *Jaga Kasanje*, for instance, was a great ally of the Portuguese and fought along side them even against other Mbangala warlords, such as Nzinga-a-Mbande⁴²⁵, who also had an army of “*jagas*” of her own⁴²⁶. It is possible thus to find Portuguese references about “our *Jaga*”⁴²⁷, as well as distinction between “allied *jagas*” and “enemy *jagas*”⁴²⁸.

⁴¹⁷ According to Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 197, the peoples of Kongo used the term “Jaga” partly in the general sense of “foreigner” or “brigand”. Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 138, 177 points to another group of “cannibal” warriors in the region of Bukkameale that were neither Jaga nor Mbangala. See also Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 223-227.

⁴¹⁸ Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 63.

⁴¹⁹ Joseph C. Miller, “Central Africa During the Era of the Slave Trade, c. 1490-1850”, in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, Linda M. Heywood, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 50 – note 61, has suggested that the term “Jaga” was used in reference to African resistance, as well as “quilombo”. See also Jan Vansina, “Quilombos on São Tomé, or in Search of Original Sources”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 23 (1996): 453-459.

⁴²⁰ Although Cadornega did not explain the difference between *Sobas* and *Jagas*, he suggested that the former were hereditary chiefs of definite polities, whereas the latter were conquerors on their way to new conquests: Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 275.

⁴²¹ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 2, 91.

⁴²² Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 2, 582, 586.

⁴²³ Although Mariana Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 57-60, maintains that the terms “*jaga*” and “*soba*” were “self-evident in the Portuguese world of the seventeenth century”, this does not seem to be the case. She also argued that the Portuguese employed the term in reference to “nameless enemies, whose political and social structure was foreign to the Portuguese”, ignoring the cases in which “*jagas*” were their close allies. In a later article, Mariana Candido, “*Jagas e Sobas no ‘Reino de Benguela: Vassalagem e criação de novas categorias políticas e sociais no contexto da expansão portuguesa na África durante os séculos XVI e XVII’*”, in Alexandre Ribeiro, Alexander Gebara and Marina Berthet, eds. *África: histórias conectadas* (Niterói: PPGH-UFF, 2014), 73, suggests that the “*sobas*” allies of the Portuguese and the “*jagas*” represented opposition to the Portuguese colonial presence in Angola.

⁴²⁴ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 1, 424.

⁴²⁵ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 2, 591.

⁴²⁶ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 2, 211.

⁴²⁷ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 3, 220.

⁴²⁸ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 1, 352. Ralph Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela: do descobrimento à criação do governo subalterno* (Lisboa: Ed. do Autor, 1945), 70-71, also used the term “allied Jaga” (*Jaga aliado*) a couple of times.

Sometimes *sobas* could also be considered enemies (“rebel *sobas*”), who the Luso-Africans fought with the assistance of “troops of *jagas*”⁴²⁹. Indeed, African rulers (*sobas*) also hired the services of “*jagas*” to defeat local enemies⁴³⁰. Finally, one must also consider that the “*jagas*” (that is Mbangala) were great commercial partners of the Portuguese since the seventeenth century (especially *Jaga Kasanje*)⁴³¹.

The “resurrection” of the Jaga led to a better understanding about other bands of warriors that roamed West Central Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It became clear for historians writing in the 1970s that only a small portion of the “*jagas*” found in reports, documents and in the historiography related directly to the Jaga who invaded mbanza-Kongo in 1568. The rest are references to Mbangala bands that spread out from Quilengues to different parts of the kingdoms of Benguela and Angola, and gradually “diluted” into local communities.

We will now turn to another serious misunderstanding about the history of the Mbangala, more specifically the *Imbangala* of Kasanje. Portuguese explorers collected oral traditions about the “origins” of the *Imbangala* among the Lunda in the nineteenth century, which historians in the twentieth century confirmed as historical events. The section that follows on the fall of the theory on the “Exodus of Kinguri” serves not only to clarify the history of the Mbangala, but as a warning to the complexity of working with oral traditions.

The fall of the “Exodus of Kinguri”

During the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries, the Mbangala of Kasanje became the main intermediaries between the Luso-Africans of Angola and the Lunda commonwealth⁴³², the largest political entity in territory (if not in population) of Central Africa before the twentieth century. In the seventeenth century, many Mbangala bands had abandoned their nomadic way of life and the denial of lineage structures and settled down in the lands of

⁴²⁹ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 2, 42-43, informs that Diogo Gomes de Moraes used the service of the “Jagas from Benguela” against the “rebel Sobas” of the Province of Libolo.

⁴³⁰ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 2, 123

⁴³¹ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 2, 79

⁴³² Jan Vansina, “Government in Kasai before the Lunda”, *The international Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1998): 1-22, forges the concept of “Lunda commonwealth”.

Kasanje. They later became an “ethnicity” of their own (*Imbangala*) and the main historical reference for all Mbangala groups.

The “*Imbangala*” founded a permanent *kilombo* in Kasanje, which became their “capital”, and built a market or *pumbo* with the same name some distance away to trade with Luso-Africans, who were not authorized to travel further east⁴³³. The Mbangala of Kasanje thus managed to hinder foreign advance on their lands for centuries, as well as to block direct contacts between the Lunda (their main commercial partners in the interior) and Luso-African merchants until the second half of the nineteenth century⁴³⁴.

During the nineteenth century, many Portuguese merchants and explorers⁴³⁵ visited the lands of Kasanje, including Antonio Rodrigues Neves⁴³⁶, who compiled one of the most important versions of the Mbangala oral traditions about their Lunda origins. By the end of the century, another expedition led by Henrique Dias de Carvalho managed to cross the lands controlled by the Mbangala of Kasanje into the states of *Muatiânvua*. He was able to collect similar oral traditions

⁴³³ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, 147. There were also other important slave markets under Kasanje’s supervision in the late seventeenth century, such as the one in Holo, a small independent polity to the north, in the “border” with Matamba: Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 212-223, 236. The market of Kasanje was attacked by Luso-African forces in 1836 and two years later the *presídio* of Duque de Bragança was built on the access road to the market as an attempt by the Portuguese colonial administration to control the flow of caravans. For more on the market of Kasanje, see Jean-Luc Vellut, “Notes sur le Lunda et la frontière Luso-Africaine, 1700-1900”, *Études d’Histoire Africaine*, No. 3 (1972): 94. See also José C. Curto, “*Jeribita* in the relations between the colony of Angola and the Kingdom of Kasanje”, *Anais de História do Além Mar*, Vol. XIV, (2013): 301-325; Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 365-366.

⁴³⁴ Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 181; Curto, “*Jeribita* in the relations between the colony of Angola and the Kingdom of Kasanje”, 308-309.

⁴³⁵ The list of explorers who visited Kasanje in late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century includes: Francisco José Maria de Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes*, 4^a série, parte não oficial (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 187-214; José Rodrigues Graça, “Expedição ao Muatyanvua”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, 9^a série, Nos. 8-9 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1890), 367-468; Manuel Alves de Castro Francina, “Viagem a Cazengo pelo Quanza, e regresso por terra”, *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série I (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 432-464; Otto H. Schütt, *Reisen im Südwestlichen Becken des Congo* (Berlin: Verlag Von Dietrich Reimer, 1881); Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, *From Benguela to the Territory of Yacca, 1877-1880*, 2 Vols. (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, [1881]1882). Although J. B. Douville, *Voyage au Congo et dans l’intérieur de l’Afrique Equinoxiale fait dans les années 1828, 1829 et 1830* (Paris, Chez Jules Renouard Libraire: 1832) may feature among these expeditions, there are some doubts if he really visited all regions he claims to have. For more, see Joseph C. Miller, “A Note on Jean-Baptiste Douville”, *Cahiers d’études africaines*, Vol. 13, No. 49 (1973): 150-153. Some of the most important Luso-African expeditions to the Lunda commonwealth have been translated into English: for example, Captain Francisco Jose Maria de Lacerda’s journey to Cazembe (1798) and the journey of the Luso-African itinerary merchants (*pumbeiros*) P. Baptista and Amaro José from Angola to Tete (upper Zambeze) appear in Burton, *The Lands of Cazembe*.

⁴³⁶ Antonio Rodrigues Neves, *Memória da expedição a Cassange em 1850, África Occidental* (Lisboa: Silviana, 1854).

about Kinguri, but this time directly from the Lunda⁴³⁷. These two versions of the oral tradition of Kinguri remain the main sources used by historians and anthropologists to study the “origins” of the *Imbangala*: hence there is merit in taking a closer look on both of them.

Antonio Rodrigues Neves, who was part of an expedition to the lands of the Mbangala of Kasanje in 1850 led by Francisco de Salles Ferreira, had the rare opportunity of witnessing the installation of a new ruler as head of the Mbangala of Kasanje. He had also the chance to talk to the elders (*macotas*⁴³⁸) of Kasanje from whom he collected the oral tradition concerning Kinguri’s departure from Lunda, as well as stories about their first contact with the Portuguese, to whom the Mbangala offered their service in the early seventeenth century. This alliance between Mbangala and Portuguese forces led, according to the tradition, to the defeat of Ndongo and the subsequent settlement of the followers of Kinguri in the region of Kasanje⁴³⁹.

Henrique Dias de Carvalho, one of the first Portuguese explorer to reach the states of *Muatiânvua*⁴⁴⁰, compiled the Lunda version of the oral tradition on the departure of Kinguri and his later settling in the interior of Angola. Carvalho commanded an official expedition to the Lunda commonwealth between 1884 and 1888 sponsored by the Portuguese colonial state and supported by the *Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, an institution of which he was an honorary member and that published his first reports about his expedition in 1886⁴⁴¹.

⁴³⁷ The Lunda oral tradition about Kinguri’s exodus was collected by Henrique Dias de Carvalho during his expedition to the Muatiânvua (1884-1888): Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua, 1884-1888: Descrição da viagem à Mussumba do Muatiânvua, 4 Vols.* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1890-94); Carvalho, *Ethnographia e história tradicional dos povos da Lunda*, 86-112. See also José de Oliveira Ferreira Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 1918), 119-123.

⁴³⁸ *Macotas* (*makota*) were elders who served as advisers of the *sobas*: Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 120.

⁴³⁹ Neves, *Memória da expedição a Cassange em 1850*.

⁴⁴⁰ The states of Muatiânvua are represented Antonio Augusto de Oliveira, “Carta da Africa Meridional portuguesa, 1886”, *Comissão de Cartographia de Portugal* (Paris: Erhard Frères Rue Denfert-Rochereau, 1886), Appendix 7.

⁴⁴¹ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, “Expedição ao Muata Yanvo” (Cartas à Sociedade de Geographia), *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, Ser. 6, No. 3 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1888), 130-146.

After his return to Portugal, Carvalho published a collection of four books about the expedition to *Muatiânvua*⁴⁴² (as well as an ethnographic album of photos⁴⁴³), a book about the Lunda commonwealth⁴⁴⁴, a practical guide on how to speak the Lunda language⁴⁴⁵, and an ethnographic study of the peoples of Lunda, which included information about their version of their own history⁴⁴⁶. In 1898, Carvalho further published a book specifically about the history of the *sobado* of Kasanje, or as he called it, the “*Jagado de Cassange*”⁴⁴⁷. He also became a passionate advocate for the Portuguese colonial occupation of the lands of the Lunda commonwealth⁴⁴⁸ and wrote about the possibility of the commercial and agricultural exploitation of these regions⁴⁴⁹.

Carvalho tried to popularize the stories about the African territories that he visited by publishing a sort of popular journal, *África Ilustrada*, which he defined as an “archive of useful knowledge”. It was a publication dedicated to “artists and workers, who work, produce and want to instruct themselves about what is convenient to know about Africa”⁴⁵⁰. The legend of Kinguri was published in the first volume of *África Ilustrada* (1892), together with information on the political, social and cultural characteristics of the Lunda (*Muatiânvua*).

⁴⁴² Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua, 1884-1888: Descrição da viagem à Mussumba do Muatiânvua, Vol. 1. De Luanda a Cuango* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1890); Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua, 1884-1888: Descrição da viagem à Mussumba do Muatiânvua, Vol. 2. De Cuango ao Chipaca* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1892); Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua, 1884-1888: Descrição da viagem à Mussumba do Muatiânvua, Vol. 3. De Chipaca a Liembe* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1893); Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua, 1884-1888: Descrição da viagem à Mussumba do Muatiânvua, Vol. 4. De Luembe a Calanhi* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1894).

⁴⁴³ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Álbum da Expedição ao Muatiânvua* (1890). See also Teresa Mendes Flores, “As fotografias da expedição portuguesa ao Muatiânvua, 1884-1888”, *Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens*, No. 47 (2017): 53-77.

⁴⁴⁴ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *A Lunda, ou os estados do Muatiânvua, domínios da soberania de Portugal* (Lisboa: Adolpho, Modesto & Cia, 1890).

⁴⁴⁵ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Método prático para falar a língua da Lunda* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1890).

⁴⁴⁶ Carvalho, *Ethnographia e história tradicional dos povos da Lunda*.

⁴⁴⁷ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *O Jagado de Cassange na Província de Angola* (Lisboa: Typographia de Christovão Augusto Rodrigues, 1898).

⁴⁴⁸ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Lunda Portuguesa: Situação actual, impreterível necessidade de sua ocupação* (Lisboa: Companhia Geral Typographica, 1895). The territories belonging to the so-called Muatânvua were among the last ones reached by Portuguese colonial forces at the end of the nineteenth century.

⁴⁴⁹ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Os climas e as produções das terras de Malange a Lunda* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1889); Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Meteorologia, Climatologia e Colonização* (Lisboa: Tipografia As Colónias Portuguesas, 1892).

⁴⁵⁰ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *África Ilustrada: Arquivo de conhecimentos uteis*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Lisboa: Diário de Notícias, 1892).

According to the oral traditions collected by Neves and Carvalho, the Lunda had been conquered by another large Central African state, the Luba⁴⁵¹, a story that is represented by the marriage between Lweji (*Ruweji*), daughter of the ruler of Lunda, and the Luba hunter Chibinda Ilunga (*Ilunga Tchibinda*)⁴⁵². The child born from this union eventually became the new ruler of the Lunda and the founder of the *Mwaant yaav* dynasty. One of Lweji's brothers, Kinguri, refused to accept the new dynasty and became the leader of a dissident group of warriors who left Lunda and founded a series of states in today's Zambia and Angola. Subsequent waves of migrations led by title-holders loyal to Kinguri culminated in the expansion of the Lunda commonwealth and the creation of a series of "Lundaized" states on its margins⁴⁵³.

The legend of Kinguri and the conviction that the "*Imbangala*" came from the lands east of the Cuango River (*Muatianvua*) thus became common knowledge for explorers and scholars from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and was passed on to ethnographers of Angola of the twentieth century, such as José de Oliveira Diniz and José Redinha. Ferreira Diniz, a colonial official who occupied the position of *Secretário dos Negócios Indígenas* and *Curador Geral da Província de Angola* in the 1910s, wrote an extensive book about the "indigenous" population of Angola (1918), in which he dedicated a whole section to the "*Bangala*". He considered the Mbangala to be direct descendants of the people of Lunda, along with Kioko (*Quioco*), Luena, Shinje (*Xinje*), Songo, Minungo, Bondo and Holo. He also used the Mbangala as a perfect example of a Lunda "tribe", which he justified by showing the importance of this "tribe" and its historical relations with other "peoples of the west". Ferreira Diniz saw the kinship ties between the Mbangala and various peoples of the kingdom of Angola as a direct consequence of their extensive

⁴⁵¹ Birmingham, "The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola", 143, explains that Africanist scholars in the 1960s began to suspect that the Luba of Katanga were among "the most important peoples of Central Africa", thus the increasing interest in studying their relation to the peoples of Lunda and their contacts to Angola.

⁴⁵² Although there is no English translation of Carvalho's books containing the myth of Kinguri, there are different summaries of the myth of the conquest of Lunda by the Luba, as represented by the marriage between Lweji (*Ruweji*) and Chibinda Ilunga (*Ilunga Tchibinda*): Victor Turner, "A Lunda Love Story and Its Consequences: Selected Texts from Traditions Collected by Henrique Dias de Carvalho at the Court of Muatianvua in 1887", *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. 19 (1955): 1-26; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 78-97; Miller, "Kings and Kinsmen: The Imbangala Impact on the Mbundu of Angola", 257-269; Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 122-150; Thornton, "The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West", 3; Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 214-225.

⁴⁵³ According to the traditions about Kinguri, other title holders followed him out of Lunda some time after his departure. These oral traditions attest that *Mwa Ndonje* settled north of Kasanje (among the proto-Minungo), while *Munjumo wa Tembo* moved southwest of Lunda to Songo, Bihé, and other areas in the central plateau: Miller, "The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History", 558 – note 34.

migratory movements within Central Africa⁴⁵⁴. For Redinha, on the other hand, the “*Bangala*” were a combination of Lunda people with “*Libolos*” and “*Gingas*”, the latter a reference to the Mbangala of Matamba. These *Bangala* left had lands beyond the Cassai River (*Além-Cassai*) following their leader Kinguri (*Tchinguri* or *Quinguri*), who was a “Lunda-Tubungo” chief. They settled in the interior of Angola in the seventeenth century, where they then met the Jaga of Kongo with whom they later travelled south and then back north. Redinha concluded that the “poly-cultural” features of the Mbangala derived from their “poly-ethnic” condition. He added that this type of mixed civilization extended its roots south of the Cuanza River⁴⁵⁵.

With the rise of African History as an independent field of study in the 1950s, there was a renewed interest in the oral traditions concerning the Lunda expansion. The exodus of Kinguri became of great importance for the study of several polities in Central Africa: it enabled historians to fix approximate dates for the foundation of Lunda and Kasanje and it also provided a chronological framework for the histories of Yaka, Katanga, Kioko, Shinje, Kazembe, and other peoples of the Cuango.

In 1963, Jan Vansina wrote an article about the foundation of Kasanje, incorporating information from different sources and taking a hard look at the two most important versions of the migration of Kinguri into Angola: Neves’ history of Kasanje (1854) and Carvalho’s expedition to *Muatiânvua* (1890s)⁴⁵⁶. Vansina believed that the combination of oral traditions collected by Neves, Carvalho and others⁴⁵⁷ with Portuguese colonial reports and other written sources about the Mbangala could generate a new chronology for the rise both of Kasanje and the Lunda commonwealth⁴⁵⁸. His first step was to question Carvalho’s version of the exodus of Kinguri and the establishment of commercial relations with the Portuguese in Massangano and in Luanda. After

⁴⁵⁴ Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola*, 97-119. For a similar analysis, see Beatrix Heintze, “The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga through the Centuries: Critical Approaches to Precolonial Angolan Historical Sources”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 34 (2007): 70-71.

⁴⁵⁵ José Redinha, *Coleção Etnográfica* (Luanda: Museu de Angola, 1955), 22-23.

⁴⁵⁶ Jan Vansina, “The Foundation of the Kingdom of Kasanje”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1963): 355-374.

⁴⁵⁷ For other versions of the oral tradition about Kinguri, see Francisco Travassos Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller’s Life in Western Africa*, Vol. 2 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1861); Schütt, *Reisen im Südwestlichen Becken des Congo*; Curt Von François, “Geschichtliches fiber die Bangala, Lunda und Kiobo”, *Globus*, LIII, No. 18 (1888): 273 et seq.

⁴⁵⁸ Vansina, “The Foundation of the Kingdom of Kasanje”, 354.

serving the Portuguese governor, identified in the sources only as *Dom Manuel*⁴⁵⁹, Kinguri would have settled with his people in the interior of the kingdom of Angola (in the lands of Mbaka), but they did not remain there for too long. His nephew Kasanje, who succeeded him after his death, moved their *kilombo* to the lands between the rivers Lui and Cuango, founding a capital with his name. According to this version, the followers of Kinguri received the name “*Imbangala*” during their stay in Mbaka, before they settled in Kasanje. Vansina concluded that this version of the story of Kinguri did not come from any single Lunda source, but was rather a reconstruction made by Carvalho with information he collected from both the Lunda and the Mbangala⁴⁶⁰.

Neves’ earlier version of the legend of Kinguri (collected among the Mbangala of Kasanje) is much richer in detail when compared to that of Carvalho. Neves, for instance, included the names of several local African rulers. His version also incorporated more personal information about Kinguri, including infamous stories highlighting his cruelty and how the king of Lunda ordered his exile. In the Mbangala tradition collected by Neves, Kinguri ended up assassinated by his former allies who conspired against him for fear of his cruelty. His nephew Kasanje then succeeded him, made contact with the Portuguese, fought alongside them, and later settled in Mbaka for some time. According to this tradition, Kasanje then asked the Portuguese for authorization to move to better lands in the banks of the Cuango River, where he founded a capital with his name⁴⁶¹.

Vansina believed that the Neves version of the exodus of Kinguri was more complete than Carvalho’s, and that the relationship he described between the Mbangala and the Portuguese seemed to be more realistic. For one, he was never convinced that Kinguri had personally made contact with the Portuguese and believed he had died before the Mbangala began fighting alongside Luso-African slavers. After analysing these and other versions of the story of Kinguri, Vansina concluded that his departure from Lunda and the foundation of the Lunda “empire” happened sometime between 1550 and 1612. He then tried to fix a date for the foundation of the

⁴⁵⁹ It is possible that Carvalho is referring to Governor Manuel Pereira Forjaz (1607-1611), who according to Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 3, 222, joined forces with a local “*Jaga*” in the “wars of conquest”.

⁴⁶⁰ Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua*, 4 Vols.; Carvalho, *Ethnographia e história tradicional dos povos da Lunda*.

⁴⁶¹ Neves, *Memória da expedição a Cassange em 1850*.

kingdom of Kasanje (which he placed around 1613), after a supposed large migration out of Lunda circa 1600⁴⁶².

Shortly thereafter, in an article on the Jaga of Kongo (1965), David Birmingham identified the Mbangala of Kasanje (*Imbangala*) as a people of Lunda origin who had invaded the Mbundu territories south of the kingdom of Kongo in the mid-sixteenth century⁴⁶³. In that same year, he penned a reply to Vansina's attempt to create a chronology for the arrival of the Mbangala in Angola and the foundation of the kingdom of Kasanje. He proposed another set of dates for the initial contact between the Portuguese and the Mbangala, pushing it back from about 1610 to 1575, before the foundation of the coastal settlement of São Paulo de Assumpção de Luanda. Once again, the date for the foundation of the kingdom of Kasanje became of "considerable importance for dating the history of Central Africa", including the states of Lunda and Luba⁴⁶⁴.

As with Vansina, Birmingham made use of a combination of Lunda/Mbangala oral traditions and Portuguese written documents to unveil the history of the Lunda commonwealth and the descendants of Kinguri. He also gave special attention to Neves' collection of traditions from the Mbangala of Kasanje. Birmingham concluded that the label "*Imbangala*" came from the name of their leader, Kinguri-kya-Bangala, who was dubbed the "king of Benguela" by the Portuguese. A combination of the traditions reported by the Jesuit Antonio Mendes (1563) and the Capuchin Giovanni Cavazzi (1687) made him conclude that Kinguri had died fighting the *ngola* of Ndongo, prior to the establishment of the Portuguese on the coast of Angola⁴⁶⁵.

In the following year, Vansina published yet another article about the Jaga, the Mbangala and the Lunda. By then, it was clear that the Jaga and the Mbangala were not the same group of warriors, although both were believed to have come from lands beyond the Cuango River. The Jaga had invaded mbanza-Kongo in the late 1560s, while Kinguri and his people, Vansina sustained, contacted the Portuguese around 1610. The fact there were two major migratory movements out of Lunda in a period of fifty years was a remarkable process that "begs further

⁴⁶² Vansina, "The Foundation of the Kingdom of Kasanje", 373.

⁴⁶³ Birmingham, "Speculations on the Kingdom of Kongo", 10.

⁴⁶⁴ Birmingham, "The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola", 143.

⁴⁶⁵ Birmingham, "The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola", 144-146.

investigation”, Vansina concluded. He agreed with Birmingham that Kinguri must have died before 1610⁴⁶⁶.

Birmingham and Vansina engaged in a decade-long debate about the connections between the Mbangala of Kasanje and the Lunda commonwealth, which started with their articles published in the *Journal of African History* and continued with the publication of their respective books on the history of Angola, both published in 1966⁴⁶⁷. They each valued the oral traditions about Kinguri collected in the nineteenth century as the main references for their debate. Birmingham considered the arrival of the Lunda as the most important event in the history of Angola prior to 1790. He proposed two distinct migratory waves out of Lunda. The first one would have been a loosely organized migration of people from Lunda that gave rise to the Mbangala of Kasanje around the sixteenth century. The second wave would have been tightly controlled and organized under the rule of the *Mwaant yaav* in the eighteenth century⁴⁶⁸. For Vansina, the tradition of Kinguri's exodus was important because it linked the origins of the Lunda commonwealth to the creation of the kingdom of Kasanje through datable Portuguese activities in Angola. Hence, it became the “historiographical anchor for the chronology of a huge area in west central Africa, including the first emergence of the core polity of the commonwealth, the Rund kingdom, as well as the date for the beginnings of Lunda expansion, because the Kinguri tradition conflates both processes”⁴⁶⁹.

In the late 1960s, Joseph C. Miller entered the debate by presenting a new chronology for the departure of Kinguri from Lunda. According to his research, Kinguri had left the Lunda states in the late fifteenth century and engaged in a long journey in the interior of the continent until his descendants settled in the lands of Kasanje⁴⁷⁰. Although Miller gave great importance to oral traditions⁴⁷¹, he did not ignore the written sources that placed the Mbangala bands south of the Cuanza River before the seventeenth century. These included Andrew Battell's testimony from

⁴⁶⁶ Vansina, “More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda”, 421.

⁴⁶⁷ Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*; Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*.

⁴⁶⁸ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, 147-150. See also Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West”, 1.

⁴⁶⁹ Jan Vansina, “It Never Happened: Kinguri's Exodus and Its Consequences”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 25, (1998): 388. See also Vansina, “Quilombos on São Tomé, or in Search of Original Sources”, 453.

⁴⁷⁰ Vansina, “It Never Happened”, 388 – note 4, pointed out that the early chronology for the departure of Kinguri and the rise of Lunda is neither included in Miller's doctoral dissertation, nor in the latter's book with a similar title.

⁴⁷¹ Vansina, “On Ravenstein's edition of Battell's Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 346, explains that, at the time both he and Miller tended to value oral traditions in detriment of written sources: “For instance, when it came to the origin of the Jaga [Mbangala], Lunda oral traditions took precedence over Battell - an attitude both Miller and I shared at the time”.

early seventeenth century about the presence of the Mbangala south of the Cuvo River as the sixteenth turned to the seventeenth century⁴⁷², as well as the references to Mbangala bands on the central plateau (such as the Mbangala “queen” Temba-a-Ndumba) recorded by the Capuchin Gionvanni Cavazzi (confessor of Nzinga-a-Mbande) in the second half of the seventeenth century⁴⁷³. Since the followers of Kinguri had supposedly come from the Lunda commonwealth, the written references confirming their presence in territories south of the Cuanza River in the sixteenth century forced Miller to push back the chronology for their departure from Lunda to the end of the fifteenth century. Moreover, Miller believed that the followers of Kinguri, the *Imbangala*, were not Mbangala before leaving Lunda. He kept searching for the history of what he called “Kinguri’s band before they became Imbangala”⁴⁷⁴, and concluded they must have roamed the interior of the kingdom of Angola for decades, moving to areas south of the Cuanza and into the central plateau before meeting the Portuguese. Hence, they had become Mbangala somewhere along the way, but kept their memory about Kinguri and their Lunda origins.

This new theory about the Mbangala expansion changed the dates for the exodus of Kinguri and, consequently, the chronology for the rise of the Lunda Commonwealth and the foundation of several “kingdoms” of Central Africa, such as Songo and Kioko. Miller concluded that Kinguri’s departure from Lunda, the Ruund heartland⁴⁷⁵, must have happened at the latest around 1490. The

⁴⁷² There are different versions of Battell’s description of his life among the Mbangala published by Samuel Purchas. The first ones are published in four editions of *Purchas His Pilgrimage: or Relations of the World and the Religions observed in all Ages and Places discovered, from the Creation unto this Present* (1613, 1614, 1617 and 1626), which is often referred to simply as “*Purchas his Pilgrimage*”. Purchas published a different book in 1625, under the title *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes, contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells, by Englishmen and others*, which is often referred to as “*Purchas his Pilgrimes*”. These are the main versions of Battell’s testimony, but there is also a 1619 edition entitled *Purchas His Pilgrim Microcosmus, or the Historie of Man*. Purchas declared that these were essentially different works both in terms of “subject” and “object”, despite “holding much resemblance in the name”: Hugh George Rawlinson, *Narratives from Purchas his Pilgrimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931). For more on the two main versions, see Staller, “Rivalry and Reformation Politics”, 7-28. The 1617 version of *Purchas his Pilgrimage* was edited and republished in 1901: Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*. Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 345, criticises that all historians of the twentieth century have based their knowledge about Battell’s testimony on Ravenstein’s edition, never checking Purchas’ several versions.

⁴⁷³ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, 2 Vols.

⁴⁷⁴ Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 570, argued that “The dates of the Imbangala stay in Angola suggest tentative dates for the known history of the Kinguri’s band before they became the Imbangala”.

⁴⁷⁵ According to the definition found in Jeffrey Hoover, “The Seduction of Ruwej: Reconstructing Ruund History. The Nuclear Lunda: Zaire, Angola, Zambia” (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1978), xvii, the Ruund is the “nuclear Lunda”. The term was used by the Lunda to define their language, which then became associated with their geographical position and “ethnic” associations.

conquest of Lunda by the Luba, represented by the marriage of Lweji, would also have happened around the same time⁴⁷⁶.

While historians of Angola debated the dates for the exodus of Kinguri based on Mbangala traditions and Portuguese written documents, anthropologists dedicated to the study of the great states of Central Africa, including Lunda and Luba, pointed out problems with the chronology that Angolanists had established. Among them Jean-Luc Vellut, Luc de Heusch and Christopher Wrigley⁴⁷⁷

Jean-Luc Vellut published a long article about the Lunda expansion (1972) based on new geological and documentary evidence that questioned the early chronology proposed by Miller. Vellut showed that the death of the *Mwaant yaav* Mukanza I happened in 1755, and consequently the Lunda expansion must have happened in late seventeenth or early eighteenth century at the earliest⁴⁷⁸. In order to explain this discrepancy, Vellut built on Birmingham's idea about two different waves of migrations out of Lunda and concluded that the references he saw belonged to the second wave, controlled by the *Mwaant yaav*, while Kinguri's departure happened during an earlier migration. Thornton explains it further:

“Cognizant of Miller's conclusions that individuals recorded in genealogies might well represent whole generations of rulers known by a single title, rather than a single person, Vellut concluded that his chronological findings did not upset Miller's early date for the first Lunda migration. The fact that Kinguri's 'sister' in the tradition was also the 'mother' of the first *mwaant yaav* did not have any

⁴⁷⁶ This new chronology also affected the dates for the foundation of other “kingdoms”: Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 570-573.

⁴⁷⁷ The debate between anthropologists such as Luc de Heusch and Christopher Wrigley and historians such as Jan Vansina and Joseph Miller encompasses a broader theoretical discussion about structuralism as a valid tool for the analysis of oral traditions concerning the peoples that occupied Central Africa before the twentieth century. Historians have criticized the teleological structures presented by these anthropologists in their analysis of Lunda oral traditions and advocated for a historical approach to the oral and written sources available. I intend to engage such debate more profoundly in future researches about these themes. For a criticism of structuralism as a methodology for the study of the history of Central Africa, see Jan Vansina, “Is elegance proof? Structuralism and Africa History”, *History in Africa*, No. 10 (1983): 307-348; Jan Vansina, “Bantu in a Crystal Ball, II”, *History in Africa*, Vol. 7 (1980): 293-325. See also Roy Willis, “Translator's introduction”, in Luc de Heusch, *The Drunken King or the Origin of the State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, [1980] 1982), vii-xiv; Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 9. For an introduction on the structural study of myths, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, [1963] 1977), 206-231.

⁴⁷⁸ Vellut, “Notes sur le Lunda et la frontiere Luso-Africaine”, 61-166.

necessary chronological significance if titles with multiple incumbents and not single individuals were considered”⁴⁷⁹.

According to Vansina (1998), Miller squared his chronology with Vellut’s conclusions by advancing the idea of two distinguishable migratory movements out of Lunda, an early one led by Kinguri himself, and a second wave in the late seventeenth century. Thus, Miller adjusted his chronology to the rise of the *mwaant yaav*, while saving the Kinguri tradition “as a genuine record of ancient times”⁴⁸⁰. In one of his later articles, Vansina (2007) complained that one of the most important sources about the Mbangala expansion, Battell’s testimony, had not been seriously examined by scholars engaged in the debate about Kinguri and the Mbangala (himself included) and that the written sources “took a backseat to the traditions he [Miller] collected from modern Imbangala”⁴⁸¹.

Vansina concluded that the tradition about Kinguri’s exodus took shape in the 1840s amidst the Mbangala of Kasanje and the Songo and consolidated by the beginning of the twentieth century⁴⁸². It was a commercial strategy to unify the Mbangala to their major partners in the interior⁴⁸³. It took decades, however, for historians of Africa to realize and correct this mistake.

⁴⁷⁹ Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West”, 2. For Vellut’s view about perpetual kinship, see Vellut, “Notes sur le Lunda et la frontière Luso-Africaine”, 65. See also Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 184-185.

⁴⁸⁰ Vansina, “It Never Happened”, 389.

⁴⁸¹ Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 346. See Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, passim. Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West”, 2, made a similar criticism to Miller’s bias towards the modern oral traditions he collected among the Imbangala in the late 1960s in detriment of the written sources. In a recent publication, Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 50 – note 68, mentioned Vansina’s criticism about the “legendary travels of Kinguri”, while presenting his opinion on the rise of the Mbangala bands “in the Central Highlands, perhaps its southern fringe”.

⁴⁸² According to Vansina, “It Never Happened”, 402, “By 1920 the exodus tradition had been adopted in the whole area of western Lunda influence. As earlier traditions already had stressed the origin of chiefs, and hence of their legitimacy, in a foreign nuclear area, whether Kola (i.e. the Rund heartland in the north), Nama in the southeast, and probably Candembe among some Songo, another exodus story sounded familiar and was easily incorporated in most cases”. See also Heintze, “The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga through the Centuries”, 77-78.

⁴⁸³ Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 188-189, explains that: “Particularly during the nineteenth century, it was economically advantageous to establish a historical tie that would serve as the basis for becoming privileged trading partners, opening up trade routes or minimising conflicts by settling in the Lunda Commonwealth. Since these other groups too were familiar with the twin concepts of positional succession and perpetual kinship, they used them as convenient idioms in which to cast such relationships ... Thus, a historical discourse emerged which put forward the notion of a common ancestral relationship of the Rund/Lunda and those groups. They were only separated through the emigration of one or more ‘founding fathers’ of these other ethnic entities”.

All despite decades of discussion about the validity of oral traditions and their equivalent value (or lack thereof) to written sources⁴⁸⁴. As Beatrix Heintze explains:

“Since the formation of such kinship ties is a product of historical processes which were embedded in specific political contexts, it would be mistaken to assume that such ties are ‘artefacts’ of some by-gone age. Rather, in most cases they were political constructs which, like other constellations, were subject to change and could be adapted to meet the requirements of new political situations”⁴⁸⁵.

The validity of the Mbangala oral traditions regarding Kinguri’s exodus from Lunda was first challenged by the publication of Luc de Heusch’s structuralist criticism of the Lunda traditions (1971). He discussed the exodus of Kinguri (*Chinguri*) from Lunda based on the traditions collected by Carvalho and analysed the classic debate between Birmingham and Vansina. De Heusch, a disciple and associate of Claude Lévi-Strauss, made use of structuralist concepts (inversion, opposition, transformation) to “discover” what he considered to be law-governed relations between the mythical traditions of peoples and cultures seemingly widely separated from each other, like the Luba and the Mbangala of Kasanje⁴⁸⁶.

Nevertheless, de Heusch did not challenge Vansina’s chronology, based on oral traditions, for the departure of a historical, real warlord called Kinguri from Lunda and the rise of the *Imbangala*. Indeed, he concluded that the theory of the two waves of migrations out of Lunda was more plausible than Birmingham’s previous early chronology, and argued that the tradition of Kinguri and the rise of the *mwaant yaav* led to the foundation of the Bemba state in Zambia, quite distant from the lands of the Mbangala of Kasanje. “The Bemba epic is a mirror image of the Luba-Lunda sacred union of the prince from above and the terrestrial princess”. Hence, the mythical marriage that represents the conquest of the Luba over the Lunda and the exodus of the princess’ brother was not an exclusivity of the Mbangala⁴⁸⁷.

⁴⁸⁴ While discussing the validity of oral traditions, Jan Vansina, “Oral Tradition and its Methodology”, in *General History of Africa, Volume I. Methodology and African Prehistory*, J. Ki-Zerbo, ed. (Berkeley: UNESCO / University of California Press, 1981), 142-165, alerted to the incorporation of fragments of oral traditions from other places into local history: “In practice, caravans of merchants such as the Imbangala of Angola, or no doubt those of the Dyula and the Hausa, may bring with them fragments of history which are incorporated into local history because they fit in well. Later on, links were formed between representatives of different groups at the beginning of the colonial period and they exchanged information concerning their traditions”.

⁴⁸⁵ Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 186.

⁴⁸⁶ Willis, “Translator’s introduction”, viii-ix.

⁴⁸⁷ Heusch, *The Drunken King or the Origin of the State*, 228-229, 232.

Christopher Wrigley wrote a detailed review of de Heusch's book (1974) in which he criticized the author's acceptance of Vansina's historical reconstruction of the rise of the Lunda "empire" and the thesis concerning two different waves of migration. Wrigley also criticized Miller's "apparently un-questioning belief in the Lunda origin of the Imbangala", despite praising his argument showing that "Kinguri" was a titular position, not a person. More importantly, Wrigley showed that the term "*nguri*" ("lion") belonged to a Mbundu dialect (not specified) and not to the Lunda language⁴⁸⁸. "Thus the kinguri, the lion chief who lived in the lion hills, seems to be firmly pinned to the lands west of the Kwango, and the story of his migration from the east must come under suspicion of being a mythical fabrication"⁴⁸⁹.

Wrigley proposed that the tradition of Kinguri's exodus was not historical and that it was related to the structure of the Lunda state, and not to the foundation of outside polities. Hence, the Mbangala version for the exodus of Kinguri should be dismissed, along with all the chronological speculation based on it⁴⁹⁰. Wrigley's position was considered extreme and was heavily criticized by historians⁴⁹¹. His whole analysis was based on a debate between "exponents of literalist and symbolist readings of African historical narratives" about the historical existence of the personages of oral traditions. While historians such as Birmingham and Vansina interpreted the symbolic figures of Kinguri's myth as real persons, structuralist scholars such as De Heusch and Wrigley tended to look for the "quasi-mathematical form hidden beneath the exotic myth narratives"⁴⁹².

Miller's research on the Mbangala, however, had clarified that Kinguri was not a historical individual, as the "literalists" had supposed, but rather the name of a title. The same would be true for "queen" Lweji and the Luba hunter Chibinda Ilunga, the latter called Lukonkesha in the

⁴⁸⁸ Wrigley had indeed made important contributions by introducing the use of Portuguese archival materials to the anthropological (structuralist) study of Central African states, which became known as the Luso-African frontier: Hoover, "The Seduction of Ruwej", 22.

⁴⁸⁹ Wrigley, "Myths of the Savanna", 134. More than a decade later, Vansina, "It Never Happened", 393, agreed with Wrigley that the exodus of Kinguri was a nineteenth-century fabrication, according to him invented by both the Mbangala of Kasanje and the "*Ambaquistas*", that is, the Luso-Africans from the *presidio* de Ambaca (Mbaka).

⁴⁹⁰ Wrigley, "Myths of the Savanna", 134-135.

⁴⁹¹ For Vansina's reply to Wrigley, see Jan Vansina, "Comment: Traditions of Genesis", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1974): 317-322. See also Thornton, "The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West", 2.

⁴⁹² Willis, "Translator's introduction", vii-xiv. For an example about this structuralism "quasi-mathematical" approach to the interpretation of myths, see Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 228-229.

Mbangala tradition⁴⁹³. Miller's work, however, reproduced and reinforced the belief in the exodus of Kinguri and his role in the foundation of the *Imbangala*.

In 1978, James Jeffrey Hoover defended his doctoral dissertation on the Lunda (*Ruund*), where he analysed the myth of Lweji (*Ruwej*) and the rise of the *Mwaant yaav*. Hoover accepted Miller's thesis about perpetual titles, but highlighted his interpretation of the oral traditions of the Lunda/Mbangala as only "one plausible reconstruction" of the historical process behind the unification of the Lunda and the Luba⁴⁹⁴.

Hoover used linguistic data to conclude that the tradition of Kinguri had been introduced into Lunda by *Imbangala* traders in the nineteenth century. Hence, the Mbangala influenced the Lunda to incorporate the legend of Kinguri, while the Ruund would influence the Mbangala to reject lineage-based social structures⁴⁹⁵. In his own doctoral dissertation, Miller had argued that the proto-Imbangala band dropped their lineage basis at the Cassai River⁴⁹⁶. Hoover built on this argument to suggest that the *Imbangala* could be imitating a "long-standing Ruund example of non-lineage-based social structure when the tradition says he forbade mothers to give birth; nothing indicates this social revolution was an innovation of the *kinguri*'s band"⁴⁹⁷.

In another part of his thesis, Hoover stated that "Miller's metaphorical interpretation of Ruund names as historical titles was partly necessitated by the need to get the Kinguri (*Chingud*) to Angola by the earlier dates now accepted". There was evidence to suggest that the personages of the brothers of Lweji, including Kinguri, were rather recent additions to Ruund tradition and to those of the other peoples. "They were added as the Mbangala, Lwena, and later the Chokwe became significant neighbors and economic partners of the Ruund". Hoover concluded that the Chibidian period, that is the rule of Chibid and Luwej, could not have happened long before 1620,

⁴⁹³ Miller explains that: "...Imbangala lineages and political structures consist of permanent, named positions, each of which possesses a specified status expressed in terms of kinship with all other positions in the system. Individuals come and go as occupants of these titles, but they do not affect the name or rank of the positions ... The Imbangala believe that the holder of such a title actually becomes the person who founded the position many years before and they perform rituals to effect the individual's change in identity. The incumbent acquires personality traits attributed to the idealized original occupant of his position, takes the name, kinsmen, and social status of the position, and thus assumes his place as a living continuation of the title founder": Miller, "Kings and Kinsmen: The Imbangala Impact on the Mbundu of Angola", 22, 115-239, 262.

⁴⁹⁴ Hoover, "The Seduction of Ruwej", xvii, 168-172.

⁴⁹⁵ Hoover, "The Seduction of Ruwej", 23-27, 212-213.

⁴⁹⁶ Miller, "Kings and Kinsmen: The Imbangala Impact on the Mbundu of Angola", 141-150.

⁴⁹⁷ Hoover, "The Seduction of Ruwej", 171.

because of the use of the loanword “yibwobw” (soaked manioc roots). Hence, he rejected Miller’s earlier chronology of the Mbangala in relation to the departure of Kinguri from Lunda⁴⁹⁸.

Hoover spotted the addition of Kinguri’s exodus to the oral traditions of both the Lunda and the Mbangala and was aware that these additions had the objective of establishing strong cultural (and kinship) ties between the Mbangala of Kasanje and the Ruund of Lunda, which would consequently allow the development of their trading networks. As he explained: “Entire ethnic groups do not develop from one heroic ancestor ... The major point of the passage is to link the large Lunda empire in the center of the continent with the Luso-African trading kingdom of Kasanje which was long the major Lunda link to the world economy”⁴⁹⁹.

Thornton reinforced Hoover’s argument by reminding that Cavazzi, who published his work in 1687, had never heard of the Lunda or about Kinguri’s connection with them. According to the Italian Capuchin, the Mbangala traced their origin to a kingdom founded by Zimbo (*Njimbo*), whose home was located on the central plateau, near the headwaters of the Cunene River⁵⁰⁰. Hence, it was clear that “in the face of the new evidence we must abandon the connection between early Imbangala history and the Lunda foundation myth”⁵⁰¹. When Miller published *Way of Death* (1988), he was also convinced the Mbangala had not come from Lunda, but suspected their homeland was on the central plateau, close to the upper Cunene Valley. From there, the Mbangala would have made their descent into the “kingdom of Angola”⁵⁰².

Beatrix Heintze has recently reaffirmed that Kinguri’s exodus was a nineteenth-century addition to the oral traditions of both *Imbangala* and Lunda. She has argued that it was meant to create a mythical connection between the Mbangala of Kasanje and the *Mwaant yaav* of the Lunda commonwealth. Furthermore, she attested to the incorporation of the Lunda traditions by not only the Mbangala of Kasanje, but also the Tchokwe (*Chokwe*). Heintze concluded that the presence of the Mbangala in the kingdom of Angola predated their settlement in Kasanje, and that Mbangala bands first appeared among the pastoral areas in the south and not very far from the coast⁵⁰³. We

⁴⁹⁸ Hoover, “The Seduction of Ruwej”, 214, 228.

⁴⁹⁹ Hoover, “The Seduction of Ruwej”, 213.

⁵⁰⁰ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, book VII; Cavazzi, “Missione evangelica al Regno de Congo, 1668”, Book I, 7-24.

⁵⁰¹ Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West”, 2.

⁵⁰² Miller, *Way of Death*, 28-30.

⁵⁰³ Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 188-189.

will now turn to these southern regions in search for clues about the Mbangala presence in Benguela.

The Mbangala Migrations

Chapter 1 showed that some historians of West Central Africa consider the territory of Quilengues – which included the lowlands of Mbuelo, the Chela Mountain Range, and the lower Cunene River basin – as the region where the Mbangala militaristic cult of the *kilombo* first appeared (Map 2). They presented evidence based on linguistic reconstructions and historical accounts that recorded the presence of Mbangala bands in the region since the sixteenth century⁵⁰⁴. But, after centuries of misunderstandings about their connections with the Jaga and other “cannibal warriors” of Africa, and their non-existent ancestral relationship to the Lunda commonwealth, there is much still to ask about the Mbangala. With the fall of Kinguri’s exodus as an explanatory model, historians must rethink one of the most important events of the History of West Central Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the rise and expansion of the Mbangala bands.

As mentioned previously, there is documentary and historiographical evidence for the dispersal of the Mbangala bands from the lowlands of Quilengues in waves of conquering expansions to different parts of the so-called “kingdom of Benguela”. This evidence, however, is scattered in various works written by missionaries, explorers, chroniclers, geographers and historians from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Some Mbangala waves of migration have been well documented and analysed by historians. That is the case, for example, of the Mbangala bands who encountered the Scottish sailor Andrew Battell on the margins of the Cuvo River at the turning of the seventeenth century⁵⁰⁵. Others have not yet been fully analysed as part of the

⁵⁰⁴ Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 197 – note 109; Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 232 – note 23. See also Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 189.

⁵⁰⁵ For more on the history of the “northern” Mbangala bands (*Imbangalas*), see Birmingham, “The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola”, 143-152; Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, 64-77; Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 549-574; Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 121-149; Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 176-223; Heintze, “The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga through the Centuries”, 67-101; Hilton, “The Jaga Reconsidered”, 191-202; Thornton, “A Resurrection of the Jaga”, 223-227; Vansina, “The Foundation of the Kingdom of Kasanje”, 355-374; Vansina, “More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda”, 421-429; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*; Vansina, “It Never Happened”, 387-40; Curto, “*Jeribita* in the relations between the colony of Angola and the Kingdom of Kasanje”, 365-366.

Mbangala migrations, perhaps because the evidence available for them is not as emphatic as the testimony of a direct witness, like Battell.

I argue for the existence of at least three Mbangala waves of migration out of Quilengues during the second half of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century, as identified below. These Mbangala bands have been cited in the documentation and in the historiography of West Central Africa since the end of the sixteenth century, often identified simply as “*jagas*”. Nevertheless, because of the consolidation of the myth of Kinguri’s exodus from Lunda, these “southern” Mbangala bands have not been linked to the “northern” bands who crossed the Cuanza River at beginning of the seventeenth century and later settled in the western (left) banks of the Cuango River, where they became known as the *Imbangala*.

In the beginning of the 1970s, for instance, Miller wrote extensively about the “southern” Mbangala bands, that is those south of the Cuanza River, and their overwhelming presence in the kingdom of Benguela (including Libolo, Hako and Kulembé⁵⁰⁶). He cited a letter written by the *conquistador* Manuel Cerveira Pereira confirming the presence of Mbangala bands in the immediate interior of Benguela, that is Quilengues, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, around the same time as the invasion of mbanza-Kongo by the “real” Jaga⁵⁰⁷.

Miller also mentioned that the first encounter between Mbangala warriors and the Portuguese could have taken place “near the mouth of the Kunene River at an unspecified date”⁵⁰⁸, probably an obscure reference to Humbe-Inene. However, he discarded this information as an addition by Giovanni Cavazzi to the oral traditions that this priest collected in Matamba. In Miller’s view, the Capuchin missionary probably took the reference about the Mbangala in the Cunene region from stories he heard from Portuguese mariners about “misnamed Jaga” warriors in Benguela mixed up with legends from Eastern Africa about Zimbo⁵⁰⁹.

⁵⁰⁶ Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 210-223.

⁵⁰⁷ According to Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 564, the southern Mbangala bands were moving north from Benguela to Angola around the same time that the Jaga invaded the kingdom of Kongo. As he writes: “The next firm date also located the Imbangala quite far south, but by then apparently moving north near the coast. They had reached Sao Felipe de Benguela (Benguela Nova, the location of the present town of Benguela) by 1584 or 1585”.

⁵⁰⁸ Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 563.

⁵⁰⁹ Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 563 – note 55, concluded: “A lively set of mariners’ tales, visible in Battell’s account and other places, must have provided this detail”.

References for the presence of Mbangala bands close to the mouth of the Cunene River, however, forced Miller to consider why the followers of Kinguri would have marched so far south after leaving the Lunda commonwealth. In an attempt to explain this early Mbangala presence in the lowlands of Benguela, he argued for a supposed “circuitous southern route” taken by Kinguri’s bands after leaving their homeland, which had led them to the inner Cunene basin before they marched north⁵¹⁰. This also forced him to propose a new chronology with an earlier date for Kinguri’s exodus from Lunda, as seen previously. Let us turn now to the sources.

The first example for a wave of Mbangala migrations out of Quilengues has been well-documented and fully analysed by chroniclers and historians since the seventeenth century (Map 2). It concerns the marauders who marched north through the Seles, a strip of lowlands in the interior of Quicombo (11°20’S), between the central plateau and the sea, in the second half of the sixteenth century. They met the Portuguese, and Battell, on the margins of the Cuvo River, the largest waterway between the Cuanza and the Cunene, while trying to cross it. The Portuguese helped them cross the Cuvo (11°S) in exchange for their cooperation in capturing slaves. A decade later, they would help the Mbangala bands cross another river, this time the mighty Cuanza⁵¹¹.

Some of the northern Mbangala bands began working for Portuguese and Luso-African slavers in exchange for weapons, alcohol and other imported goods. Their help was essential for the development of the Atlantic slave trade in the seventeenth century, and proved fundamental for the Portuguese conquest of Ndongo. Some of these Mbangala bands settled down on the western (left) banks of the Cuango River and founded the *kilombo* of Kasanje. The Mbangala of Kasanje (*Imbangala*) became the main commercial intermediaries between the Luso-Africans of Angola (west) and the Lunda commonwealth (east) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as discussed previously⁵¹².

⁵¹⁰ Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 564, writes: “Their southward swing fills in an otherwise unexplained twenty-year gap in notices of their presence farther north”. However, Miller’s theory about a “circuitous southern route” taken by the followers of Kinguri to the mouth of the Cunene River has been disproved by the non-existence of Kinguri’s exodus.

⁵¹¹ Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 2nd ed., 694-704; Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 19-35. See also Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 272; Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 564-566.

⁵¹² Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, 549-574; Joseph C. Miller, “Slaves, Slavers and Social Change in Nineteenth Century Kasanje”, in *Social Change in Angola*, in Franz-Wilhelm Heimer, ed. (Munich: Weltforum Verlag, 1973), 09-29; Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 176-223; Vansina, “On Ravenstein’s edition of Battell’s Adventures in Angola and Loango”, 321-326; Heintze, “The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga

The Mbangala of Matamba preserved the memory of the second wave of migration from the south. Oral traditions collected in the seventeenth century attest to a second wave of Mbangala warriors from Quilengues, who marched up the highlands of Benguela and conquered numerous polities that inhabited the central plateau (Map 2). The cultural interactions between these Mbangala bands and the Mbundu⁵¹³ communities of the central plateau resulted in the rise of new Mbangala rituals that shaped the cult of the *kilombo*.

The Italian Capuchin Giovanni Cavazzi collected the oral traditions of the Mbangala of Matamba that account for the presence of their ancestors in the central plateau before they descended to the kingdom of Angola to settle in the province of Malanje (*Baixa do Cassange*) in the seventeenth century⁵¹⁴. Cavazzi had access to these oral traditions from Matamba because of his relationship with the “Jaga queen” Nzinga-a-Mbande. The missionary, who had previously lived at the court of Ngola-a-Ari, the *ngola* of Ndongo and her greatest enemy, from 1655 to 1658, and visited Nzinga-a-Mbande in Matamba in 1658, remained at Nzinga’s court from 1660 to 1664, having participated in her funeral in December 1663⁵¹⁵. Thornton believes that the Capuchin began working on his manuscript that included these oral traditions around 1660, which was completed by 1665 and periodically updated with marginal notes until 1668⁵¹⁶.

Although Nzinga-a-Mbande was originally from the kingdom of Ndongo, she became the “Jaga queen” of the Mbangala of Matamba when she allied to *Jaga Kaza* (Ngola-ka-Kaza) and assumed the role of *tembanza*, that is the first wife of the *Jaga*⁵¹⁷. As *tembanza*, Nzinga-a-Mbande

through the Centuries”, 67-101; Heintze, “Translocal ‘Kinship’ Relations in Central African Politics of the 19th Century”, 189; Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 37-41,

⁵¹³ “Mbundu” was the generic label given to the peoples living in the interior of Benguela, especially the central plateau. They would be identified as “Ovimbundu” (Umbundu speakers) in the nineteenth century: Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 292-293. The generic label “Mdundu” was also used in Angola to identify the people of the kingdom of Ndongo. Nevertheless, as Adriano Parreira, *Economia e sociedade em Angola na época da rainha Jinga, século XVII* (Lisboa: Estampa, 1990), 175, notes, the kingdom of Ndongo is not a territory reserved to a single “ethnicity”, hence there should be no automatic association between Ndongo and the Mdundu people either.

⁵¹⁴ The earliest references to the Mbangala in the central plateau are found in Cavazzi’s 1668 notes about his mission in Kongo entitled *Missione evangelica*: Cavazzi, “Missione evangelica al Regno de Congo, 1668”, Book I. The *Missione evangelica* served as basis for his book *Istorica Descrizione de tre regni Congo, Matamba ed Angola*, first published in 1687, see Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, 2 Vols.

⁵¹⁵ Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 217-219, 235-244.

⁵¹⁶ Thornton, “Legitimacy and Political Power”, 34; Mario Albano, “Cavazzi: conselheiro diplomático da rainha Nzinga”, in *A Rainha Nzinga Mbandi: história, memória e mito*, Inocência Mata, ed. (Lisboa: Colibri, 2012), 217-220. See also Macedo, “Jagas, canibalismo e ‘guerra preta’”, 55-57.

⁵¹⁷ Miller, “Nzinga of Matamba in a New Perspective”, 209; Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 164-165; Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII*, 366-367. See also Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, 87-93; Pinto, “Em torno de um problema de identidade”, 231-232; Macedo, “Jagas, canibalismo e ‘guerra preta’”, 13-15.

inherited the rituals of Temba-a-Ndumba, including the preparation of the *maji-a-samba*, and became responsible for the imposition of the *yijila*. Temba-a-Ndumba was the daughter of Ndonji (one of Zimbo's generals) and his wife Mussassa, who led the Mbangala from the lower Cunene basin to the highlands of the central plateau. She had been named after Zimbo's wife, and became a powerful warrior after Ndonji's death. She led the Mbangala bands, alongside with Mussassa, to victory over the polities of the central plateau, "scourging the neighboring kingdoms and provinces and cruelly slaughtering the inhabitants"⁵¹⁸.

Although Mussassa gave her daughter control over their *kilombo*, Temba-a-Ndumba, "because of her arrogance", turned against her mother and made her an enemy, which I argue can be seen as another act of rebellion against lineage structures. Still according to Cavazzi, after establishing herself as the uncontested leader of the Mbangala of the central plateau, she decided to "renew the old laws of her father and ancestors", by re-establishing the *yijila*, or "the laws of the jagas" as the Portuguese called them⁵¹⁹.

Evidently, European missionaries tended to focus their attention on the religious practices of the peoples they encountered in Africa. They tended to project their religious and cultural prejudices upon the African practices they analyzed, and regarded the events they witnessed through a European male-dominated perspective of the world. The Capuchin understood the Mbangala rituals and social organization of the *kilombo* as an "evil cult", exacerbating accounts about violent rites of passage, which included human sacrifice, infanticide and cannibalism⁵²⁰. Cavazzi recorded that Temba-a-Ndumba had also taught the Mbangala under her command the cults for the veneration of the spirits of the dead, not ancestors by kinship, but through the *kilombo*, and that there was much confusion among the Mbangala of Matamba about the origins of their other religious practices, not related to the *kilombo*⁵²¹.

A colonial historian from the seventeenth-century affirmed that the "*jagas*" of Benguela had indeed fewer rituals than those from the kingdom of Angola. The southern Mbangala,

⁵¹⁸ Cavazzi, "Missione evangelica al Regno de Congo, 1668", Book I, Chapter 1; Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 177. See also Birmingham, "The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola", 145.

⁵¹⁹ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 177-178. See also Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 162-163.

⁵²⁰ Macedo, "Jagas, canibalismo e 'guerra preta'", 59; Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*, 15.

⁵²¹ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 209.

according to Cadornega, were not so dedicated to the adoration of idols, like those from the north. They only had great adoration for the *quicullos*, which consisted of the bones of their ancestors. They made sacrifices and offers of food and drinks (Portuguese grape wine and palm wine) to the *quicullos*, and carried the funeral urns containing those bones (*cofres de veneração*) during their wars⁵²².

Keeping with the religious theme, Cavazzi also understood the attacks of “cannibal warriors” led by Zimbo against the local African communities as divine punishment for their sins. Zimbo was portrayed as a frightening and terrible ruler, “haughty and proud, ambitious for human glory and anxious to immortalize his name”. He had left his homeland in *Serra Leoa* with his followers (*Muzimbos*) to “kill, loot and spare no living thing, even an irrational animal”⁵²³. Cavazzi also believed that Zimbo was responsible for “punishing” the *mani-Kongo* with the invasion of his *mbanza* in the sixteenth century. Thereafter, Zimbo still marched over Eastern Ethiopia before retreating to the lower Cunene basin, where he would found a *kilombo* and restructured his army to initiate a new age of war⁵²⁴.

Although Cavazzi stated that Temba-a-Ndumba was responsible for the *yijila* and the rituals of denial of lineage and ancestry, including the infamous *maji-a-samba*, in other moments he suggested that some of these laws and practices had been created by Zimbo himself and later “revived” by the “warrior queen” of the central plateau⁵²⁵. Cavazzi considered Zimbo the first Mbangala warlord (together with his wife Temba-a-Ndumba), thus Zimbo must have established the ‘laws of the *jagas*’ before their new age of expansion out of the lower Cunene basin. In his

⁵²² Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 3, 223-224. See also Childs, “The Peoples of Angola in the Seventeenth Century According to Cadornega”, 276.

⁵²³ Cavazzi, “Missione evangelica al Regno de Congo, 1668”, Book I, Chapter 1.

⁵²⁴ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 124-125. See also Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, Vol. 3, 222-223.

⁵²⁵ Contradiction in narratives should not be considered uncommon mistakes. As Heintze, “The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga through the Centuries”, 72-73 has alerted, some written sources were based on several different oral traditions told at different places and times. Some of these sources also included information taken from other written sources, besides personal reminiscences and experiences. These interpolations are sometimes obvious, but many of them are hard to spot. Cavazzi’s writings are a good example of this kind of narrative amalgamation. A particular information or historical event could also take the opposite direction, which means the integration of historical material into oral traditions.

book, Cavazzi only begins to call the bands under Zimbo's command "*jagas*" following their dispersal from their new *kilombo* on the lower Cunene basin⁵²⁶.

The information provided by Cavazzi about Zimbo as the founder of the Mbangala and the stories about Temba-a-Ndumba were copied and reproduced in the late nineteenth century by the Portuguese explorers Capello and Ivens, who had been in close contact with the southern Mbangala bands and attested for their ancestral presence in the lower Cunene basin⁵²⁷. They conjectured that Zimbo could also be the founder of the "empire" of Humbe-Inene (see below).

In the 1980s, historians of Angola began pointing to the central plateau as the "homeland" of the Mbangala bands⁵²⁸. According to Miller, the Mbangala of the central plateau in the eighteenth century were not as centralized as the Lunda commonwealth during the same period, despite the fact that they shared some linguistic traits, that is they spoke a similar Umbundu language. These peoples of the highlands of Benguela, called Ovimbundu from the nineteenth century onwards, shared traditions that combined ancient "rainmaking kings, warlords rich in cattle, and a late-sixteenth century military cult of the Jaga"⁵²⁹.

The Mbangala of the central plateau extended their power at the end of the sixteenth century and some of their bands "spilled down in every direction over the flanks of the plateau"⁵³⁰. I suggest based on the hydrography of the central plateau that some of them followed the courses of the rivers down the highlands, such as Tamba and Cuanza, until they reached the lands of Matamba (Map 2). In the seventeenth century, the Mbangala bands of the central plateau then fell subject to the mighty *Jaga* Muzumbo-a-Kalunga, whose reputation and tradition echoed centuries later and hundreds of kilometres to the north of his supposed original location on the upper Cunene

⁵²⁶ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 174-180. See also Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, 163.

⁵²⁷ Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 213-218.

⁵²⁸ Birmingham, *Central Africa to 1870*, 84; Joseph Miller, "The paradoxes of impoverishment in the Atlantic zone", in *History of Central Africa*, Vol. 1, David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin, eds. (London and New York: Longman, 1983), 139; Miller, *Way of Death*, 28. See also Thornton, "Legitimacy and Political Power, 31 – note 27; Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*, 102, 116-117, 137; Thornton, "Cannibals, Witches and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World", 281 – note 45.

⁵²⁹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 28, argued that the *kilombo* was a joint creation from the time the followers of Kinguri met the Mbundu peoples of the central plateau (also called Ovimbundu).

⁵³⁰ Miller, *Way of Death*, 28.

valley⁵³¹. A historian of West Central Africa has recently highlighted the connections between the Muzumbo-a-Kalunga and Zimbo⁵³².

Cavazzi further suggested that there were other Mbangala migrations out of Quilengues when he declared he did not intend to narrate the history of all “independent captains” who left the *kilombo* founded by Zimbo at the lower Cunene basin following his death. His intension was to record the history of Tembo-a-Ndumba as the ancestor queen of the Mbangala of Matamba, because his focus was the history of Nzinga-a-Mbande⁵³³.

A third wave of Mbangala warriors moved southwards from Quilengues and defeated the peoples who occupied the banks of the Cunene River (Map 2), known as kingdom of Mataman (*Matama* or *Madaman*). The survivors of these attacks were forced to flee across the Cunene to the semi-arid and desert areas of Cimbebasia (Kaokoland and Damaraland) or towards the Cuvelai Delta and the Ovamboland. After the destruction of Mataman and the expulsion of some of their subjects, these southern Mbangala bands mixed with the remaining groups in the area to found Humbe-Inene, or the Big-Humbe, which was also a title. Humbe-Inene was a powerful, though loose confederacy of African polities that became a major supplier of slaves and ivory for Quilengues in the eighteenth century, all the while hindering Luso-African advances into their territories until the second half of the nineteenth century.

There are written references to the kingdom of Mataman since the end of the sixteenth century⁵³⁴. Lopes/Pigafetta recorded that the provinces of Cimbebasia (*Cimbebas* or *Climbebi*) extended from the “confines of Angola”, that is lower Cunene River, to the Bravaghul River, which originated on the “Mountains of the Moon”⁵³⁵. In the interior of the continent, the region known as Cimbebasia reached the mythical “first lake” of Inner Ethiopia, the mythical source of the Nile,

⁵³¹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 28.

⁵³² Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 232 – note 23.

⁵³³ Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, Vol. 1, 177.

⁵³⁴ See Thomas J. Desch-Obi, “Engolo: Combat Traditions in African and African Diaspora History” (PhD Thesis, University of California, 2000), 21. Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 20, argued that the fact the kingdom of Mataman attracted the attention of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Portuguese writers evidences its importance.

⁵³⁵ Actually, the Kuiseb River originates in the Khomas highlands.

and also bordered the Magnice River (Limpopo River)⁵³⁶, which also supposedly sprung from the “first lake”⁵³⁷.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Samuel Purchas also wrote about the existence of a mighty kingdom in Cimbebasia (*Quimbebe*) ruled by a “king” called *Matama*⁵³⁸. Both Lopes/Pigafetta and Purchas’ descriptions are of great importance because they refer to the kingdom of Mataman before its destruction at the hands of the southern Mbangala bands in the sixteenth century. Desch-Obi also argued that Cavazzi’s references to Zimbo as founder of a *kilombo* in the lower Cunene basin is a clear reference to the Mbangala invasion of the kingdom of Mataman⁵³⁹.

Desch-Obi found seventeenth-century maps that place Cimbebasia east of the escarpment around latitude 15°S⁵⁴⁰, in this case incorporating the lands of the lower Cunene River. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, the cartographer De L’Isle located Cimbebasia and the kingdom of Mataman south of the Cunene River, while he identified the territory around 15°S as the lands of Huila (*pays d’Ohyla*) and the domains of *Jaga Muzumbo-a-Kalunga* (see Appendix 1.1).

The kingdom of Mataman remained an important geographical reference centuries after its destruction. The eighteenth-century geographer and mathematician John Mair presented Mataman as one of the “subdivisions” of Guinea, that is the Atlantic portion of Africa, together with

⁵³⁶ According to Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 158 – note 117, the Magnice River is sometimes identified as the Zambezi River and at other times as the Limpopo River. Sometimes both rivers are also mistakenly called Cuama River. See also Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 50.

⁵³⁷ “Beyond the Kingdom of Congo we may remember, is the country of the King of Angola, and farther towards the Cape of Good Hope that of King Matama, and the provinces ruled over by him, called Climbebe”: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 113-114. This description by Lopes/Pigafetta was used by the cartographer De L’Isle to draw his “L’Afrique” (Appendix 1).

⁵³⁸ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 1st ed. (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1613); 580; Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 2nd ed., 694, mentioned the existence of the kingdom of Mataman while describing the coast of West Central Africa from south to north: “And with this we will begin with the most southerly parts, in which we first come into the kingdom of Matama (this is the king’s proper name), who being a gentile ruled over divers provinces, name Quimbebe [Cimbebasia]. This is a kingdom great and mighty, extending from Bravagal to Bagamidri”.

⁵³⁹ Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 232 – note 23. See also Antonio Guebe, *Resistência à ocupação colonial do sul de Angola, região dos Va-Nyaneka Va-Nkumbi e dos Va-Ambo, 1850-1917* (Luanda: Edições de Angola, 2008), 23-24

⁵⁴⁰ Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 20-21.

Benguela, Angola, Congo, Loango, Macoko, Benin, Guinea Proper and Negroland⁵⁴¹. Its territory extended from Cabo Negro (16°30'S) to the Bavaghul River (24°S)⁵⁴² and bordered the Mwene-a-Mutapa (*Monomotapa*)⁵⁴³.

Although some eighteen and nineteenth-century authors affirmed that Cimbebasia was a wasteland with no towns, where the Europeans had little intercourse or commerce⁵⁴⁴, others asserted it was fertile lands in the interior of this unexplored “country”⁵⁴⁵. There were also skeptics who doubted the very existence of the kingdom of Mataman. The chronicler William Fordyce Mavor, for instance, dismissed most of the reports as “fictions”, while claiming to be disgusted by the Portuguese tales about cannibalism, infanticide and butcher shops selling human parts⁵⁴⁶. Others, however, reported that Mataman was not an imaginary kingdom, but located further inland and about 100 miles to the north from where it was usually placed in maps and travellers’ accounts⁵⁴⁷.

Cimbebasia also remained an important reference, especially after the arrival of European missionaries in the region. The Spiritan Missionary Charles Duparquet, who directed a mission of the Apostolic Prefecture of Cimbebasia, included the inner Cunene basin as part of *Cimbebas*, as well as the lands of the Damara, Kwanyama, Ovambo, and those surrounding the Cubango

⁵⁴¹ Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe*, 263.

⁵⁴² Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe*, 263; *Universal History: From the Earliest Account of Time, Compiled from Original Writers*, Vol. XVI (London: Richardson, Osborne, Hitch, Millar, Rivington, Crowder, Davey, Law, Longman & Ware, 1755), 2.

⁵⁴³ Lopes/Pigafetta also made references to “jagas” fighting Amazon warriors in the lands bordering the *Mwene-a-Mutapa*, which might be a reference to the presence of Mbangala bands in the kingdom of Mataman and/or in the *Mwene-Muji*: Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the surrounding countries*, 118-119, 124. See also Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, 129.

⁵⁴⁴ William Fordyce Mavor, *The History of Various Modern African Nations* (London: Richard Phillips, 1808), 2; Mair, *A Brief Survey of the Terraqueous Globe*, 263.

⁵⁴⁵ The eighteenth-century explorer Christopher Frederick Damberger, “Extracts from Damberger’s travels in the interior of Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to Morocco, from the years 1781 to 1797”, *The Edinburgh Magazine of Literary Miscellany*, Vol. XVII (Edinburgh: J. Ruthven & Sons, 1801), 127, asserted there were reports of “fertile valleys” and “beautiful meadows” in the interior of the kingdom of Mataman.

⁵⁴⁶ According to Mavor, *The History of Various Modern African Nations*, 2, “the description that have been given of this country are exceedingly confused, fabulous and ridiculous. In our researches after the truth, we are surfeited with fictions, and disgusted with stories of nations of Amazons and Cannibals, who wage perpetual war with each other, and in whose shambles the limbs of the captives are exposed to sale; who bury their children alive, and recruit their armies with the stoutest of their captives. The Portuguese writers are the only persons that have pretended to describe this country; and, as no European settlements have been made in this barbarous and unpromising district, it is in vain to expect relations which have the smallest appearance of truth or probability”. See also Walker, *Elements of Geography and of the Natural and Civil History*, 503.

⁵⁴⁷ *Universal History*, Vol. XVI, 2.

River⁵⁴⁸. Reports written by Finnish missionaries from the beginning of the twentieth century extended the territory of Cimbebasia to the upper Zambezi River⁵⁴⁹.

Contemporary references to Cimbebasia often locate it in the western arid lands of today's northern Namibia (Kaokoland and Damaraland), from the lower Cunene River (17°15'S) to the Bravaghul River⁵⁵⁰ (23°S), close to the Tropic of Capricorn. Desch-Obi located the lands of Cimbebasia further north, defining it as the region "from the southern section of the central highlands to just north of the Etosha pan"⁵⁵¹.

Hermanegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, who travelled the interior of Benguela in the 1880s, had direct contact with the peoples of the lowlands (Mbuelo) as well as the inhabitants of the central plateau (Nano). They travelled through Quilengues using the services provided by local porters, guides and other African professionals. These Portuguese explorers, and self-taught ethnographers, developed their own thesis about the origins of the Mbangala ("jagas") combining the knowledge acquired in the works of Lopes/Pigafetta, Giovanni Cavazzi and Antonio Nogueira⁵⁵². They believed that Zimbo (*Ximbo*) was the first warlord of the Mbangala and that they had an ancestral close relation with the "tribes" of Quilengues (*Ba-nhaneca* and *Ba-humbi*, or the Mbangala). In their view, following the defeated in Eastern Ethiopia (kingdom of Melinde), Zimbo retreated to the lands in the lower Cunene basin, where he found a *kilombo*. From there, Zimbo waged war against the kingdom of Mataman, forcing their people to flee to desert areas in the lands of Cimbebasia and Damaraland⁵⁵³.

Capello and Ivens located the kingdom of Mataman as a densely populated state between the Cunene River and the Chela Mountain Range and were sure that its inhabitants were indeed

⁵⁴⁸ Carlos Duparquet, *Viagens a Cimbebásia* (Luanda, Museu de Angola: 1953), 105-140. See also his map entitled "Carte de l'Ovampo" between pages 138-139.

⁵⁴⁹ Matti Peltola, *Suomen lähetysseuran Afrikan työn historia. Sata vuotta suomalaista lähetystyötä 1859-1959*, Vol. II [The History of African Work by the Finnish Missionary Society. One Hundred Years of Finnish Missionary Work, 1859-1959, Vol. II] (Kuopio: Suomen Lähetysseura, 1958). A microfilm containing this document is deposited at the National Archives of Namibia, but I could not have access to it because of problems with the microfilm equipment. I did have access to a brief description of its contents in the reference book for the microfilms of the archive. Nowadays, Cimbebasia is the name of a neighborhood in the suburbs of Namibia's capital, Windhoek.

⁵⁵⁰ Now called Kuiseb River, close to today's Walvis Bay, Namibia.

⁵⁵¹ Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 20-21.

⁵⁵² Capello and Ivens, *From Benguella to the Territory of Yacca*, 2 Vols; Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, 2 vols.

⁵⁵³ Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 43, 215-217, 324-327. See also Birmingham, "Speculations on the Kingdom of Kongo", 10; Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 189.

Damara (*Dámaras*). They also recorded traditions concerning Humbe-Inene, the ruler of the great confederation of warrior-hunters that controlled many places in the interior of Benguela from the homeland in the lower Cunene basin⁵⁵⁴.

Captain R. Avelot, in turn, conjectured that the Mbangala (*Jaga*) annihilated the kingdom of Mataman at the end of the sixteenth century, forcing its inhabitants (*Cimbeba* or *Shi-mbeba*) to flee to the southern lands across the lower Cunene River, where they would later become the Damara (*Daman*) and other Herero peoples⁵⁵⁵. These Mbangala founded two new “kingdoms” along the inner Cunene basin after the destruction of the kingdom of Mataman: Huila and Lunkumbi (*Lu-n’kumbi*), the latter ruled by Humbe-Inene⁵⁵⁶. Avelot also suggested that there was a unification of these two “kingdoms” by the Humbe-Inene, who began to rule over the entire Caculovar basin (*Ka-ku-lovar*), as well as Huila (*Hoila* or *Auyla*)⁵⁵⁷.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Father Duparquet also gained access to oral traditions from the Damara⁵⁵⁸ that linked their ancestors to the kingdom of Mataman, which he located on the north (right) bank of the lower Cunene River. The traditions recorded that the Damara had migrated from the north about two centuries earlier, at the time of the Mbangala invasions. The missionary was certain that the Damara were direct descendants of the people of

⁵⁵⁴ Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 322 – note 1.

⁵⁵⁵ The historical connection between the destruction of the “kingdom” of Mataman by waves of attacks from Mbangala bands of warriors and the rise of Humbe-Inene has been a matter of some academic debate. Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 25, 234 – note 48, argued for a clear connection between the Mbangala invasions in the lower Cunene River basin, the destruction of Mataman and the rise of Humbe-Inene. See also Guebe, *Resistência à ocupação colonial do sul de Angola*, 23-24. Moreover, Carlos Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola: The Nyaneka-Nkumbi Ethnic Group* - Vol. II (New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, [1961] 1979), 14-30, has shown connections between the Mbangala (*Jaga*) and several of the polities that later occupied the territory of the “kingdom” of Mataman. He has also shown that the ruling class of Mutano, “capital” of Humbe-Inene, inherited titles that can be traced back to the Mbangala, such as “Humbe” and “Ngonga”. Similarly, Frieda-Nela Williams, *Precolonial Communities of Southwestern Africa: A History of Owambo Kingdoms, 1600-1920*, 2nd ed. (Windhoek, National Archives of Namibia, [1991] 1994), 60-67, has found traces of Mbangala interference in the migratory movements of Owambo peoples that occupied the territory of northern Namibia: but she relates them to the Lunda expansion and the supposed “exodus of Kinguri”, in accordance with the paradigm still in vogue.

⁵⁵⁶ Mutano, “capital” of Humbe-Inene, was located on left margin of the Caculovar River, close to its intersection with the Cunene River. See Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 25; For another reference about Mutano, see Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 2, 151.

⁵⁵⁷ Avelot, “Les Grands Mouvements de Peuples en Afrique”, 81, 164-165. See also Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 24-25.

⁵⁵⁸ According Duparquet, *Viagens a Cimbebasia*, 86, the nation of the Damara was divided into different “tribes”, each with its own ruler, but all recognized the hegemony of the main ruler Camaherero.

Mataman (*Ma-daman*), who had survived the Mbangala invasion and crossed the Cunene to escape, later mixing with Ovambo (*Owambo*) peoples⁵⁵⁹.

The German missionary Heinrich Vedder, the first to undertake a study of the past of the Ovambo people, similarly saw historical ties between the Mbangala and Ovambo. In his view, the occupation of Ovamboland (today's northern Namibia) was linked to the Mbangala expansion and their participation in the Atlantic slave trade from the beginning of the seventeenth century⁵⁶⁰. Historians dedicated to the history of Ovamboland, however, have refuted Vedder's theories about the association between the Ovambo peoples and the *Imbangala*⁵⁶¹, based on the myth of Kinguri and on Miller's work about the chronology of their expansion⁵⁶².

Hence, the southern Mbangala expansion resulted in the destruction of the kingdom of Mataman and the rise of the Humbe-Inene as the major power in southern Quilengues, stretching its influence from the inner Cunene basin up to the central plateau. Capello and Ivens asserted that Humbe-Inene ruled over a large territory that extended from the kingdom of Bihé (*Viye*) to the lands of the Kwanyama (*Cunhama*), today's northern Namibia. According to the information collected by the explorers, Humbe-Inene was an ally of the "king of Angola" (Ndongo) and gave him support against Portuguese military incursions into their territories. However, one of his allies from the central plateau (the "king" of Bihé) did not want to make war against the Portuguese *conquistadores* and disobeyed the orders to help Ndongo. This dispute led to a war between Humbe and Bihé in which the forces of Humbe-Inene were defeated and forced to retreat⁵⁶³.

⁵⁵⁹ Duparquet, *Viagens a Cimbabásia*, 87. See also Desch-Obi, "Engolo", 20-21; Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 234 – note 48; Williams, *Precolonial Communities of Southwestern Africa*, 51-67; Marta Salokoski, "How Kings are Made – How Kingship Changes: A Study of Rituals and Ritual Change in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Ovamboland, Namibia" (PhD Dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2006).

⁵⁶⁰ Heinrich Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1938), 15. Vedder based his work on twenty-eight manuscript volumes deposited in the Parliamentary Library of Windhoek and on oral data from the Ovambo peoples collected at the beginning of the twentieth century by the missionaries Erkki Laurmaa (from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission in northern Namibia) and Karl Sckär (who worked in the Rhenish mission in the Uukwanyama region). See also Williams, *Precolonial Communities of Southwestern Africa*, 25.

⁵⁶¹ According to Williams, *Precolonial Communities of Southwestern Africa*, 24-25, 30 – note 129, "Vedder wanted to present the arrival of the Ovambo people as coinciding with that of the Portuguese, and also with the Imbangala expansion in Angola, which he believed brought the Ovambo with it. However, Miller's (1971) study on Imbabgala movements indicates that when they (Imbangala) arrived in southern Angola, the area was already settled by Ovimbundu and related people, with established kingdoms which the Imbangala conquered".

⁵⁶² Miller, "The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History", 549-574.

⁵⁶³ Capello and Ivens, *De Angola à contra-costa*, Vol. 1, 214. See also Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 326-327; Raimundo da Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, [c. 1835] 1963), 324; Desch-Obi, "Engolo", 3; Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 20-21.

Another Portuguese explorer who roamed the interior of the kingdom of Benguela towards the end of the nineteenth century, Alexandre Serpa Pinto, collected some oral traditions about the origins of the “kingdom of Bihé” and its connection to Humbe-Inene. According to these traditions, Bihé was one of the sons of the *soba* of Humbe. A famous elephant-hunter who married Cahanda, the daughter of the king of Gamba (called Bomba), Bihé thus became ruler of great part of the central plateau. He also ruled over many “Ganguela tribes” (Ngangela) who migrated to the new kingdom⁵⁶⁴. In the nineteenth century, Avelot attested that the dominant class in Bihé still considered themselves direct descendants of the Mbangala from Humbe (*Jaga du Humbé*)⁵⁶⁵.

Conclusion

This chapter had the objective of tracing the historical processes undergone in the territory of Quilengues prior to the establishment of a Portuguese settlement on the coast of Benguela at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In order to understand who were the main internal agents of change during this period, it was necessary to clarify a series of misunderstandings about the Mbangala bands who roamed the interior of Angola and Benguela since the sixteenth century. It was also necessary to deconstruct oral traditions and historiographies about the origins of the Mbangala, in this case the *Imbangala* of Kasanje, that have been legitimized as historical events by the weight of the authority of both elders and scholars.

The fall of the “Exodus of Kinguri”, that is, the debunking of the oral traditions about the origins of the Mbangala in the Lunda commonwealth, has left a major gap in the historiography of West Central Africa and raised concerns about the chronology previously established for important polities of Central Africa. This chapter is an attempt to begin a new academic discussion about the rise and expansion of the Mbangala bands, which features as one of the most important historical events in West Central Africa in the sixteenth century and a major element for the understanding of historical processes from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The rise of the Mbangala bands and their martial cult of the *kilombo* in the sixteenth century brought social, political and

⁵⁶⁴ Alexandre Alberto de Serpa Pinto, *How I Crossed Africa: From the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, through Unknown Countries; Discovery of the Great Zambezi and Affluents* (San Francisco: R.W. Bliss and Company, 1881), 90-91. See also Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor*, 231 – note 21.

⁵⁶⁵ Avelot, “Les Grands Mouvements de Peuples en Afrique”, 166.

religious disruption to the decentralized lineage-based agropastoral communities that occupied the region since the fifteenth century. The turmoil and destruction created by these bands of roaming warriors combined with environmental challenges, such as extended droughts, created the perfect landscape for the development of the slave trade in Benguela in the seventeenth century. The different Mbangala bands that roamed the interior became both partners in slaving operations and an easy justification for the military actions of Luso-African slavers.

The efficiency of the Mbangala martial culture, including its expansion through the incorporation of young men and their transformation into dedicated warriors who believed themselves “invulnerable” to physical and spiritual harm, made the Mbangala bands unstoppable and took them to distant parts of West Central Africa, while forcing small and big polities to adapt to the “revolution” they ignited. Documental and linguistic evidence point to different waves of Mbangala migrations moving out of Quilengues and expanding both northwards and southwards. In time, these bands of roaming warriors settled down and “diluted” themselves into the local communities they interacted with. This amalgamation with local communities they once raided included the acceptance of new kinship ties and the development of lineage structures.

In the next chapter we will see how Mbangala bands and Luso-African slavers worked together for the development of the Atlantic slave trade from Benguela in the seventeenth century and turned it into one of the most important slave-exporting regions in the history of the Atlantic slave trade.

Chapter 3

Foreign Intervention and the Rise of the Atlantic Slave Trade in Benguela

The rise of Mbangala bands in the sixteenth century prepared the landscape for the development of the Atlantic slave trade on the coast of Benguela at the beginning of the following century. The fast spread of these nomadic warriors and the way they reproduced themselves, through the kidnapping of adolescents who soon became new warriors, led to their occupation of vast portions of the interior of Benguela at the beginning of the seventeenth century. I argue that this widespread presence of Mbangala bands in the *sertões* shaped the territory of Quilengues, populating it with refugees from communities disrupted by raids and internal wars. A combination of systemic violence and environmental destruction, including enduring droughts and the burning of fields by invading Mbangala warlords, caused the displacement of entire communities, forcing them to move into someone else's domains and to accept subjugation under new local rulers. Groups of displaced peoples moving about and migrating into foreign territory were easy prey for Mbangala warlords "hunting" in the area⁵⁶⁶. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, they became the "ideal" victims for the Atlantic slave trade.

In this chapter, I discuss the rise of the Atlantic slave trade on the coast of the "kingdom of Benguela" and the participation of both foreign and local agents in the development of that commerce. I argue that the intervention of Portuguese and Luso-African slavers on the coast and in the interior of Benguela empowered some African authorities, including Mbangala warlords, who chose to open trading relations with the foreigners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The acquisition of imported goods by these local authorities, such as textiles, alcohol and weapons, reshaped the political landscape of the region that Luso-Africans generically called "Quilengues",

⁵⁶⁶ Luso-African slavers operating in Benguela in the beginning of the seventeenth century depended on local Mbangala warriors to "hunt slaves" for them. In 1617, the governor of Angola, Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos, wrote to El-Rei, Dom Felipe II, explaining the importance of the "*jagas*" for the development of the slave trade in Angola. He refers to the Mbangala mercenaries working for Portuguese officials and *moradores* as "hunting dogs" (*cães de caça*) who brought them slaves from the interior of Benguela: "Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei", No. 98 (28 August 1617), in *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* (henceforth MMA): *África Ocidental, 1611-1621*, 1st series, Vol. 6, Antonio Brásio, ed. (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955), 283. Colonial historians, such as Alfredo Albuquerque Felner and Ralph Delgado, also used this analogy comparing African warriors to "hunting dogs" in the service of Portuguese slavers. Alfredo Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação e início do estabelecimento dos Portugueses no Congo, Angola e Benguela, extraído de documentos históricos* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1933), 207, called the Mbangala "a pack of dogs" (*matilha*). Ralph Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela: do descobrimento à criação do governo subalterno* (Lisboa: Ed. do Autor, 1945), 220, also used the expression "hunting dogs", probably taken from Vasconcelos' 1617 letter to El-Rei, as did John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 137.

and its effects were felt as far as Humbe Inene. The participation of Mbangala bands and other African warriors in slaving expeditions throughout the *sertões* enabled the expansion in the supply of slaves on the coast and the ascension of Benguela as a major slave exporter. Nonetheless, the war brought by foreign slavers did not spare their allies, not even after the acceptance of vassalage. Anyone could become a victim of the Atlantic slave trade.

There are documental references attesting to contacts between Portuguese sailors and local African authorities of the so-called “kingdom of Benguela” before the official arrival of Manuel Cerveira Pereira in 1617. These traders visited the region to acquire a series of commodities offered by African communities, which included vegetables, beeswax, cattle, ivory, copper “bracelets” or *manilhas*, and slaves⁵⁶⁷. Although the search for copper mines in the interior of Benguela became the main justification used by the governor of Angola, Manuel Cerveira Pereira (1603-1606 and 1615-1617) to explore Benguela, slaves quickly became the major reason for the Portuguese presence in the region⁵⁶⁸. Governor Cerveira Pereira, who was also the first governor of Benguela, was one of the major promoters of the slave trade and became known as the “*conquistador* of Benguela”⁵⁶⁹.

⁵⁶⁷ Luciano Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses: Benguela e seu Sertão, por um anonymo, Coleção de documentos, 1617-1622* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1881), 5. See also Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 20-21.

⁵⁶⁸ There were serious doubts about the existence of copper mines in the vicinity of Benguela, the main reason raised by Manuel Cerveira Pereira to invest in its exploration. The bishop of Congo, Dom Frei Manuel Baptista, affirmed that “there is no copper in Benguela”. He had consulted with *capitães-mores* and sailors who lived in Benguela and they told him they had never heard any stories about these mines. Bishop Baptista confronted Captain Cerveira Pereira a few days before his departure for Benguela in a new expedition to the supposed copper mines, who replied that although he had never seen them, he had heard news of their existence: “Lembranças do Bispo do Congo a El-Rei” No. 121 (7 September 1619), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 363. In 1617, the governor of Angola, Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos, suggested that the real reason for Captain Cerveira Pereira’s desire to explore Benguela was to capture slaves for the Atlantic market: “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 283-285. In 1624, Governor Fernão de Sousa wrote to Captain Cerveira Pereira ordering him to stop trying to deceive the Crown with stories about mines: Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2 (Luanda: Banco de Angola, 1948), 117-118. In a report from 1781, the governor of Benguela, Antonio José Pimentel de Castro e Mesquita (1779-1784), informed his superiors that he did not find the alleged copper mines of Benguela. He reported that the “blacks” from the region did not have information about the supposed mines either, even those who used copper bracelets, arguing that if there was any copper in the region it would be a common article among the local populations, who were very fond of this type of ornament: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 64, Doc. 35, “Ofício do governador de Benguela António José Pimentel de Mello e Castro”, (20 July 1781).

⁵⁶⁹ The title of *conquistador* was created in the fifteenth century, with the proclamation of the *Dum Diversas*, a papal bull issued by Pope Nicholas V (1452) that authorized the king of Portugal (Dom Afonso V) to conquer infidels and pagans, and allowing their perpetual enslavement. This broad authorization to enslave non-Christians was only constrained by a decision of the Holy Office from 1686, which required a declaration of “just war” to justify any attacks: Estevam C. Thompson, “Fontes coloniais para uma história pré-colonial de Benguela, sécs. XVII a XIX”, *Africana Studia*, No. 25 (2015): 40.

There is also plenty of information about the establishment of commercial contacts between Portuguese slavers and Mbangala warlords, referred to as “*jagas*” in the documentation, soon after the arrival in 1617 of Governor Cerveira Pereira and his men, which contradicts Mariana Candido’s reading of the primary documentation⁵⁷⁰. Early descriptions of the “*jagas*” camped close to São Filipe de Benguela did not differ from the established discourse that viewed the Mbangala as “thieves” and “cannibals”, who sustained themselves through raiding and the consumption of human flesh⁵⁷¹. They were depicted as “hunting dogs” (*cães de caça*) used by Portuguese slavers to acquire captives in the interior of Benguela⁵⁷². According to one source, they ate most of their captives and sold the remaining ones to slave traders⁵⁷³.

Some traders operating in the region of Benguela argued that the alliances with the Mbangala warlords were essential for the development of commerce⁵⁷⁴. They affirmed that there was no way to maintain their slaving business without the participation of “*jagas*” hunting slaves for them⁵⁷⁵. Others opposed this partnership and believed that soon these “*jagas*” would “consume” all natives, leaving the land uninhabited, as they had done in other areas in which they had entered and were allowed to remain⁵⁷⁶.

⁵⁷⁰ Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 41 and 44-45, affirms that “Portuguese documents on Benguela are silent on the Imbangalas, suggesting that they were not an important force in the history of Benguela”. Some pages later, however, she cites a document attesting that Quilengues was a territory “filled with Quilombos of *jagas*”.

⁵⁷¹ “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 283-285. Although Captain Cerveira Pereira worked alongside some Mbangala warlords, he also accused them of being “cannibals” when it was convenient: José Rivair Macedo, “Jagas, canibalismo e ‘guerra preta’: os Mbangalas, entre o mito europeu e as realidades da África Central do século XVII”. *História*, São Paulo, Vol. 23, No. 1 January/June (2013): 64.

⁵⁷² “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 283.

⁵⁷³ “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 284. Joseph C. Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, *Cahiers d’études africaines*, Vol. 13, No. 49 (1973): 121-149, argues that stories about wide-spread cannibalism among the Mbangala could be a strategy used by slave traders to justify the low number of slaves officially reported to the colonial administration despite the large number of captives captured during enslaving operations. See also Chapter 2.

⁵⁷⁴ “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 283-285. See also Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Franz Weiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985), 7; Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 207, 303.

⁵⁷⁵ The “*jagas*” were also considered necessary allies in the “kingdom” of Angola, as reported by the *conquistador* Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco. He affirmed that the “*jagas*” were feared by the other African polities and that their alliance could be used to deter local authorities from rebelling against the colonial administration. He advised Portuguese authorities that grape wine was their most cherished commodity and that they should be provided three barrels of wine annually for their most important celebrations: “Relação de Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco”, No. 136 (16 January 1620), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 451.

⁵⁷⁶ “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 283-285.

This chapter also considers the surge of the slave trade in the end of the eighteenth century, linking it to the increase of Portuguese military actions in Caconda and Quilengues. Disguised as “punitive expeditions” against “rebel *sobas*”, these were indeed slaving operations directed against vassal and independent African authorities. Hence, I argue that Quilengues was not only an area through which slave caravans travelled to reach coastal markets, but was also an important reservoir of captives itself. This argument corroborates recent historiography on the slave trade in West Central Africa, which has pointed to the origins of slaves from areas close to the embarkation points on the coast⁵⁷⁷. This new historiography has criticized Joseph C. Miller’s thesis regarding an ever-expanding “slaving frontier” in Angola and Benguela and the role of long-distance caravans in the supply of slaves to the Atlantic market⁵⁷⁸.

This chapter also shows that the acceptance of vassalage by African authorities did not necessarily protect them from being attacked by military officers involved in the slave trade. Hence, instead of understanding these unjustified wars against vassal *sobas*, supposedly protected by their status, as an “incoherence of the legislation”⁵⁷⁹, I argue these were deliberate attacks promoted by military personnel unapologetically involved in the slave trade and who had little regard for the orders received from their superiors from Benguela, Luanda or Lisbon. More examples of the slavers’ disregard for colonial regulations and procedures, as well as for the protection supposedly granted to African vassals, will be shown in chapter 4 and 5.

Finally, I challenge the interpretation found in some colonial sources presented in this chapter, and recently reaffirmed by Daniel Domingues da Silva⁵⁸⁰, that the slave trade in Benguela

⁵⁷⁷ José C. Curto, “Rethinking the Origin of Slaves in West Central Africa”, in *Changing Horizons of African History*, Awet T. Weldemichael, Anthony A. Lee and Edward A. Alpers, eds. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2017), 23-47; Daniel Domingues da Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 18-19, 73-99; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 198-214; Roquinaldo A. Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 52-87. See also Daniel Domingues da Silva, “From beyond the Kwango: Tracing the Linguistic Origins of Slaves Leaving Angola, 1811-1848”, *Almanack*, No. 12 (2016): 34-43; Daniel Domingues da Silva, “The Kimbundo Diaspora to Brazil: Records from the Slave Ship *Brilhante*, 1838”, *African Diaspora*, Vol. 8 (2015): 200-219.

⁵⁷⁸ For more on the slaving frontier thesis, see Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 140-169. David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours Under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 133-161, had previously developed the main ideas about displacement to the interior caused by wars and the establishment of peaceful relationships with African communities living close to the coast.

⁵⁷⁹ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 175-188.

⁵⁸⁰ Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa*, 96.

started after failed attempts to find copper. I argue rather that the exploration of the supposed copper mines in the interior of Benguela was but an excuse given by slave traders, such as governors Manuel Cerveira Pereira and Lopo Soares Lasso, to exploit the region for slaves. Hence, instead of having failed to find the mines⁵⁸¹, Cerveira Pereira, in fact, succeeded in his true, and personal, goal of developing the Atlantic slave trade from Benguela.

Benguela-a-Velha and the tale of a white mercenary among the “jagas”

As indicated above, Portuguese contact with the Benguela region began well before the arrival of Captain Cerveira Pereira as the first Portuguese governor of Benguela in 1617. The Portuguese visited the coast of Benguela since the end of the fifteenth century. In 1483, the Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão sailed to the mouth of the Catumbela River and dropped anchor in a nearby bay, which he named *Angra de Santa Maria*. He also visited the site that would later be chosen for the first attempt of Portuguese settlement in the “kingdom of Benguela”⁵⁸². By 1546, Portuguese and Luso-African traders regularly visited the lands around the Longa River to acquire copper and slaves from local inhabitants⁵⁸³.

The first governor of Angola, Paulo Dias de Novais (1575-1588), also organized maritime expeditions to the southern coast of Benguela⁵⁸⁴. He sent Captain Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco to explore the littoral down to Cape Negro (*Cabo Negro*), who returned with news about the existence of valuable minerals and cattle in the hands of the local population. Governor Novais then ordered his nephew, Captain Antonio Lopes Peixoto, to create a *presídio* on the coast of Benguela from where trading caravans could be launched to explore the wealth of the land⁵⁸⁵.

⁵⁸¹ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 47-49.

⁵⁸² Augusto Antonio de Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola, 1784-1791”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, 7ª série, (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1887), 417; Ernest G. Ravenstein, “The Voyages of Diogo Cão and Bartholomeu Dias, 1482-88”, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 6, December (1900): 631. See also Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 37.

⁵⁸³ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 324.

⁵⁸⁴ This southern portion of Benguela would become, centuries later, the province of Moçamedes (1840): See José C. Curto and Arshad Desai, “The Early Demography of Moçamedes, 1839-1869: A Preliminary Analysis”, *Historiae*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2019): 11-32.

⁵⁸⁵ Elias Alexandre da Silva Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Editora Ática, [1787-1792] 1937), 204-205. Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 324; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 21.

Captain Peixoto left Luanda in 1587 with seventy men and anchored close to a hill Diogo Cão had dubbed “*A Terra de Duas Pontas*”, called simply “*Morro*” in the sixteenth century, meaning “hill” or more precisely “cliff”⁵⁸⁶. The initial Portuguese settlers developed commercial relations with a major authority of the region, who initially saw this foreign presence on the coast as advantageous, and even accepted the presence of foreigners in his *libatas*⁵⁸⁷. The foreign traders declared that this local ruler, identified simply as “king of Benguela”⁵⁸⁸, reached out to them in order to establish trade, accepting “subjugation” to Portugal to enhance their relationship⁵⁸⁹.

Despite initial peaceful relations, the local ruler changed his attitude towards the foreign presence in his lands and decided to expel the Portuguese settlers. He began by attacking a group of 50 soldiers fishing on the beach without their guns. They were all beheaded. African warriors then moved against the settlement, where they slaughtered everyone in sight. Only two soldiers managed to escape and return to Luanda to provide the governor of Angola with news of the attack⁵⁹⁰. According to one source, Captain Peixoto tried to flee on horseback, but died from injuries sustained during the attack before reaching safety⁵⁹¹.

After its destruction, this first settlement close to “*Morro*” became known as Benguela-a-Velha (Old Benguela)⁵⁹². It would take decades for a new attempt to create a settlement in Benguela, despite some expeditions sent by Governor João Furtado de Mendonça (1595-1602) to explore the region⁵⁹³. Slave traders also kept visiting Benguela and engaging in commerce with

⁵⁸⁶ Ravenstein, “The Voyages of Diogo Cão and Bartholomeu Dias”, 631.

⁵⁸⁷ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 205.

⁵⁸⁸ There is some academic debate among historians of West Central Africa about who was the supposed “king of Benguela”: David Birmingham, “The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1965): 146; Jan Vansina, “More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1966): 425-426; Miller, Joseph C. “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1972): 560-564; John K. Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 130, 114; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 33, 37-38.

⁵⁸⁹ “Carta do Padre Diogo da Costa ao Provincial de Portugal”, No. 87 (31 May 1586) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 3, 21.

⁵⁹⁰ The eighteenth-century historian Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 206, called the attack a “carnage” (*carniçaria*). Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 23, used similar language to talk about the attack, calling it a “horrendous carnage” (*medonha carnificina*). Both historians suggested that news about the destruction of the *presídio* and the death of his nephew helped shorten the life of Governor Novais. For a brief description of the event, see also Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 7-8.

⁵⁹¹ This source also affirms that some people who were in the fort took refuge in a ship, taking their merchandise (*fazendas*) with them and later returning to Luanda: “História da residência dos padres da Companhia de Jesus em Angola, e cousas tocantes ao Reino, e Conquista”, No. 132 (1 May 1594), in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 4, 572.

⁵⁹² For the location of “Morro de Benguela Velha”, see Appendix 6.

⁵⁹³ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 324.

local authorities, including some Mbangala warlords⁵⁹⁴. Andrew Battell, an English sailor and mercenary, participated in one of these inland slaving expeditions close to Benguela-a-Velha⁵⁹⁵.

On one occasion, the slaving expedition of which Battell was part met a group of Mbangala warriors camped on the left (south) margin of the Cuvo River⁵⁹⁶. According to his testimony, this Mbangala band had not had previous contact with slavers, because their “*jaga*” had never seen white men before. The Mbangala warlord supplied captives to Battell’s expedition at rock bottom prices⁵⁹⁷. In return, the “*Jaga*” asked the Portuguese to help his band cross the Cuvo River with one of their boats, so they could engage in war against “*Benguelas*” on the other side of the river⁵⁹⁸.

After defeating his enemy, the “*Jaga*” sold part of the captives to the Portuguese. For five straight months, the foreign slavers acquired victims from these “*jagas*” until one day, after returning from Luanda to acquire more captives, they realized that the Mbangala were gone. The slavers decided to follow them into the interior. On the way, they met another local warlord called Mofarigosat who also had never had contact with white men. The slavers ended up fighting alongside Mofarigosat’s forces to defeat his local enemies. After a series of successful campaigns, the Portuguese slavers asked for permission to leave, but Mofarigosat denied it. They then offered to leave Andrew Battell behind as guarantee that they would return⁵⁹⁹.

Left behind and fearing for his life, Battell decided to flee and try to join the Mbangala band he had previously met. He found some of them at the *ombala* of *soba* Cashil, which Battell describes with certain amazement, and joined the warriors in a two-day march to their *kilombo*, in

⁵⁹⁴ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 328. Joseph C. Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, No. 32, December (1997): 13, suggests that the persistence of warfare and the development of the slave trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries confirmed the utility of the Mbangala warlords and their bands of warriors.

⁵⁹⁵ Ernest G. Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh, in Angola and the Adjoining Regions*. (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1901), 19.

⁵⁹⁶ Battell mentioned that the “*Gagas*” or “*Iagges*” called themselves “*Imbangolas*”: Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 1st ed. (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1613), 589. See also Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 4th ed. (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1626), 772.

⁵⁹⁷ In the early seventeenth century, according to Andrew Battell, slavers paid the equivalent to \$001 *real* per slave bought from the Mbangala in Benguela-a-Velha, while in Luanda the price for a slave was about 12\$000 *réis*. Although the price of slaves in the surroundings of Benguela-a-Velha was quite low, this account seems to be exaggerated and hyperbolic: Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes: Containing the History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, vol. 6 (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), 377; Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 20. See also Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 326.

⁵⁹⁸ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 19-20.

⁵⁹⁹ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 22-23.

Calicasamba. Battell then began to roam the *sertões* with the Mbangala, hoping that they would march west, where he could see the ocean and attempt to board some ship in the vicinity. He visited a number of *libatas* and *ombalas* of powerful *sobas*, including those of Calango, Makellacolonge, Shillambanza and Cafuxe (Kafuxi-ka-Mbari⁶⁰⁰), describing some of these places with clear admiration⁶⁰¹.

Battell recognized some of the rivers that the Mbangala came across, including the Longa and the Cuanza. The Mbangala roamed the left (south) margin of the Cuanza for months and he fought alongside them with his musket, earning a certain reputation among African warriors and authorities alike. Battell earned the favors of *soba* Cafuxe (who he called “*Casoch*”) for his services in war, and bragged he could have anything he desired from this potentate. He also informed that he was protected by his fellow African warriors, being “often carried away in their arms, and saved my life”⁶⁰².

Battell was the only slaver who lived among Mbangala warriors to recount his experience. He described Mbangala warlords and the organization of the *kilombo* with esteem, always praising them for their bravery and military abilities. He left the company of the Mbangala for the *presídio* of Massangano after some Luso-African traders approached them to buy slaves. He later joined the Luso-Africans as a mercenary and fought with his musket under the orders of Governor Cerveira Pereira in the wars of Cambambe⁶⁰³.

As demonstrated above, there was a strong presence of various Mbangala warrior bands in the interior of Benguela as the Portuguese attempted to establish a settlement on that coast at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Some of these Mbangala bands worked as mercenaries for Portuguese and Luso-African slavers and played important roles in the development of the slave trade from Benguela. Thus, I argue that the Mbangala bands are essential to understand the history of Benguela: they appear in many Portuguese sources from the early seventeenth century as long as we know how to read them. Once the misunderstanding about the “*jagas*” is resolved (Chapter

⁶⁰⁰ For more about Kafuxi-ka-Mbari, see Thornton, *A History of West Central Africa to 1850*, 101-107

⁶⁰¹ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 23-27.

⁶⁰² Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 27-28.

⁶⁰³ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 38.

2), the Mbangala thus become a major force behind the history of Benguela and the southern Atlantic slave trade⁶⁰⁴.

Manuel Cerveira Pereira and the development of the Atlantic slave trade from Benguela

Following these first contacts, Manuel Cerveira Pereira⁶⁰⁵ arrived as the first governor of Benguela in mid-1617, accompanied by 150 soldiers in several ships⁶⁰⁶. Although he made a first stop at Benguela-a-Velha, he allegedly judged the area difficult to defend against local enemies and decided to sail further south. Pereira and his party anchored in a bay (*Bahia da Torre* or *de Santo Antônio*⁶⁰⁷) and immediately began building defensive structures, which included a wall and installing a number of artillery pieces.

According to a report from the governor of Angola, Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos (1617-1621), Captain Cerveira Pereira decided not to settle in Benguela-a-Velha, called both “Bemgala” and “Bemguela” in the documentation, mainly because he could not find people to enslave: the Mbangala bands that had previously roamed the area had destroyed all sources of captives. Governor Vasconcelos accused Cerveira Pereira of digressing from his main goal of finding the copper mines in the interior of Benguela and dedicating most of his time and resources to hunt for slaves with the help of an Mbangala warlord with whom he became associated⁶⁰⁸.

⁶⁰⁴ As previously argued, this thesis contradicts some of the most recent historiography on Benguela. See Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 41.

⁶⁰⁵ For a classic colonialist view of Manuel Cerveira Pereira’s life and military career, see Gastão Sousa Dias, *Manuel Cerveira Pereira* (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1940). For a recente fictional version, see Pepetela. *A sul. O Sombreiro* (Alfragide: Dom Quixote, 2011).

⁶⁰⁶ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 8. In another source, Captain Cerveira Pereira claimed that he arrived accompanied by only 130 soldiers, because some had fallen sick before their departure from Luanda. Moreover, thirty-eight soldiers died in Benguela soon after their arrival: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618). A transcript of this document can be found in “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, No. 103 (6 March 1618), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 298.

⁶⁰⁷ There is some dispute about the location of Torre Bay. Lopes de Lima did not believe it was the same of the Cattle Bay (*bahia das Vacas*), which became the central point of embarkation in São Filipe de Benguela. Some pointed to Elephant Bay (*bahia dos Elefantes*) as the actual place chosen by Captain Cerveira Pereira to anchor in Benguela: “Relação da Conquista de Benguela”, in Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 8-9 – note 1. Another source mentions only *bahia de Santo Antonio*: “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 284. See also AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618).

⁶⁰⁸ “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 283-285.

Governor Vasconcelos denounced the great number of slaving operations in Benguela and the use of local Mbangala mercenaries to carry out “illicit” attacks against individuals considered free African subjects of Portugal. He promised to pacify the interior and bring order to the slave market, freeing those wrongfully captured. Yet, Vasconcelos further informed El-Rei⁶⁰⁹ about those who he considered traitors of the Crown for stealing, enslaving and murdering local Portuguese subjects, even “feeding” them to the “*jagas*”. According to this governor of Angola, Captain Cerveira Pereira was among the traitors who should receive capital punishment for their crimes⁶¹⁰.

The governor of Angola wrote repeatedly to his superiors in Lisbon denouncing the slaving operations carried out by Captain Cerveira Pereira and other slavers based in Benguela. The captain had been extorting local *sobas* and stealing goods from them, which scandalized African authorities and made Governor Vasconcelos request a year of tribute exemption for the *sobas*, so that they could recover from the “tyrannies” exercised against them⁶¹¹. Dom Frei Manuel Baptista, the Bishop of Congo, complained to El-Rei that Captain Cerveira Pereira had been given so much power that he became corrupted⁶¹² and that the captain ambioned to begin a new *conquista* of his own by destroying the one that already existed⁶¹³.

An anonymous report (“Benguela e seu sertão”) describing Captain Cerveira Pereira’s arrival in Benguela brings not a few examples of the slaving expeditions and the *modus operandi* of the Portuguese slaver⁶¹⁴. It lists five different slaving raids, called “battles” by the author, against different local African polities, ranging from small nomadic groups to major *sobados*, including

⁶⁰⁹ El-Rei is a reference to Filipe II of Portugal, also known as Filipe III of Spain, who reigned over both Portugal and Spain from 1598 to 1621.

⁶¹⁰ “Carta do governador de Angola a El-Rei”, No. 98 (28 August 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 285.

⁶¹¹ “Carta do governador de Angola ao Conde de Faro”, No. 99 (9 April 1617), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 286-287.

⁶¹² Captain Cerveira Pereira was notorious for his cruelty against African enemies and even his own soldiers. A number of soldiers under his command tried to escape from Benguela to Luanda: Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 334.

⁶¹³ “Lembranças do Bispo do Congo a El-Rei” No. 121 (7 September 1619), MMA, 1st series, Vol. 6, 362. The “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela had been officially separated by a Royal Provision dated 14 February 1615: Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1 (Luanda: Banco de Angola, 1948), 121.

⁶¹⁴ Although it is not possible to confirm the authorship of this report, Luciano Cordeiro, who edited and published the source, believed it could have been written by Manuel Cerveira Pereira himself, or at least by someone under his direct influence: Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 5. Hence, the account also has to be considered as an attempt to leave a positive narrative about Captain Cerveira Pereira and his time as *conquistador* of Benguela. Nevertheless, the report brings an inside look into the Portuguese slaver’s operations in Benguela and the way he confronted local resistance. It also evidences the early alliance made by Captain Cerveira Pereira with local “*jagas*”, that is Mbangala warlords, for the development of the Atlantic slave trade in the region.

conflicts with independent Mbangala warlords who occupied portions of the interior of the “new” *conquista* of Benguela.

According to this anonymous report, Captain Cerveira Pereira arrived with his men on the site of what became São Filipe de Benguela in 17 May 1617. It did not take long for the movement of Portuguese troops on the coast to draw the attention of the local *soba*, probably Peringue⁶¹⁵, who sent scouts to the new settlement to learn about the intruders and their intentions in his lands. Captain Cerveira Pereira declared that he had come in peace and gave the *soba* gifts of textiles as proof of his friendly intentions. The *soba* seems to have given him authorization to remain on the coast, since the author of the report affirmed that the settlers occupied it peacefully and were not attacked after their arrival⁶¹⁶.

Soba Peringue engaged in further diplomatic relations with the Portuguese by sending some cattle to the new settlement on the coast, along with an embassy with his subjects, referred to as “sons” in the documentation. The African ruler, however, declined Captain Cerveira Pereira’s offers of vassalage, which created great tension between the parties. As the Portuguese began the exploration inland, the *soba* retreated to his *kilombo* and was accused of killing some slaves of the settlers along the way. This gave Captain Cerveira Pereira the “justification” he needed to take action. He composed a military detachment of ninety armed men and forty slave-warriors and marched against the *soba*⁶¹⁷.

The first “battle” commanded by Captain Cerveira Pereira against *soba* Peringue was a classic slave raiding operation. The soldiers travelled overnight and attacked the enemy at four in the morning, while they were asleep. When they noticed the invasion, the African warriors retreated to the hills, from where they attacked the invaders with arrows, while the remaining population ran into the bush. As reported by the anonymous author, a vicious skirmish followed,

⁶¹⁵ There are references in another report from 1618 written by Captain Cerveira Pereira about his arrival in Benguela that indicates that the *soba* in question was Peringue: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618). See also Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 333; Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 23; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 45.

⁶¹⁶ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 9. See also AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618).

⁶¹⁷ According to Captain Cerveira Pereira, local African warriors attacked the slaves of the settlers who were cutting trees for wood in the bush, beheading two of them and taking another six as captives: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618). See also Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 9; Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 333.

with the African warriors bravely defending their position. Since they did not know the power of Portuguese firearms, they advanced against the attackers: many were massacred and others retreated into the bush. Captain Cerveira Pereira's forces then invaded the *libata*, capturing those who did not flee, as well as seizing cattle and other supplies. Thereafter, he ordered his men to burn all of the huts and carry the loot back to their settlement⁶¹⁸.

The second "battle" was against the "*jagas*", that is a band of Mbangala warriors from the *sertões* of Benguela. The anonymous author defined them as "venturing warriors" who roamed the interior and behaved like thieves, "making war and destroying the land" without any local resistance. After three months in the region, the Portuguese noticed the existence of a *kilombo* close to their settlement. They received an embassy from its Mbangala warlord, Cangombe⁶¹⁹. The "*Jaga*" reached out to the Portuguese forces stationed close the "Morombo" River (probably the Marimbombo River, a perennial river close to São Filipe de Benguela) to sell some captives. Captain Cerveira Pereira authorized the transaction as long as *Jaga* Cangombe accepted vassalage to Portugal. The anonymous author reported that the Cangombe accepted the conditions and made good trade with the Portuguese⁶²⁰.

This same source briefly described the *kilombo*, praising the bravery of its warriors and the great authority of their warlord, who they obeyed with great "punctuality". *Jaga* Cangombe seems to have developed good commercial relations with the Portuguese traders, but these did not last long. He was eventually accused of treason for inciting slaves to escape from the Portuguese and for giving shelter to more than thirty runaways. Cangombe denied the accusation, declared that he owed no obedience to the Portuguese, and that he could destroy them if he wanted⁶²¹.

⁶¹⁸ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 10. See also AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, "Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira", (2 July 1618).

⁶¹⁹ Although the anonymous author does not name the first Mbangala warlord who made contact with the Portuguese forces in Benguela, Captain Cerveira Pereira describes the same event in one of his reports to his superiors calling him "Cangombe": AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, "Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira", (2 July 1618).

⁶²⁰ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 10-11. See also Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 336.

⁶²¹ Captain Cerveira Pereira also described this conflict with the Mbangala camped closed to São Filipe de Benguela in another report to his superiors. He affirmed that "*Jaga*" Cangombe reached out for an alliance with the Portuguese because they had been fighting his local enemies and that he accepted the help of the "*Jaga*" out of necessity. Captain Cerveira Pereira then complained that the Mbangala warlord began to incite slaves from the Portuguese settlement to run away: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, "Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira", (2 July 1618).

Captain Cerveira Pereira, who lost his temper with these declarations from the “*Jaga*”⁶²², soon organized a punitive expedition with more than eighty armed men against the latter’s *kilombo*. As usual, the soldiers marched overnight, arriving around four in the morning and attacking the enemy forces while they were asleep. They caught their victims, once again, by surprise and forced them to abandon their houses and run to the hills. Many Mbangala warriors remained and fought bravely against the invaders, but were not able to stop the “fury” of Portuguese arms. Some retreated to the hills, while many others were captured by a small detachment of two soldiers on horseback commanded by Captain Cerveira Pereira. The Portuguese also captured and later beheaded the Mbangala warlord⁶²³. The invaders, as was becoming customary, looted the *kilombo* and seized great amount of supplies and more than 150 captives⁶²⁴.

The third slaving expedition reported by the anonymous author was against a group of nomadic herders, identified as the “Moquimbas” (also “Maquimbas” or “Moximbas”). The report explained that these people lived off their cattle and roamed the hills of the interior. They were so resilient, according to the source, that they were the only ones to resist the “*jagas*”. The “Moquimbas”, refused to accept vassalage to El-Rei and left for lands further away from the settlement. But even then, they too soon became victims of Captain Cerveira Pereira. The report justified this attack also by claiming that the Portuguese settlement was in need of supplies, especially beef, and that the cattle of the “Moquimbas” could provide the necessary means for their survival⁶²⁵.

Captain Cerveira Pereira’s troops spent three days seeking the nomadic group in the hills of the backlands of Benguela, until they found them, one morning, transferring their cattle to another pasture. This time, the Portuguese had the support of an Mbangala warlord, who had agreed to join the expedition with eighty of his men. Their soldiers attacked the “Moquimbas” on

⁶²² According to Manuel Cerveira Pereira, the “*Jaga*” declared that the Portuguese were like “women in war” and that they were “only men at sea”. Captain Cerveira Pereira replied that the “*Jaga*” should either return his slaves or “tighten his bow” because he would go after him to show “if whites were men or women”: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618).

⁶²³ After defeating the “*Jaga*”, Captain Cerveira Pereira kept him under captivity for some time, forcing his people to return all runaway slaves in hopes that he would be released. The captain decided to behead “*Jaga*” Cangombe after the return of the slaves to make him an example to others. He added an anecdote that the “*Jaga*” called the name of “Jesus” (*Jesu*) three times before being beheaded, and thus died as a Christian: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618).

⁶²⁴ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 10-11.

⁶²⁵ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 11-12. See also Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 336-337.

foot and, along with Captain Cerveira Pereira and two others on horseback, forced them to leave their huts and cattle behind and to run for their lives. The raiders captured more than a thousand head of cattle, which were shared with the “*jagas*” who helped in the expedition, along with an old woman who was not able to escape⁶²⁶.

The fourth raid commanded by Captain Cerveira Pereira in the interior of Benguela was against a major potentate in the region, probably *soba* Quitumbela⁶²⁷, located close to the mouth of the Coporolo River, also known as São Francisco⁶²⁸ (Map 3). The Portuguese considered *soba* Quitumbela a powerful enemy for his great number of dependents and the fertility of his lands⁶²⁹. His people were accused of visiting the Portuguese settlement to steal from it, including a large number of slaves, who were later resold to the “Moquimbas”. They were also accused of having “killed and eaten” an ensign or *alferes* who had fled from the settlement after committing a crime and was found hiding in the bush. Captain Cerveira Pereira sent messengers to the *sobado* with offers of vassalage, threatening the *soba* with destruction and enslavement in case of refusal. The *soba* refused to accept the captain’s offer, and disdaining the Portuguese forces, boasted that they were not strong enough to face him⁶³⁰.

Captain Cerveira Pereira considered all these events a great offense and assembled a detachment of eighty armed men to march against *soba* Quitumbela. He also counted on the support of the “*jagas*” who had helped him defeat the “Moquimbas” and now worked alongside Portuguese forces. They marched for one and a half day until they reached the main *libata* of their new enemy. Africans scouts, however, followed the movement of the Portuguese troops and alerted the *soba* and his people, who left their houses for fortifications in the bush, taking all their belongings with them.

⁶²⁶ According to Captain Cerveira Pereira’s report from 1618, they seized more than one thousand head of large cattle and a great number of sheep: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618). The number presented by the anonymous author is much higher: 3000 head of cattle: Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 11-12.

⁶²⁷ Captain Cerveira Pereira briefly mentions *Soba* Quitumbela in his 1618 report: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618).

⁶²⁸ According to Lopes de Lima, the *soba* in question was Muene Calunga. See Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 12 – note 1.

⁶²⁹ In another report from 1618, Captain Cerveira Pereira revealed that *soba* Peringue had fled with his people to the lands of a *soba* who occupied the territory close to the bay of São Francisco (Coporolo River): AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 1, Doc. 87, “Representação de Manuel Cerveira Pereira”, (2 July 1618).

⁶³⁰ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 12.

Hence, the raiders found only empty houses when they arrived, except for a small group left behind to attract the invading forces into an ambush. As the African scouts ran into the bush and were followed by the Portuguese and their “*jagas*”, a great number of African warriors armed with arrows awaited the invaders in the bush and counter-attacked. Although the raiders almost panicked in face of such tremendous resistance, the anonymous author declared that they managed to overcome their fear and defeated the resistors with the might of their guns and the strategic use of a few horses. The Portuguese killed many of the Africans they found and captured 20 individuals to sell as slaves and 150 head of cattle. Captain Cerveira Pereira then ordered that the two main *libatas* of Quitumbela be set on fire and all crops, seeds and palm trees to be destroyed. According to our source, the total destruction of their land should teach Africans to obey by fear⁶³¹.

Captain Cerveira Pereira returned to Benguela with his share of the booty, but left fifty soldiers behind in the company of his allied “*jagas*” to carry out other attacks against neighboring *libatas*. The Mbangala warlord, however, did not want to remain in the service of the Portuguese, since he had grown “prosperous and rich” after various successful raids. He told the Portuguese soldiers that he was going to make war elsewhere to bring them more captives. They left for the *sertões* and the soldiers returned to São Filipe de Benguela. Captain Cerveira Pereira would see the warlord’s action as a treasonous act⁶³².

On their way back to the coast, the soldiers met a group of African herders and tried to seize their cattle, but the latter retreated to the rocky hills. Captain Cerveira Pereira was informed of their location and gathered ninety soldiers to raid the hills where the herders had taken refuge. The troops marched for two days and prepared the attack for the early hours of the day, while their victims were still asleep. However, one soldier, who accidentally hit the battle drum, revealed their position. The herders jumped into formation to defend their community, while women and children ran to the higher and more protected parts of the hills, where the invaders could not reach. The herders fought bravely with arrows and stones, but could not resist the attack of the gunmen, who killed several of them. They retreated to the higher hills, leaving cattle and other supplies behind.

⁶³¹ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 12-13.

⁶³² Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 13.

Captain Cerveira Pereira then ordered his men to burn the huts and break all the vessels for water, the latter an especially harmful act, according to the anonymous author⁶³³.

On the following day, the soldiers began their march back to São Filipe de Benguela with their looted cattle. They were forced to follow the low course of a dry river, surrounded by rocky hills. The herders followed the caravan from above and, at the opportune moment, attacked the Portuguese with stones and arrows, causing many injuries. Captain Cerveira Pereira positioned his gunners to hinder the advance of the attackers and fled with the rest of the caravan. The herders grabbed whatever they could and retreated, while the Portuguese took refuge in their camp⁶³⁴.

The anonymous author additionally declared in his report that Captain Cerveira Pereira commanded many other raiding expeditions against local communities during his first years in Benguela, ventures that he did not have enough space to write about. He also denounced the existence of enemies of the captain within the Portuguese forces, who worked to destroy his accomplishments and had even tried to poison him. Those arguments served to justify the lack of information about the copper mines that the captain should have been exploring, instead of raiding local communities and capturing slaves⁶³⁵.

Cerveira Pereira's infamous career finally ended with his death by natural causes in April 1626⁶³⁶, nine years after founding the settlement of São Filipe. Amidst stories of violence and destruction, Captain Cerveira Pereira built the foundations for the slave trade from Benguela while in command of the *Conquista*.

Lopo Soares Lasso and the first military expeditions into Quilengues

Following the death of Captain Manuel Cerveira Pereira, he was replaced by Captain Lopo Soares Lasso (Laço), another experienced slaver and military commander. Captain Lasso was chosen by the governor of Angola, Fernão de Sousa, to replace Captain Cerveira Pereira after Bento Banha Cardoso, yet another local slaver, refused the position. Captain Cardoso allegedly

⁶³³ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 13-14.

⁶³⁴ Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses*, 14.

⁶³⁵ Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 25, argued that the money invested in the search of copper mines in Benguela was not wasted: even though Captain Cerveira Pereira never reached them, it served to organize the slave trade.

⁶³⁶ For more on Cerveira Pereira's death, see Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 117-121.

refused the offer for lack of resources to maintain the military force necessary to defend the settlement in Benguela from African warriors and Dutch forces alike⁶³⁷. Hence, Captain Lasso became the new governor of Benguela (1627-1635).

In order to give the new governor of Benguela the means to maintain the high costs of the venture, Governor Sousa authorized Captain Lasso to use his position to participate in the local slave trade⁶³⁸. If Captain Cerveira Pereira was known as the “*consquitador*” of Benguela, Captain Lasso became known the “*avassalador dos sertões de Benguela*” for the wars he waged in the interior (Quilengues) and the great number of African polities he defeated and turned into “vassals” of Portugal⁶³⁹. The captives acquired during these campaigns guaranteed the funds necessary for the maintenance of the settlement.

Captain Lasso was an experienced slaver who had commanded several expeditions against the “kingdom of Ndongo”. Then a lieutenant, he was responsible for the destruction of the *kilombos* of *soba* Ngunza-a-Ngombe (Zenza Angumbe), *soba* Bangu (Bango-Bango) and *soba* Kafuxi-ka-Mbari (Cafuxe)⁶⁴⁰. He also participated voluntarily in the campaigns commanded by Captain Bento Banha Cardoso against Queen Nzinga-a-Mbande⁶⁴¹, paying for his own troops and other expenses with his deals in the slave trade⁶⁴². Before becoming governor of Benguela, he had also commanded an expedition against a *kilombo* in Kisama (Quiçama), a territory between the “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela known for its “rebellious nature” and great resistance against

⁶³⁷ “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo”, No. 76 (9 July 1626), in Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Franz Weiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985), 163-165. See also Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 115.

⁶³⁸ Governor Sousa informed that Captain Lasso “remained trading” (*ficasse aviando*): “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo”, No. 76 (9 July 1626), in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 163-165; “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo”, No. 76 (1 June 1627), in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 180. See also Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 119-123; Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 93. The participation of governors and *capitães-mores* in the slave trade remained legal until the 1720s. Governor Antonio de Albuquerque Coelho de Carvalho (1722-1725) was the first one to be prohibited from getting involved with the trade and received a salary (*soldo*) of 15\$000 cruzados instead: Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 357; Carlos Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII* (Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1972), 80-81; Miller, *Way of Death*, 547. See also J. C. Feo Cardozo de Castello Branco Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia do vice-almirante Luiz da Mota Feo Torres: A história dos governadores e capitães generaes de Angola, desde 1575 até 1825* (Paris: Fantin, 1825), 244.

⁶³⁹ Mário Antonio Fernandes de Oliveira, *Angolana: documentação sobre Angola (1783 -1883)*, Vol. 1 (Luanda: Centro de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1968), 258.

⁶⁴⁰ Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 163-164; Raimundo da Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, [c. 1835] 1963) 264, 268.

⁶⁴¹ For more about Nzinga-a-Mbande, also Njinga, see Chapter 2

⁶⁴² Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 93. See also “O extenso relatório do governador a seus filhos”, No. 30 (n/d, 1625-1630) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 263.

foreign presence⁶⁴³ (Map 2). Lastly, he was celebrated as defender of São Filipe de Benguela, after driving away the Dutch ships that attacked the town in 1633⁶⁴⁴.

The experienced commander pioneered the penetration of the *sertões* of Benguela and was the first to wage war in the lands of Quilengues, reaching the surroundings of Huila. By 1628, he had opened indirect trade with the deep interior, as far as Quipungo, via a commercial outpost in Quilengues. The inflow of imported goods into “the heartland of the Kunene peoples”, as Desch-Obi calls it, had great impact on the polities located deep into the *sertões*, reaching as far as Humbe Inene. It helped destabilize the traditional political structure of the Cunene region, since the centre of this new source of wealth was in the areas between Quipungo and the outpost of Quilengues, far from the control of Humbe rulers in Mutano⁶⁴⁵. “As a result, the earlier political balance based on cattle redistribution was shaken as subordinate kings and provincial lords (*ovipundi*) moved to take advantage of the trade and acquire goods for their own redistribution of subordinates”⁶⁴⁶.

Captain Lasso left Luanda on 24 April 1627, with seventy-two soldiers and an unknown number of slaves, to occupy his post of the new governor of Benguela. Governor Fernão de Sousa (1624-1630) had ordered him to disembark in the lands of Sumbe-a-Mbwela⁶⁴⁷ (Sumbe Ambala), at the mouth of the Cuvo River, close to Benguela-a-Velha. According to the governor of Angola, this was the most defensible site and the closest one to the supposed copper mines in the interior. Nevertheless, Captain Lasso did not disembark on the shores of Sumbe, but rather in the southern region of Quicombo. He justified his decision by stating this was a better site to anchor and still close to the access route to the copper mines. After disembarking, however, he did not march to

⁶⁴³ “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo” No. 36 (15 August 1624), in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 86.

⁶⁴⁴ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 244-245; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 170. See also Ravenstein, *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, 170.

⁶⁴⁵ Mutano was the “capital” of Humbe-Inene, located on left margin of the Caculovar River, close to its intersection with the Cunene River. For more, see Chapter 2.

⁶⁴⁶ Thomas J. Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 47. See also Gastão Sousa Dias, *Pioneiros de Angola: Explorações portuguesas no sul de Angola, séculos XVII e XVIII*, Coleção Pelo Império, No. 42 (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1937), 7-8; Miller, *Way of Death*, 71-73.

⁶⁴⁷ Sumbe-a-Mbwela was an African ruler who controlled the basin of the Cuvo River: his name was later adopted to designate the people who lived in the region as Sumbe: Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 23.

the supposed mines, but instead engaged in a slaving expedition against “*jagas*” camped in the vicinity⁶⁴⁸.

In a report from 1629, one finds a description of the first military campaign led by Captain Lasso against African authorities in the interior of Benguela, both “*Jagas*” and “*Ambundos*” (that is Mbangala and non-Mbangala). Although Captain Cerveira Pereira had previously defeated some “*jagas*” and *sobas* living in the vicinity of São Filipe de Benguela, he had not engaged the powerful warlords of the interior, in the region dubbed “Quilengues” by the Portuguese. The slave traders did not venture far from their *libatas* and into the *sertões* back then, allegedly not going beyond the *sobado* of Molundo⁶⁴⁹ (Map 3).

At the time of Captain Lasso’s arrival in Benguela, the Portuguese had established mostly peaceful relations with some local African rulers, who after military defeat accepted their terms of vassalage. These included *sobas* Peringue, mani-Berro, Quizamba, and an unnamed *soba* who lived on the coast close to the town of São Filipe, probably Quitumbela⁶⁵⁰. Among the so-called “*jagas*”, only Kakonda was considered a vassal (*feudatário*) of Portugal. Other local *sobas* also kept peaceful commercial relations with the slavers on the coast, although they had not accepted any terms of “subjugation”. Among them, one finds *sobas* Cabamba and Molundo⁶⁵¹.

Captain Lasso disembarked in Benguela on 10 May 1627. Soon after, he received news that a powerful Mbangala warlord in Quilengues, *Jaga* Nguri (Anguri), had raided vassal *sobas* Peringue and mani-Berro and, in the process, had captured their wives, “sons” and cattle. A couple of weeks after his arrival, Captain Lasso thus assembled eighty armed soldiers and marched to the fortified hills (*impuri*) inhabited by Nguri. The Mbangala warlord was defeated and forced to

⁶⁴⁸ “Carta de Fernão de Sousa a Lopo Soares Lasso”, No. 191 (24 April 1627), in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 209. See also “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo”, No. 76 (1 June 1627), in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 180-181; Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 118, 125.

⁶⁴⁹ “Auto do Provedor da Fazenda de Benguela”, No. 202 (23 July 1629) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 303.

⁶⁵⁰ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 65.

⁶⁵¹ “Auto do Provedor da Fazenda de Benguela”, No. 202 (23 July 1629) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 302. Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 125, 404; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 119-120.

accept vassalage, after losing many of his warriors. During these first campaigns in the *sertões*, Captain Lasso lost his left eyesight after being injured by two enemy arrows⁶⁵².

Following this successful campaign against *Jaga* Nguri, Captain Lasso kept advancing into the *sertões*, making war against other African authorities in the interior of Quilengues, among them Bisansongo and Quissangue. *Soba* Bisansongo, for instance, was surrounded in his *impuri* and killed during the battle. His *quiambolé*⁶⁵³ requested a truce and was forced to accept vassalage. Other African rulers, such as *soba* Bembe (Bambe), approached the Portuguese forces after the defeat of Bisansongo to “accept subjugation”. As it happens, a local enemy had expelled Bembe from his lands. But, after becoming a vassal of Portugal, he re-acquired them⁶⁵⁴. In the end, the acceptance of vassalage allowed *soba* Bembe to return to power.

In February 1628, Captain Lasso organized yet another expedition against African polities in the *sertões*. He marched to the lands of *soba* Quilumata (Culimata) with seventy-five soldiers. But Captain Lasso was not able to engage in any battle because Quilumata decided to flee, leaving more than two thousand head of cattle behind, which were seized by the invaders along with some slaves. In September of 1628, he marched on with the same force against *soba* Cabamba, in the lands of Luceque (Luqueco). According to one report, Cabamba was the most powerful *soba* of the interior, and the one with the most aversion to vassalage. A powerful army composed of 1500 African warriors (both “*Ambudos*” and “*Jagas*”) accompanied the slavers, the largest military campaign ever assembled in Benguela, and the one that generated the greatest amount of slaves and cattle⁶⁵⁵.

In November of 1628, Captain Lasso then marched to the region of Sumbe seeking the supposed copper mines of the interior. He found a *kilombo* along the way, but the people fled

⁶⁵² “Auto do Provedor da Fazenda de Benguela”, No. 202 (23 July 1629) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 302-304. See also “O extenso relatório do governador a seus filhos”, No. 30 (n/d, 1625-1630) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 295; Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 125-126.

⁶⁵³ According to Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680*, vol. 1 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, [1680] 1972), 620, *quiambolé* was the title given to “*capitães-mores* by Africans”.

⁶⁵⁴ “Auto do Provedor da Fazenda de Benguela”, No. 202 (23 July 1629) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 303. See also Ralph Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza: Ocupação e aproveitamento do antigo reino de Benguela, 1843-1942*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional. 1940), 229-230.

⁶⁵⁵ The report estimated between four to five thousand head of cattle as seized by the Portuguese. There are no estimates for the number of captives taken, only that they were many (*muitas peças*): “Auto do Provedor da Fazenda de Benguela”, No. 202 (23 July 1629) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 304. See also Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 126.

without engaging in battle. They had probably heard news of previous attacks promoted by the captain and the destruction they caused. The invaders chased the fleeing population for four days, but did not reach them. Nonetheless, Captain Lasso kept waging war on *libatas* he found along the way to the mines, “subjugating” as many as thirteen *sobas*, some of them considered quite powerful enemies. These campaigns led to the enslavement of around one thousand people. Among the *sobas* defeated by Captain Lasso and forced to accept vassalage, one finds: mani-Songo, Lulembe, mani-Nhanga, Quitemo, Cabombo, Conzamba, Monadundo, mani-Catubela, Caungueca, Cabambe, Gumbe, Cangunda and Cahuri⁶⁵⁶.

Captain Lasso thereafter informed the governor of Angola that a local enemy of the *soba* who reigned over the copper mines had defeated and expelled him from his lands. The defeated *soba* reached out to the governor of Benguela to sew an alliance, promising to give him the copper mines if he helped destroy his nemesis. Captain Lasso justified he could not march to the mines because he did not have enough manpower and asked his superiors for reinforcements to carry out this campaign⁶⁵⁷. These excuses and requests were very similar to those of Manuel Cerveira Pereira.

Although Captain Lasso kept sending news about the existence of copper mines in the interior, his greatest “accomplishments” were successful slaving raids against local *sobas* and “*jagas*”⁶⁵⁸. When he finally arrived at the mines in the interior of the Cuvo River⁶⁵⁹, the governor of Angola complained that the captain had not sent enough information about them, but only four rocks with a small amount of copper⁶⁶⁰. The slave trade was to remain the most important business for the Portuguese in Benguela throughout the century.

⁶⁵⁶ “Auto do Provedor da Fazenda de Benguela”, No. 202 (23 July 1629) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 304.

⁶⁵⁷ “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo”, No. 111 (29 August 1628) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 209. See also “Carta de Fernão de Sousa não enviada”, No. 107 (August 1628) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 199; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 124-125.

⁶⁵⁸ “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo”, No. 121 (5 November 1628) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 217.

⁶⁵⁹ Captain Lasso took possession of the mines of Sumbe, close to the Cuvo River, in March of 1629: Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 1, 93. According to Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 126, these were the “real” mines of Benguela, not those Captain Cerveira Pereira spent years searching for.

⁶⁶⁰ “Carta de Fernão de Sousa ao Governo”, No. 134 (29 March 1629) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 227. See also “Carta de Fernão de Sousa a El-Rei”, No. 150 (8 January 1630) in Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, Vol. 2, 246-247.

Indeed, Captain Lasso continued to organize slaving operations in the interior of Benguela for almost a decade. His activities only stopped when he faced one of the most powerful *sobas* of Quilengues in 1637. On this occasion, he marched against *soba* Ngola-a-Nzimbo (Ngola Njimbo or Gola Amgimbo), who initially did not want to fight and looked for a diplomatic solution to end hostilities. When the Portuguese expedition arrived in the lands of *soba* Nzimbo, they were approached by an embassy from the African ruler to negotiate a peace treaty. The *soba* stated that there was no need for violence and war between them. If they had come after runaway slaves who fled to his territory, he promised to return them all; in case the expedition was after captives for the Atlantic trade, he would give them enough slaves to “satisfy their greed”. *Soba* Ngola-a-Nzimbo argued that it was not right to raid his people, who lived peacefully in his lands. Still, Captain Lasso ignored Nzimbo’s offer of peace and invaded his *sobado*⁶⁶¹.

Although Ngola-a-Nzimbo’s warriors fought bravely to defend their territory from Captain Lasso’s forces, the expedition broke through their defenses and invaded Nzimbo’s *ombala*. The raiders sacked and burned it down, enslaving its inhabitants. The *soba* retreated with some of his warriors and sought reinforcements from neighboring *sobados*. Ngola-a-Nzimbo subsequently assembled a mighty army with the help of other *sobas* and returned to his *ombala* to take revenge. He caught the raiders still distracted with the looting of his capital and slaughtered them. Captain Lasso died alongside his men: only one survivor returned to Benguela to tell the story of the attack⁶⁶².

The Caconda wars in Bongo in the second half of the seventeenth century

Captain Lasso’s defeat at the hands of Ngola-a-Nzimbo’s army in 1637 did not make the Portuguese abandon their project to conquer the territory in the interior of Benguela and turn it into a major source of slaves. No major military expedition seems to have reached this area during the following thirty-five years. But it did not take too long for the cycle of violence to erupt yet again.

⁶⁶¹ Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, vol. 1, 201-202.

⁶⁶² Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, vol. 1, 230.

In 1673, a dispute arose in Kakonda for control of the *jagado* between its ruler, Caala, and his nephew, Gandir, who had come of age and desired to become the new “*Jaga*”⁶⁶³. Caala, who had previously been accused of killing his sister Lamba Culembe, made an attempt against Gandir’s life. With the support of some neighboring *sobas*, Caala also arrested *pumbeiros* trading in the *sertões*, seizing their merchandise. News of the feat soon reached São Filipe de Benguela, leading local traders to request that the governor launch an expedition against Caala. Gandir also came to the coastal settlement to ask for Portuguese assistance to claim his place as *Jaga* Kakonda⁶⁶⁴.

The governor of Angola, Francisco da Távora (1669-1676) did not initially give authorization for the slavers in Benguela to move against Caala. Only after much pressure from the community of merchants did the governor agree to dispatch an expedition from Luanda. Meanwhile, Captain Manuel Rodrigues do Couto (governor of Benguela in 1672) and other local slavers organized their own “punitive expedition”. They marched against Caala without authorization from the governor of Angola. The slavers’ main goal was to guarantee the return of their investments in the trade, which had been disrupted by the actions of the “*jaga*”⁶⁶⁵.

The expedition assembled by Captain Couto was composed of the most important members of the merchant community of Benguela⁶⁶⁶ and the allied *sobas* Bumba-Cazombo, Quitata-Cambimbe, Moambo-a-ebo, Gando, Molundo, Peringue, Quizambo and Moambo-albo. Before departing, however, the captain suffered what seems to have been a heart attack (*atacado por uma pontada*) and died. Sergeant-major (*sargento-mor*) Manuel da Rocha Soares assumed command

⁶⁶³ Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 291, writing in the early nineteenth century, affirmed that many of the warlords in the interior of Benguela, such as Kakonda, considered themselves descendants of the “*jagas*” (*giacas*) who had conquered the country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They thus did not use the title of “*Soba*” but rather “*Jaga*”.

⁶⁶⁴ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 216. See also Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 3 (Luanda: Banco de Angola, 1948), 355.

⁶⁶⁵ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 217. See also Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 3, 355.

⁶⁶⁶ Among them, one finds: João Brás Goes, Manuel Ferreira, Carlos de Lacerda, Manuel Fernando Roque, Francisco Dias Cordeiro, Pedro da Silva, Manuel Monteiro, José de Campos, Manuel Dias de Oliveira, Domingos Gonçalves, André Fernandes, Matias Cabral da Silva, Manuel da Rocha Soares, Manuel Monteiro Louzado, Manuel Fernandes Torta, Bento Pereira da Fonseca, José Ferreira Lobo, André Fernandes, Sebastião Pegado Ponte, Manuel Rosado, Gaspar Dias de Lima, Cruz de Antonio Borges, Pedro Veleiro Sespedes, Matias Coutinho de Mendonça, Baltazar Gonçalves, Domingos Antunes da Silva, Cruz de João Vaz da Cruzada, Manuel Pita Calheiros, Antonio Lopes de Manuel Dias de Oliveira and Frei Manuel de Santo André: Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 218.

and ordered the expedition to move to the land of Gila-honi, where they were to meet yet another detachment of black warriors (*guerra preta*) from Quilengues before moving to attack Caala⁶⁶⁷.

When the expedition was ready to march against Kakonda, some *sobas* accused Bumba-Cazombo and Quitata-Cambimbe of collusion with the “*jagas*” and of plotting to flee from the expedition with their porters. The plot seem to have been somewhat successful, for the expedition retreated to São Filipe and revenge against Kakonda was postponed. Commander Rocha Soares justified that it was impossible to engage in war in the *sertões* without porters and a good number of *guerra preta*⁶⁶⁸. While the power of African rulers in the *sertões* (both *sobas* and “*jagas*”) was undeniable, the forces of the Portuguese did not even have a fort in the interior to give them logistic support or to serve as a point of retreat in case of military defeat.

In 1682, however, the Portuguese sewed an alliance that permitted them to build their first outpost at the base of the plateau, within the so-called “*sertões* of Caconda”. By then, commercial activity in these *sertões* had become a dangerous enterprise, which caused a decline in local slave trading. The governor of Angola, João da Silva e Sousa (1680-1684), made an agreement with the *soba* Bongo (a dependent of *Jaga* Kakonda⁶⁶⁹) to build a fort in his lands, at the foot of the hills of Quilengues⁶⁷⁰. The *soba* probably agreed to the governor’s proposition by considering the benefits of having a market with imported goods so close to his *ombala*. As mentioned before, imported commodities helped local authorities to acquire new dependents and to spread their political capital (Chapter 2).

This *presídio* was dubbed Caconda, a name that would later be transferred to other sites. The region became a strategic trading centre where Luso-African caravans bought beeswax, ivory and especially slaves. A workforce commanded by *sargento-mor* Pedro da Silva built the fort along the margins of the Lutira River (Map 4). As pointed out by the Ralph Delgado, the foundation of the *presídio* of Caconda (1682) opened a new stage for the slave trade in Benguela⁶⁷¹.

⁶⁶⁷ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 218.

⁶⁶⁸ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 219-220. Caala was not attacked by Portuguese forces and remained as the ruler of Kakonda, while Gandu was forced to renounce his ambitions to become the new “*Jaga*”: Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 3, 358.

⁶⁶⁹ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 73.

⁶⁷⁰ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 218; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 290.

⁶⁷¹ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 218.

This first *presídio* in the “*sertões* of Caconda” was located in the lowlands of Mbuelo, in the territory of Bongo, not in the highlands of Nano. Only two years after its construction, the relationship with *soba* Bongo deteriorated, and the African ruler marched against the outpost in his lands, with the support of *Jaga Kakonda*⁶⁷². At the time, the *presídio* of Caconda was under the command of Captain Manuel da Rocha. He had received fifty soldiers as reinforcements to defend the outpost and launch “punitive” expeditions against local “rebels”. Before he could act, however, Bongo and Kakonda attacked the *presídio*⁶⁷³.

They caught the Portuguese forces by surprise, attacking them with arrows and guns. After a day long battle, some soldiers raised a “white flag” and left their fortified camp to surrender, unbeknownst to Captain Rocha. When the captain realized what was transpiring, he decided to play along, fearing an insurrection on the part of remaining soldiers, who were distressed by the long battle. He thus left the camp, accompanied by the *sargento-mor* and a few other soldiers to negotiate the terms of capitulation with *Jaga Kakonda*⁶⁷⁴.

Kakonda, however, did not accept their offer of surrender and killed the captain and his men, leaving only one alive to tell the tale. *Jaga Kakonda* allegedly decapitated Captain Rocha and sat on his head, thus adding insult to injury. He then raided the Portuguese camp, seizing weapons, ammunition, imported goods and religious paraphernalia. The defensive structures were destroyed, as was the church. The soldiers were arrested and later rendered back to São Filipe of Benguela, as a demonstration of “daring generosity”. After this victory, Kakonda began to incite other African rulers to rise against Portuguese presence in the *sertões*⁶⁷⁵.

⁶⁷² Mariana Candido, “Jagas e Sobas no ‘Reino de Benguela: Vassalagem e criação de novas categorias políticas e sociais no contexto da expansão portuguesa na África durante os séculos XVI e XVII’”, in *África: histórias conectadas*, Alexandre Ribeiro, Alexsander Gebara e Marina Berthet, eds. (Niterói: PPGH-UFF, 2014), 71; Thomas J. Desch-Obi, “Engolo: Combat Traditions in African and African Diaspora History” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, 2000), 67. See also Francisco Castelbranco, *História de Angola: desde o descobrimento até a implantação da República, 1482-1910* (Luanda, Typographia a Luzitania, 1932), 142-145.

⁶⁷³ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 305; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 211-212; José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas na África Occidental e Oriental; Ásia Occidental; China, e na Oceania*, vol. 3 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1846), 109-111; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 212. See also Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 143.

⁶⁷⁴ Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica...*, Vol. 3, 109-111; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 222. See also Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 143.

⁶⁷⁵ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 222-223.

Pumbeiros, in particular, became easy pray for these African “rebels”, who captured anyone roaming their *sertões* and seized their merchandise⁶⁷⁶. This “insurrection” of African polities in the interior of Benguela represented a major loss for the Portuguese, since the region was then responsible for one third of the revenue of their colonial enterprise in West Central Africa. The disruption of commerce could cause the insolvency of “Brazilian” creditors involved in the slaving business and the consequent destruction of the *Conquista*. Accusations of “profanation” of religious images and garments strengthened the request for a punitive expedition against *Jaga Kakonda*⁶⁷⁷.

The governor of Angola, Luis Lobo da Silva (1684-1688), dispatched an army to Benguela commanded by Captain Carlos de Lacerda. It was composed of two hundred armed soldiers and a great number of porters and “black warriors” armed with bows and arrows. The expedition attacked the *libata* of Kakonda and retrieved some weapons and religious images, but did not find the “*Jaga*”, who was engaged elsewhere in war against local enemies. They seized the cattle and destroyed the *libata*. In the meantime, Kakonda received news of the attack and returned to his *libata* to take revenge⁶⁷⁸.

When Captain Lacerda saw the size of the army *Jaga Kakonda* had assembled against him, he panicked and fled back to Benguela. The retreat was considered shameful, and Captain Lacerda was removed from his post⁶⁷⁹. Another expedition was subsequently put under the command of the governor of Benguela, João Brás de Goes, who counter-attacked. In the process, Captain Goes raided several African rulers in the *sertões* of Benguela and destroyed their *quipacas* (fortifications similar to *kilombos*⁶⁸⁰).

The expeditions commanded by Captain Goes against *Jaga Kakonda* were mostly successful. Kakonda fled and took refuge in the lands of several local allies, including *sobas* Xahisenda, Cangengo, Quibengo, Cacombo and Lumbimbe. Finally, he sought shelter in the lands of *soba* Ngola-a-Nzimbo, an old enemy of the Portuguese and responsible for the destruction of

⁶⁷⁶ Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 290.

⁶⁷⁷ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 223.

⁶⁷⁸ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 305-306; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 224; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 143-144.

⁶⁷⁹ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 306; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 212; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 224; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 291; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 144.

⁶⁸⁰ For more about *quipacas*, see Chapter 1.

the expedition commanded by Captain Lasso years before. Nzimbo promised to defend Kakonda against the invading forces, stating that they had together beheaded a couple of Portuguese officers before and that he would do the same to Captain Goes, if he dared to step into his lands⁶⁸¹.

Captain Goes marched against Nzimbo's *ombala*, defeating his warriors and recovering two artillery pieces stolen from the *presídio*. Nzimbo escaped with some of his men and took refuge in the *impuri* (fortified hills) of Bembe⁶⁸². The Portuguese commander then built a new fortified outpost, this time in the lands of the Hanya (Hanha)⁶⁸³, which he also named Caconda (1685)⁶⁸⁴.

Defeated, *Jaga* Kakonda tried to make peace with the Portuguese. In 1688, he visited Benguela to speak with its new governor, Captain Manuel de Nojosa, and accused the former governor, Captain Goes, of committing "crimes" against his people, including assassination and illegal enslavement. Kakonda was given safe passage to travel to Luanda and repeat his accusations to the chief judge (*Ouvidor Geral*) of Angola. Captain Goes was soon arrested for several crimes, which included appropriation of the captives reserved for the royal fifth (*quinto*)⁶⁸⁵. *Sargento-mor* Pascoal Rodrigues assumed command of the new *presídio* of Caconda, and also became responsible for the construction of a new church dedicated to *Nossa Senhora da Conceição*. Nonetheless, *Jaga* Kakonda was also arrested and sent to the fortress of Penedo, in Luanda, where he later died⁶⁸⁶. Kakonda's defeat in 1685 and subsequent humiliation gave fresh impetus to Portugal's ambitions in the interior of Benguela.

⁶⁸¹ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 225-226; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 291; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 145.

⁶⁸² Desch-Obi, "Engolo", 67.

⁶⁸³ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 228, called it "*Quitandas da Hanha*". See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 232.

⁶⁸⁴ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 112, 232, 273-274; See also Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 143-144.

⁶⁸⁵ The royal fifth was a tax that reserved for the monarch of Portugal one-fifth (20%) of all precious metals and other commodities, including slaves, acquired by his subjects as booty of war, found as treasure or extracted by mining.

⁶⁸⁶ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 226-227; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 291-292; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 145.

The Caconda wars in Hanyá in the beginning of the eighteenth century

While the defeat of *Jaga Kakonda* was a significant achievement from the perspective of Portugal's military ambitions in the region, the beginning of the next century saw continuing resistance to Portuguese and Luso-African presence inland in the form of the Caconda wars.

About a decade after the death of *Jaga Kakonda* under Portuguese custody in the dungeons of Penedo, his descendant Hiamba-Kakonda (Hiamba Caconda⁶⁸⁷) and his sister Nana-a-Mbundu (Nana Ambundo⁶⁸⁸) sought to re-acquire their rights over the lands of Hanyá, where the Portuguese had rebuilt the *presídio* of Caconda. They gathered an army with the support of local allies and marched against Caconda in 1698. The governor of Angola, Luís Cesar de Menezes (1697-1701), subsequently dispatched troops from Luanda commanded by Captain Gaspar Rebelo da Costa to defeat the “rebels”, but the expedition did not manage to capture them⁶⁸⁹.

Captain Rebelo da Costa offered Hiamba-Kakonda and Nana-a-Mbundu “mild” terms of vassalage, but they declined. The captain was forced, therefore, to return to Luanda without the completion of his mission. The governor of Angola then decided to replace him with a Luso-African captain born in Benguela, Antonio de Faria. Captain Faria organized his own expedition with the help of local slavers and vassal *sobas* and marched against the enemies, but found the *libatas* of Hiamba-Kakonda empty upon arrival. The African ruler had moved to the fortified hill of *soba* Xalungando. The Portuguese forces attacked Xalungando's *impuri*, forcing the Africans to escape through cracks and tunnels that the Portuguese did not dare to enter. The invaders seized a great amount of cattle and slaves, enough to make them return to the coast “rich and merry”, according to one source⁶⁹⁰.

Governor Menezes was succeeded by Bernardino de Távora de Sousa Tavares (1701-1702), who attempted to put an end to the conflict by offering *Jaga* Hiamba-Kakonda a pardon for his “crimes”. The African ruler, once again, turned down the offer and kept up his attacks on

⁶⁸⁷ According to Delgado, Hiamba-Kakonda was in fact Huambo (Wambu), one of the rulers of the central plateau: Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 309.

⁶⁸⁸ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 232, presented Hiamba-Kaconda and his sister as heirs of *soba* Bongo. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 249, however, disputes the information that they were siblings, but rather “allies in preventing the advance of the Portuguese inland”.

⁶⁸⁹ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 229; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 294-295.

⁶⁹⁰ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 328-329; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 227; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 229-230.

pumbeiros attempting to trade in the lands he considered his domain. The “*Jaga*” also incited his counterparts to attack local allies of the Portuguese. *Soba* Catira, for instance, “spirited by the actions” of Hiamba-Kakonda, attacked the vassal *soba* Xa-Dingri (who lived close to the *presídio* of Caconda) and seized all his cattle. The vassal *soba* requested help from Captain Antonio de Faria, who sent emissaries to Catira to question him about the attack⁶⁹¹.

Soba Catira replied to the governor that he should worry about the “whites” under his command and not about the “blacks”. *Soba* Xa-Dingri, in turn, threatened the governor that he would look for another “lord” (*senhor*) to help him, if he did not receive the requested military aid. Captain Faria therefore prepared an expedition against Catira composed of seventy soldiers plus *guerra preta*. He also sent a last threat to the “rebel” *soba*, demanding that he present himself at the *presídio* for questioning, to which Catira responded by sending two detachments of warriors to attack Caconda⁶⁹².

Despite great endeavours on the part of Catira’s warriors, the Portuguese managed to repel the attack and pursued the fleeing African warriors. *Jaga* Hiamba-Kakonda intervened on Catira’s behalf and a great battle followed, resulting in the death of a large number of Catira’s warriors, the burning of his *libatas*, the imprisonment of his people, and the acquisition of cattle. Catira escaped and waited for the Portuguese expedition to retreat to the coast before returning to his lands. Hiamba-Kakonda also suffered major losses. He eventually presented himself at the *presídio*, along with other local “rebel” potentates, and negotiated the terms of his surrender. Captain Faria pardoned all of the “rebels” following their acceptance of vassalage, rewarding them with titles over the lands within the jurisdiction of the *presídio* of Caconda⁶⁹³.

Mariana P. Candido has presented a different version of the fate of Hiamba-Kakonda and Nana-a-Mbundu. According to her, Captain Antonio de Faria’s expedition would have defeated Nana-a-Mbundu’s forces at some point, after which she accepted vassalage, while Hiamba-Kakonda managed to resist Portuguese attacks and remained an independent “*Jaga*”. Both African rulers were offered asylum by another local powerful potentate, *soba* Kanguengo, and decided to move their *kilombos* to the lands of Ivangando, away from Portuguese influence in Caconda. Once

⁶⁹¹ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 230-231.

⁶⁹² Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 231-232.

⁶⁹³ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 233. See also Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 227; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 294-295.

settled in Ivangando, Hiamba-Kakonda and Kanguengo united forces and raided some neighboring *sobados* of African vassals of Portugal, provoking another attack by Portuguese forces. After being defeated, Hiamba-Kakonda managed to avoid “punishment” for his “rebellious” actions by presenting himself at the *presídio* of Caconda and excepting the terms of vassalage. The Luso-African raiders, however, did not spare *soba* Kanguengo: they invaded Ivangando and captured more than fifty of his subjects, as well as a thousand head of cattle⁶⁹⁴.

Whatever the story about the defeat of Hiamba-Kakonda and Nana-a-Mbundu, the fact is that it inhibited their aspirations of recovering control over the territory of Hanya, which consequently guaranteed the maintenance of the *presídio* of Caconda for more than eighty years as the most important commercial outpost in the interior, at the very foot of the central plateau (Map 4). The governor of Angola, Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho (1764-1772), again transferred the *presídio* of Caconda to the highlands of Nano in 1768-1769, as part of his project to enhance Portuguese influence and control over the trading routes in the interior of Benguela. After the move, the old *presídio* of Caconda was renamed Caconda-a-Velha and the lands of Hanya, on the border of the territory that Luso-Africans generically called “Quilengues”⁶⁹⁵. This marked the establishment of an entrenched Portuguese presence within Quilengues.

The battle for Quilengues in the first half of the eighteenth century

The entrenchment of Portuguese presence in the *presídio* of Caconda opened up for them an important access route to slave trading in the interior of Benguela. For eight decades, the old *presídio* of Caconda in the lowlands of northern Quilengues, that is Caconda-a-Velha, featured as the main centre of the slave trade in the interior of the “kingdom” of Benguela. From its foundation in the 1680s until its transfer to the central plateau at the end of the 1760s, Luso-African slavers engaged in innumerable wars against local rulers and enslaved a great number of their subjects⁶⁹⁶.

⁶⁹⁴ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 250.

⁶⁹⁵ See the location of Caconda-a-Velha as part of Quilengues in Map 3. See also Francisco Cândido Cordeiro Pinheiro Furtado, “Carta geographica da costa occidental da África” (1790), in Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, unpaginated.

⁶⁹⁶ There are no estimates for the number of slaves exported from Benguela in the seventeenth century because of the lack of documents: Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 152. Nonetheless, Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 20, proposed 2,000 to 3,000 slaves exported per year as early as the second half of the seventeenth century. He also estimated that total exports for the entire coast from Luanda to Cape Negro ranged

Environmental distress also caused a surge in internal conflicts among African potentates struggling to survive. Long periods of droughts between the 1680s and the 1720s triggered the migration of many communities living in the lowlands of Quilengues and on the central plateau. These refugees became favored victims for the slave trade in the *sertões* of Quilengues (Mbuelo) and Caconda (Nano), reaching as far as the Upper Cunene region⁶⁹⁷.

In the first two decades of the eighteenth century, the Portuguese engaged in a series of slaving expeditions disguised as official military campaigns against local rulers of Quilengues. The slavers used the *presídio* of Caconda-a-Velha as their headquarters in the *sertões*, from where they dispatched their *pumbeiros* and launched expeditions. This made Caconda-a-Velha the most important target for African resistance against Portuguese slavers⁶⁹⁸. At the turn of the century, the high activity of the slavers in the *sertões* of Quilengues had generated much animosity on the part of local African polities and caused a series of “rebellions”; Ralph Delgado called these conflicts the “memorable battle for Quilengues”⁶⁹⁹.

The excesses committed by the slaving operations of the 1710s triggered the ruler of Quitata, *soba* Gando-ia-Quitata, to incite attacks against *pumbeiros* roaming the *sertões*, which prompted a reaction from the *capitão-mor* of Caconda, Captain Luiz Ferreira. Upon receiving reinforcements from Luanda, Luso-African soldiers marched against Gando-ia-Quitata, destroying his *libata* and capturing great numbers of slaves and cattle. The *soba* retreated to the Upper Cunene region, taking refuge in the lands of *soba* Canhacuto. The Luso-African forces chased and attacked both *sobas*. After the destruction of his *libata*, Cachacuto and his first wife were captured by the Luso-Africans, as well as a large number of slaves⁷⁰⁰.

from 12,000 to 15,000 slaves per year in the first half of the seventeenth century. For more on slave exports from Benguela in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see José C. Curto, “The Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Benguela, Angola, 1730-1828: A Quantitative Re-Appraisal,” *África*, 16-17, no. 1 (1993/1994): 101-116; José C. Curto, “Another Look at the Slave Trade from Benguela: What We Know and What We Do Not Know,” *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2015): 9-26.

⁶⁹⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 150; Desch-Obi, “Engolo”, 68-69. See also Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 255.

⁶⁹⁸ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 232.

⁶⁹⁹ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 256.

⁷⁰⁰ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 338-339; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 233-234; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 252-253. See also Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 296; Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 232.

The major event in the “battle for Quilengues” happened during the government of Henrique de Figueiredo e Alarcão (1717-1722), when *Jaga* Quiambola (Quiambela), heir of Gando, was chosen to lead the resistance against Portuguese slaving operations in the interior. Quiambola had the support of several local rulers, such as Lungariaebo (Zunga-ria-hebo), Quiendangondo, Mucuinabas and Janjala (Ianjara)⁷⁰¹. In 1718, they laid siege to Caconda-a-Velha and allegedly intended to invade São Filipe de Benguela as well⁷⁰².

The main reason behind the “rebellion” was the slaving operations commanded by the *capitão-mor* of Caconda, José da Nóbrega de Vasconcelos, and his *sargento-mor* Antonio Vieira Guimarães. Captain Nóbrega de Vasconcelos would later be arrested by colonial authorities for waging unauthorized war against *sobados* in the *sertões* and sent to Limoeiro prison in Lisbon, where he remained until 1725⁷⁰³.

Under siege and running out of supplies, Captain Nóbrega de Vasconcelos managed to send a small number of experienced soldiers, led by Captain João Pilarte da Silva, to raid the neighboring region of Mahungo. They sneaked out of their fortified camp and attacked the *ombala* of *soba* Lungariaebo by surprise, swiftly beheaded him, arresting his wife and seizing the necessary supplies for the maintenance of Caconda-a-Velha until the arrival of reinforcements. At the same time, Captain Nóbrega de Vasconcelos requested help from the Governor of Benguela, Manuel Simões (1717-1721), who forwarded the request to Luanda⁷⁰⁴.

The governor of Angola dispatched reinforcements, weapons and a small cavalry detachment with six horses to Benguela. The governor of Benguela personally commanded the reinforcements to Caconda in June 1722, which included five soldiers armed with muskets and more than 800 *guerra preta* armed with bows and arrows. He divided his troops into two units and managed to trick *Jaga* Quiambola into engaging one of them, while the other remained hidden in the bush and attacked the enemy from behind. After a full day of battle, the Luso-African forces

⁷⁰¹ According to Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 348, all the *sobas* and “*jagas*” of Caconda gathered around Quiambola against the Portuguese presence in the *sertões*. See also Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 240-241.

⁷⁰² Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 348; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 241; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 296; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 162. See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 232-233.

⁷⁰³ Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 256-260.

⁷⁰⁴ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 348-349; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 241; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 296; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 162.

killed four *sobas*, along with thirty-seven of Quibangola's most valuable warriors. They also fatally wounded *soba* Giraul (Giraúlo) and captured his wife. Quimabola, however, managed to escape and retreated deep into the *sertões*⁷⁰⁵.

After the retreat of Quiambola, the governor of Benguela sent his men after the *sobas* who had helped the “*jagas*”. He also chased Quiambola and destroyed part of his remaining forces, but Quiambola fled to the hills of Bembe. They attacked him once more, with the “*Jaga*” escaping again, this time to the region of Catumbela. After another attack, Quiambola decided to surrender, since he had lost most of his warriors. *Jaga* Quiambola accepted the terms of capitulation and vassalage and had his life spared by the governor of Benguela. The slavers from São Filipe de Benguela celebrated their victory over the African rulers of Quilengues for three nights, in which they lit up the town with lamps and fired shots of artillery⁷⁰⁶.

The transfer of Caconda to the central plateau and foundation of Salvaterra dos Magos

The Luso-African victory over *Jaga* Quiambola and his allies allowed the colonizers to further entrench their presence in the interior of Benguela, while at the same time exacerbating the negative effects of increased slave trading. At the end of the 1760s, the Governor of Angola, Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho (1764-1772), attempted to reinforce the Portuguese presence in the interior of Benguela in order to establish better control over the slave trade and its agents roaming the *sertões*, among them many deserters and deported criminals. He also envisioned the development of other sources of revenue, including mineral exploration and the advancement of agriculture⁷⁰⁷.

In a report dated 23 September 1768, the governor of Angola complained that the slaving operations in the interior were out of control and that settlers were involved in constant wars that

⁷⁰⁵ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 349-350, 354-355; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 242-245; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 256-259.

⁷⁰⁶ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1, 356; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 245; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 296-297; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 256-260. See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 233.

⁷⁰⁷ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 52, Doc. 45, “Bando que ordena as feiras nos sertões de Benguela e Caconda”, (23 September 1768). A transcript of this source can be found in “Bando sobre as feiras que devem haver nos Certões de Benguela e Caconda” (23 September 1768), in *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6 (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), unpaginated.

destroyed all opportunities of development. He blamed the existence of small groups of “whites” scattered throughout the *sertões* for the chaos in the region, pointing to the fact that they did not live in society, were absent from church, and some did not even teach Portuguese to their children anymore: “Individuals wandered dispersed, without religion, without justice, without society and without order”, lost to the “vices of the land”. Besides, these settlers acted “tyrannically” towards local African rulers and created constant conflicts with them⁷⁰⁸.

Sousa Coutinho determined that these settlers should be gathered in permanent markets in the interior, built around settlements with a regent, a judge and a church. Beyond regulating trade, these settlements should also control the movement of criminals, deserters and other “vagabonds” who roamed the *sertões* without any governance on the part of the “colonial” administration⁷⁰⁹. The governor of Benguela, Francisco Xavier de Sousa Furtado (1777), was chosen to oversee the construction of these colonial settlements. He was to select regents from among the most important merchants of Benguela for new settlements in Quilengues (Salvaterra dos Magos), Huila (Alba-Nova), Quipeio (Passo de Sousa), Bihé (Amarante), Quitata (Vila-Viçosa), Tinde (Novo-Belém), Galangue Grande (Linhares), Ivangando (Borba), Bailundo (Nova-Golegã), Fendi (Contins), Luceque (Sarzedas) and Ngunza (Novo Redondo). The new regents were supposed to impose the new regulations and arrest those who did not comply⁷¹⁰.

⁷⁰⁸ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 52, Doc. 45, “Bando que ordena as feiras nos sertões de Benguela e Caconda”, (23 September 1768). See also, “Carta de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado”, No. 3 (24 November 1768), in Alfredo Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização dos planaltos e litoral do sul de Angola*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1940), 160-162; “Informações prestadas por D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho sobre o governo de Angola ao seu sucessor D. Antonio de Lancastre”, No. 10 (26 November 1772), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 198-199.

⁷⁰⁹ “Instrução por que se há de governar o capitão-mor de Caconda João Baptista da Silva, e do qual não se apartará hum só ponto” (15 December 1769), in *Arquivos de Angola*, unpaginated; Extracts of this document can also be found in “Instrução por que se há de governar o capitão-mor de Caconda João Baptista da Silva, e do qual não se apartará hum só ponto”, No. 6, in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 173-175. See also “Carta de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado”, No. 4 (18 October 1769), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 163-169.

⁷¹⁰ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 52, Doc. 45, “Bando que ordena as feiras nos sertões de Benguela e Caconda”, (23 September 1768); “Instrução por que se há de governar o capitão-mor de Caconda João Baptista da Silva, e do qual não se apartará hum só ponto” (15 December 1769), in *Arquivos de Angola*, unpaginated; “Carta de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado”, No. 4 (18 October 1769), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 163-169. See also Ralph Delgado, *O governo de Sousa Coutinho em Angola* (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1960), 47; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 300.

The governor of Angola also ordered the transfer of the *presídio* of Caconda, which at the time had only one settler, to the highlands of Nano⁷¹¹. He chose the land of Catala, considered a healthy and rich territory, as the site for the new *presídio* of Caconda (Map 4), which became also known as Caconda-a-Nova⁷¹². The *presídio* of Caconda-a-Velha was abandoned by the Portuguese because Sousa Coutinho concluded that its maintenance costs were too high. He also argued that the presence of deserters and outlaws involved in illegal trading in the area was an endemic problem that could only be solved by the establishment of a “white” settlement in the lands of Hanya, with the presence of a judge⁷¹³.

Caconda-a-Velha did not completely lose its importance after being abandoned. Indeed, it remained a haven for smugglers and deserters until at least the beginning of the nineteenth century. In a letter from 1810, the *capitão-mor* of Caconda, Alexandre José Coelho de Sousa e Menezes, denounced that the captain in charge of the territory of Hanya, that is Caconda-a-Velha, Paschoal da Silva, gave shelter to deserters from Caconda and Benguela. Its *capitão-mor*, Captain Paschoal da Silva, was a “brat” (*moleque*) who did not respect his orders⁷¹⁴, evidencing the virtual independence of these slavers from “colonial control”.

The transfer of the *presídio* of Caconda to Catala turned Salvaterra dos Magos, the administrative centre of Quilengues, into the main centre of Portuguese influence in the lowlands of Mbuelo, at the foot of the central plateau. Caravans descending from Caconda and other parts of Nano, as well as those coming from the southern regions of Quipungo, Huila and Humbe, stopped at the settlement on their way to Benguela. Although the presence of “white” traders in

⁷¹¹ “Carta de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado”, No. 3 (24 Nov 1768) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 161. See also Elias Alexandre da Silva Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2 (Lisboa: Editora Ática, [1787-1792] 1937), 35.

⁷¹² “Carta de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado”, No. 4 (18 October 1769), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 163-169; “Instrução por que se há de governar o capitão-mor de Caconda João Baptista da Silva, e do qual não se apartará hum só ponto” (15 December 1769), in *Arquivos de Angola*, unpaginated. See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 236-237; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 169.

⁷¹³ “Carta de 12 de outubro 1769 para José Vieira d’Araújo, capitão-mor de Benguela”, No. 5 (12 October 1769), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 170. See also Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 418.

⁷¹⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 46-49, “Ofício do capitão mor de Caconda Alexandre José Coelho de Souza Menezes”, (12 January 1810).

the region dated from the previous century, Salvaterra dos Magos was the first official Luso-African settlement in Quilengues⁷¹⁵.

Despite its importance, the settlement of Salvaterra dos Magos was weakly protected, having only four soldiers stationed for its defence in 1769. In case of conflict with local potentates, Salvaterra dos Magos relied on its inhabitants (*moradores*) for protection and depended on periodic military reinforcements from São Filipe de Benguela and Caconda-a-Nova⁷¹⁶.

Ngunza-Kabolo and the Portuguese attempts to control the coast of Novo Redondo

Beyond establishing Salvaterra dos Magos in 1769, the coming of Sousa Coutinho to the governorship of Angola led to a more general reorganization of the Portuguese presence in the interior of Benguela and on the coast. As seen previously, the governor ordered the creation of a number of “white” settlements throughout Benguela in 1769. One of these new settlements, Novo Redondo, was built on the coast close to the mouth of the Ngunza River, in the lands of *soba* Ngunza-Kabolo⁷¹⁷ (Map 3).

The governor of Angola was aware of the presence of English and French smugglers, who also regularly visited the ports of Loango and Cabinda, on the coast south of the Cuanza River and feared they would stretch their presence down to Cape Negro. The latter was a well-known point

⁷¹⁵ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 282-283; Carlos Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola: The Nyaneka-Nkumbi Ethnic Group* - Vol. II (New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, [1961] 1979), 19.

⁷¹⁶ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 282-283.

⁷¹⁷ Novo Redondo was located 15 kilometers north of Quicombo and 60 kilometers south of Benguela-a-Velha: “Relatório do chefe do concelho de Novo Redondo, de 23 de julho de 1880”, in Ralph Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza: Ocupação e aproveitamento do antigo reino de Benguela, 1843-1942*, Vol. 2 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional. 1940), 636. See also Augusto de Andrade, *Viagem de exploração geographica no districto de Benguella e Novo Redondo, 1898-1899* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1902).

of “unauthorized trade”⁷¹⁸ in slaves and other local merchandise, such as ivory⁷¹⁹. With the construction of Novo Redondo, the governor of Angola intended to control surrounding alternative points for the embarkation of slaves, such as Benguela-a-Velha (Sumbe-Mbwela), Quicombo, Egito, Lobito, and Catumbela⁷²⁰.

Slave caravans coming from the interior, including the central plateau, regularly visited all of these alternative embarkation points to trade slaves with English and French smugglers. Portuguese attempts to enhance control over this coast with the construction of the *presídio* of Novo Redondo led to increasing “rebellions” on the central plateau. *Pumbeiros* trading in Nano were constantly attacked, many of them by the *soba* of Mbailundo, who had strengthened his

⁷¹⁸ I have decided to adopt the term “unauthorized trade” instead of “illegal trade” due to concerns about the ahistorical character and colonialist bias of the latter. The idea of an “illegal” slave trade in Angola in the seventeenth and eighteenth century presumes the existence of an effective colonial system of law to which all agents of the trade would be subject, including African rulers. In reality, however, independent polities coexisted in an environment of legal pluralism, one in which different legal rules governed the same geographical space. Moreover, despite attempts by the colonial administration to regulate the slave trade in areas under its direct influence, most “legal” decisions concerning the slave trade and the enslavement of individuals were taken by persons in positions of authority, independently from their relation to the colonial administration, while African customary law did not depend on colonial legislation. Hence, references to a “legal slave trade”, or as Chapter 4 discusses, the “illegality” of the enslavement of African vassals and their people are misnomers. Unavoidably, these concepts entail a colonialist perspective over the otherwise plural legalist landscape of the interior of Benguela, especially when applied only to the Portuguese. The use of “unauthorized trade” could also have colonialist implications, since Portuguese and Luso-Africans slavers in positions of authority were the ones to grant the “authorization” in question. Nevertheless, its use is preferable to “illegal trade”, because the latter assumes the existence of a coherent legal system that regulated the slave trade in West Central Africa before the nineteenth century. As Frank Luce, “Rural Workers and Labor Justice; the *Estatuto do Trabalhador Rural in Brazil’s cacao region, 1963-1973*” (PhD Dissertation, York University, 2009), 16-17, 20 explains, the notion of legal pluralism implies that there may be multiple juridical fields in one geopolitical region, while the overlapping of legal orders that regulate the same legal field is defined as “interlegality”. For a definition of “juridical field”, see Pierre Bourdieu, “The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field”, *Hastings Law Journal*, No. 38 (1986-1987): 805-853.

⁷¹⁹ “Ofício do governador para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado sobre o estabelecimento das novas povoações do Sertão de Benguela chamadas Novo Redondo, etc.” (12 January 1769) in *Arquivos de Angola*, unpaginated; “Carta para José Viera d’Araujo, capitão-mor de Benguela”, No. 7 (28 April 1770) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 175-176; “Informações prestadas por D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho sobre o governo de Angola ao seu sucessor D. Antonio de Lancaster”, No. 10 (26 November 1772) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 201; “Carta de Antonio José Pimentel e Castro, de 27 de janeiro de 1783 para Martinho de Melo e Castro”, No. 12 (27 January 1783), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 211. See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 36; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 264.

⁷²⁰ “Ofício do governador para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado sobre o estabelecimento das novas povoações do Sertão de Benguela chamadas Novo Redondo, etc.” (12 January 1769) in *Arquivos de Angola*, unpaginated. See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 2 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional. 1940), 463-471.

power and local influence by acquiring imported goods from French and English smugglers on the coast between Sumbe-Mbwela and Catumbela⁷²¹.

Besides being close to the Cuvo River (Sumbe-Mbwela), where the Portuguese had attempted to create a settlement years before, the area through which flowed the Ngunza River was also rich in slaves and ivory. In 1768, the governor of Angola ordered a small expedition to establish a permanent market in the lands of Ngunza-Kabolo with the objective of opening peaceful commercial relations with this ruler, but local warriors attacked the settlers soon after their arrival. The settlement was destroyed and the settlers who did not flee were captured and taken as captives into the *sertões*⁷²².

At the beginning of 1769, the governor of Angola dispatched a company of one hundred soldiers and two pieces of artillery, commanded by captains Joaquim Monteiro de Moraes and Antonio José da Costa, to occupy the mouth of the Ngunza River and build the *presídio* of Novo Redondo. They secured the outpost, built a small fortified camp surrounded by adobe walls and began developing diplomatic and commercial relations with local authorities⁷²³. The presence of Portuguese traders on the coast of Ngunza sponsored immediate changes in the political landscape of the region. *Soba* Ngunza-Kabolo, a tributary of the *soba* of Seles, decided to break ties with his former overlord, declaring that he was now a subject of the Portuguese. He stopped paying tribute to Seles, who tried to punish this offence and re-establish control over his tributary by marching against the new *presídio*. The *capitão-mor* of Novo Redondo, Francisco Nunes, vowed to protect Ngunza and confronted Seles in battle for his “rebelliousness”, but he and his men were captured and slaughtered by the enemy⁷²⁴.

⁷²¹ Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, 63, argues that the Mbailundo wars of 1773 and 1775 were a direct reaction to increasing attempts by Portuguese forces to control the coast between Sumbe-Mbwela and Quicombo.

⁷²² “Ofício do governador para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado sobre o estabelecimento das novas povoações do Sertão de Benguela chamadas Novo Redondo, etc.” (12 January 1769), in *Arquivos de Angola*, unpaginated.

⁷²³ For more about the foundation of Novo Redondo, see Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 37; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 264; *Catálogo dos governadores do Reino de Angola*, in *Coleção de notícias para a história das nações ultramarinas*, Tomo III, Parte 2 (Lisboa: Academia Real das Sciencias, 1826), 419; Joaquim Antonio de Carvalho e Menezes, *Demonstração geográfica e política do território portuguez da Guiné Inferior, que abrange o reino de Angola, Benguella e suas dependências* (Lisboa: Typographia Classica de F.A. de Almeida, 1848), 44; Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 471-472. See also Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 314-315; Gastão Sousa Dias, *D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho*, *Cadernos Coloniais*, No. 27 (Lisboa: Cosmos, 1936), 46-47; Castelbranco, *História de Angola*, 169-170.

⁷²⁴ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 46-47, 67; Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 267-268; Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 473.

The victory of *Soba* Seles over the Portuguese stationed in Novo Redondo incited other local African rulers to resist the foreign presence. Hence, “rebellions” spread to the interior and uphill to Nano. Powerful *sobas*, such as Mbailundo, increased their attacks on *pumbeiros* buying slaves in the *sertões*, which eventually triggered a reaction from Luanda. The new governor of Angola, Antonio de Lancastre (1772-1779), launched a series of “punitive” expeditions against “rebel” *sobas*, led by captains Albano de Caldas Araújo and Antonio José da Costa, the latter being the same who commanded the occupation of Novo Redondo⁷²⁵.

This campaign against the “rebels” of Novo Redondo became a massive three-year war in the interior of Ngunza that later reached the highlands of Nano. The war lasted from 1773 to 1775 involving several *sobados*, and generating great amounts of slaves for the Atlantic trade. Captain Costa spent over a year raiding local *libatas* and destroying enemy *quipacas*, enriching himself with the people captured as spoils of war. When he finally reached Nano, however, he concluded a treaty with the *soba* of Mbailundo and retreated to the coast. Rumors had it that he had negotiated peace with Mbailundo in exchange for slaves for his personal gain. Loaded with slaves from the *sertões*, Captain Costa returned to Luanda in December of 1775, where he was received with animosity by the governor of Angola. Despite accusations of bribes and illicit trading, he remained in command of slaving operations, disguised as military “punitive” expeditions, in the interior of Benguela for a few subsequent decades⁷²⁶.

Indeed, between 1774 and 1796, Captain Costa became one of Benguela’s most important slave suppliers, after which he left the continent with his wife for Rio de Janeiro⁷²⁷. During this period, he featured as one of the most active and respectable members of the community of slave traders in São Filipe de Benguela⁷²⁸. He also had associates in Novo Redondo, a settlement he helped to build and protect. He further rose to the position of royal treasurer (*Tesoureiro*) of

⁷²⁵ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 48; Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, 302; Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 473.

⁷²⁶ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 49-62; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 344-345.

⁷²⁷ Ferreira, Roquinaldo. “Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650-1800” (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 2003), 133.

⁷²⁸ For more about Captain Antonio José da Costa’s commercial networks in Benguela and Rio de Janeiro, see Estevam C. Thompson, “Negreiros nos Mares do Sul: Famílias traficantes nas rotas entre Angola e Brasil em fins do século XVIII” (M.A. Thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 2006); Estevam C. Thompson, “Negreiros in South Atlantic: The Community of ‘Brazilian’ Slave Traders in Late Eighteenth Century Benguela,” *African Economic History* 39 (2011): 73-128. See also Roquinaldo Ferreira, “Biografia como história social: o clã Ferreira Gomes e os mundos da escravidão no Atlântico Sul,” *Varia Historia* 29, no. 51 (2013): 679-695; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 214-215.

Benguela in the 1790s. As we will see below, Captain Costa played a vital role in the exploration of Quilengues and in the supply of a large number of captives during the late eighteenth century surge in slaves exported from Benguela.

The war of Mbailundo ended with the arrest of the *soba*, not by Captain Costa and his forces, but by a slaver who betrayed the African ruler, allegedly getting the *soba* drunk and seizing him after he passed out⁷²⁹. In the end, the Portuguese had defeated many powerful African rulers, such as Quingolo, Cambundo-dara, Clara-Camnuanda, Cammumá, Canjungo, Cassenze, Muco, Muganguela, Sambo, Galangue and Matenda-Azamba, among others. The *soba* of Mbailundo was taken to the dungeons of Penedo, in Luanda, along with his heir Guingando, from where they never left. Meanwhile, the Portuguese placed a vassal *soba*, Capingana, in charge of the conquered lands⁷³⁰.

The 1785' expedition to Cape Negro and the raiding of Quilengues

In addition to his successful campaign to expand Portuguese influence in the interior of Benguela, Governor Sousa Coutinho also launched military campaigns to bring the coastal territory south of the Cuanza River under Portuguese control. The contraband trade in slaves along this littoral zone was an important issue in Luanda since the beginning of the seventeenth century, even before the 1617 arrival of the Portuguese in São Filipe. During the second half of the eighteenth century, it became a major problem for Portuguese colonial aspirations to control the coast of Benguela. As discussed previously, there was a special concern with the presence of foreign traders on the southernmost region of Cape Negro, a point of embarkation for contraband slaves. In 1769, Governor Sousa Coutinho consulted with some of the most important *sertanejos* in Benguela about the possibility of occupying Cape Negro, but never managed to fulfill his plans to build a *presídio* in that region⁷³¹.

⁷²⁹ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 65. See also Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 269

⁷³⁰ Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia...*, 268-269; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 344-355.

⁷³¹ “Ofício do governador para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado sobre o estabelecimento das novas povoações do Sertão de Benguela chamadas Novo Redondo, etc.” (12 January 1769), in *Arquivos de Angola*, unpaginated; “Carta para José Viera d’Araujo, capitão-mor de Benguela”, No. 7 (28 April 1770) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 175-176; “Informações prestadas por D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho sobre o governo de Angola ao seu sucessor D. Antonio de Lancastre”, No. 10 (26 November 1772), in Felner, *Angola*:

Nonetheless, at the beginning of 1770, the governor of Angola dispatched an expedition commanded by Captain João Pilarte da Silva to the lands of the Mocorocas (Macarocas), a semi-nomadic group that lived close to the Coroca River, in Cape Negro (see Appendix 3.1). Captain Pilarte da Silva left São Filipe de Benguela for the lands of *soba* Canina, a local ally of the Portuguese, where he acquired *guerra preta*, porters and guides for the expedition. He moved south through the territory of Njau, then a tributary of Canina, who attempted to hinder their passage and for that reason was punished by his overlord. Canina defeated Njau and seized his cattle, but the *soba* managed to escape⁷³².

After days of marching through uninhabited dry lands, during which several members of the expedition died, Captain Pilarte da Silva arrived on the coast of Cape Negro. The arrival of his caravan drew attention from local warriors armed with bows and arrows, identified as having a “clicking language”, who attacked them. After the battle, the Portuguese expedition captured a couple of women who gave them some information about the region, but they soon died of smallpox (*bexiga*), a disease that also victimized other members of the caravan⁷³³.

The governor of Angola concluded from the expedition led by Captain Pilarte da Silva that there was an urgency in occupying the lands around the Coroca River⁷³⁴, bringing war to the local authorities that attacked the Portuguese and building a fort to guarantee their safety and the control of the southern trading routes to the interior. Nonetheless, a *presídio* in Cape Negro would be difficult to maintain, since any contact by land would have to face local resistance, such as that of the *soba* of Njau, while navigation by sea to the region was complicated due to the strength of the

Apontamentos sobre a colonização..., Vol. 1, 201. See also Dias, *Pioneiros de Angola*, 24-25; Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 417.

⁷³² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 70, Doc. 5, fls. 1-5, “Relatório de João Pilarte da Silva sobre a expedição ao Cabo Negro em 1770”; “Cópia de huma relação que deu João Pilarte da Silva, hoje falecido, ao capitão-mor José Viera de Araujo da viagem que fez ao Cabo Negro por terras no anno de 1770 em companhia de José dos Santos, hoje capitão de Caconda”, No. 8 (9 December 1770), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 177-181.

⁷³³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 70, Doc. 5, fls. 1-5, “Relatório de João Pilarte da Silva sobre a expedição ao Cabo Negro em 1770”; “Cópia de huma relação que deu João Pilarte da Silva, hoje falecido, ao capitão-mor José Viera de Araujo da viagem que fez ao Cabo Negro por terras no anno de 1770 em companhia de José dos Santos, hoje capitão de Caconda”, No. 8 (9 December 1770), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 178. For more about Captain Pilarte da Silva’s expedition, see Dias, *Pioneiros de Angola*, 17-22.

⁷³⁴ The interest of the colonial administration for the region had grown following the 1770 expedition led by Captain Pilarte da Silva, accompanied by Captain José dos Santos, to Cabo Negro, which revealed rich and densely populated territories little known to “whites”: “Relação da viagem que fiz desta cidade de Benguela para as do Lovar, no anno de 1794”, Documento No. 21, in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 236-237.

maritime currents running northwards. The Portuguese wind-powered ships took as much time to sail from Luanda to Benguela as they did if leaving from the coast of Brazil⁷³⁵.

Due to all of these difficulties, the project of occupying Cape Negro was abandoned for more than a decade. In 1783, the governor of Benguela, Antonio José Pimentel de Castro e Mesquita (1779-1784), again proposed the subjugation of local potentates in Cape Negro and the construction of a *presídio* in the region to inhibit contraband trade⁷³⁶. Finally, the new governor of Angola, José Almeida e Vasconcelos de Soveral e Carvalho (1784-1790), the Baron of Moçamedes, promoted a detailed exploration of the southern coast down to Cape Negro, as well as the lands in the interior of Quilengues.

Soon after his arrival in Luanda, the Baron of Moçamedes ordered the new Governor of Benguela, Pedro José Correia Quevedo Homem e Magalhães (1784-1788), to produce reports on the possibility of occupying and exploring the southern coast and its backlands. Homem e Magalhães' report from 1785 highlighted problems similar to those found by the 1770 expedition of Captain Pilarte da Silva and the impossibility to establish a permanent market in Cape Negro. He argued that, in case of attack, reinforcements from São Filipe de Benguela could not reach the *presídio* in Cape Negro by land, because of local resistance, or by sea, because of the maritime currents, unless they came from Brazil. The governor of Benguela believed that in order to occupy Cape Negro, the Portuguese would have to build another supporting *presídio* at the mouth of the

⁷³⁵ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 70, Doc. 5, fls. 1-5, "Relatório de João Pilarte da Silva sobre a expedição ao Cabo Negro em 1770"; "Cópia de huma relação que deu João Pilarte da Silva, hoje falecido, ao capitão-mor José Vieira de Araujo da viagem que fez ao Cabo Negro por terras no anno de 1770 em companhia de José dos Santos, hoje capitão de Caconda", No. 8 (9 December 1770), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 182. In a letter to his superiors from 1785, the Baron of Moçamedes explained that the exploration of the southern coast to from São Filipe de Benguela to Cape Negro depended on the use of small galleys equipped with lateen sails and oars, in order to overcome the strength of the Benguela current: "Carta para o Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, secretário da repartição ultramarina" (28 November 1785), in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 420; "Carta para o Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, secretário da repartição ultramarina" (18 January 1786), in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 425. The commander of the frigate "*Loanda*" (sent to Angra dos Negros) Captain Antonio José Valente and the Pilot Manuel Caetano Firme confirmed the difficulties of sailing against the Benguela current after in one of their reports. The journey from São Filipe de Benguela to Cape Negro lasted 25 days: "Cópia de doze documentos que acompanharam o officio com data de 18 de Janeiro de 1786 sobre a exploração de cabo Negro, dirigido ao Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, Secretário de Estado da repartição ultramarina, pelo governador de Angola, o barão de Mossamedes", in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 426-428.

⁷³⁶ "Carta de Antonio José Pimentel e Castro, de 27 de janeiro de 1783 para Martinho de Melo e Castro", No. 12 (27 January 1783), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 211.

Cunene River, from where they could also have access to local commodities (beewax, ivory, cattle and slaves) offered by the Nkhumbi peoples (“Mohumbes”, as he called) from the interior⁷³⁷.

Ignoring the advice of the governor of Benguela and other merchants who had visited Cape Negro⁷³⁸, the Baron of Moçamedes decided to organize a series of expeditions to explore the region, both by sea and land, and thereby determine the best place for the creation of a settlement. The first was a maritime expedition commanded by Captain Luis Candido Pinheiro Furtado⁷³⁹ and Captain Antonio José Valente⁷⁴⁰ that was to explore and map the coast between São Filipe de Benguela and Cape Negro. A second expedition, commanded by Captain Gregório José Mendes⁷⁴¹, was to explore and map the same coast by land. A third expedition, commanded by the infamous slaver Antonio José da Costa⁷⁴², was to explore the Cunene Basin and punish some “rebels” from Quilengues. The naturalist Joaquim José da Silva⁷⁴³ accompanied Captain Costa’s expedition to map and study the “Natural History” and the peoples of the interior of Benguela⁷⁴⁴.

The second expedition, led by Captain Mendes, was not in the original plans of the Baron of Moçamedes, but was organized by Captain Pinheiro Furtado after their arrival in Benguela⁷⁴⁵. He had asked the governor of Benguela to hold a meeting with the members of the community of slave traders of São Filipe to get information about the lands that they were about to explore. Most

⁷³⁷ “Carta do governador de Benguela Pedro José Correa de Quevedo Magalhães a Martinho de Mello e Castro, de 24 de fevereiro de 1785”, No. 14 (24 February 1785) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 213-215; AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 70, Doc. 12, “Relatório do governador de Benguela Pedro José de Quevedo Homem de Magalhães”, (4 May 1785). A transcript of this source can be found in “Carta do governador de Benguela Pedro José Correa de Quevedo Magalhães a Martinho de Mello e Castro, de 4 de maio de 1785”, No. 14 (4 May 1785) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 216-220.

⁷³⁸ According to Dias, *Pioneiros de Angola*, 26, the Baron of Moçamedes was convinced that Governor Quevedo was incompetent to carry out the mission to occupy Cape Negro. According to Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 129, the Baron’s decision to include other military commanders in the exploration of the lands in southern Benguela created tension with Governor Quevedo who, according to Correa, began to sabotage the expeditions.

⁷³⁹ Lieutenant Colonel of the Corps of Engineers (*Tenente-coronel de engenheiros*)

⁷⁴⁰ Lieutenant Captain (*Capitão-tenente*)

⁷⁴¹ Sergeant Major of Ordinances (*Sargento-mor de ordenanças*)

⁷⁴² Captain of the Grenadiers Guard (*Capitão de granadeiros*)

⁷⁴³ Secretary of Government (*Secretário do governo*)

⁷⁴⁴ “Relatório de Antonio José Valente, de 3 de fevereiro de 1791, em que descreve a organização da expedição em que foi à Angra do Negro”, No. 10 (3 February 1791) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 229-232. See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 129; Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 419.

⁷⁴⁵ Captain Mendes made a great impression upon the *tenente-coronel* of the expedition, who described him as a “Prussian king” for the way he dressed and behaved: Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 137.

advised against the sea expedition, saying they had lost several ships in Cape Negro sent to acquire “cattle” in the region, making no reference to contraband trade⁷⁴⁶.

Nonetheless, Captain Mendes, one of the *sertanejos* invited to the meeting, supported the idea of opening trade with the deep *sertões* of southern Quilengues and Cape Negro. He volunteered to help the exploration by land, marching with his own caravan to map the terrain, including the coast visited by the maritime expedition. This would also free Captain Costa to explore the Lower Cunene Basin and discover its mouth, as well as command “punitive” expeditions against “rebels” in the *sertões* of Quilengues⁷⁴⁷.

Captain Pinheiro Furtado was the first to leave on his mission to explore the coast down to Cape Negro, with a stop planned in Angra dos Negros (a cove in the current capital of the province of Namibe). While he and Captain Valente explored the southern coast in great detail, another ship, the frigate (*fragatinha*) *Loanda*, sailed directly to Angra dos Negros, taking Captain José de Sousa de Sepulveda⁷⁴⁸ on board, where it was to wait for the arrival of the remaining ships⁷⁴⁹.

Once in Angra dos Negros, Captain Sepulveda began exploring the region, seeking local communities to raid. He seized cattle from local nomadic herders and burned huts he found in the vicinity. On one occasion, he was approached by one of these groups of herders, later identified as the Mucuanhangues, who wanted to trade sheep and milk for iron, knives and textiles. According to the account detailing this encounter, the herders attacked the Luso-African traders in a moment of distraction and killed them in revenge for the destruction of their huts and the theft of their cattle⁷⁵⁰. Captain Mendes and his forces, as we will see below, later castigated the Mucuanhangues for this attack.

⁷⁴⁶ “Carta para o Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, secretário da repartição ultramarina” (18 January 1786) in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 424-425; “Relatório de Antonio José Valente, de 3 de fevereiro de 1791, em que descreve a organização da expedição em que foi à Angra do Negro”, No. 10 (3 February 1791) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 230.

⁷⁴⁷ “Cópia de doze documentos que acompanharam o officio com data de 18 de Janeiro de 1786 sobre a exploração de cabo Negro, dirigido ao Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, Secretário de Estado da repartição ultramarina, pelo governador de Angola, o barão de Mossamedes”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 425.

⁷⁴⁸ Lieutenant of Artillery (*Tenente d’artilharia*)

⁷⁴⁹ Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 429-430; Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 131.

⁷⁵⁰ “Cópia de doze documentos que acompanharam o officio com data de 18 de Janeiro de 1786 sobre a exploração de cabo Negro, dirigido ao Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, Secretário de Estado da repartição ultramarina, pelo governador de Angola, o barão de Mossamedes”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 428-429. See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 131-132.

After anchoring in Angra dos Negros⁷⁵¹ and learning about the assassination of Captain Sepulveda, Captain Pinheiro Furtado sent the frigate *Loanda* back to São Filipe and continued the exploration of the southern coast down to the mouth of the Coroca River, in Cape Negro⁷⁵² (Map 3). The itinerary of the maritime expedition and the geographic information collected enhanced Portuguese knowledge about the southern coast of Benguela and produced one of the most important Portuguese maps of West Central Africa at the end of the eighteenth century⁷⁵³ (See Appendix 3).

Captain Pinheiro Furtado concluded in his report that the creation of a settlement in Angra dos Negros demanded the opening of communication through land, since navigation against the current was difficult and dangerous for large “round” ships, that is vessels with deep draughts. The cove was only 60 leagues away from São Filipe de Benguela, and although the coast proved to be very dry and with few sources of potable water for caravans, the backlands were more hospitable and potential commercial routes passed by several local communities that could be incited to participate in trade, as Captain Mendes’ expedition would confirm⁷⁵⁴.

Upon returning to São Filipe de Benguela from his maritime expedition to Cape Negro, Captain Pinheiro Furtado learned that the caravan commanded by Captain Mendes had not yet left town, allegedly because of a lack of support from the governor of Benguela, who refused to supply him with soldiers and gunpowder⁷⁵⁵. Following some pressure from Portuguese officers, the

⁷⁵¹ Captain Pinheiro Furtado renamed Angra dos Negros as Moçamedes. The region had been visited by Portuguese traders for a long time, as evidenced by the names inscribed on a rock found at the bay. See “Cópia de doze documentos que acompanharam o officio com data de 18 de Janeiro de 1786 sobre a exploração de cabo Negro, dirigido ao Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, Secretário de Estado da repartição ultramarina, pelo governador de Angola, o barão de Mossamedes”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 429. For a transcript of the inscriptions found on the rock at Angra dos Negros, see Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 433-434.

⁷⁵² “Relatório de Antonio José Valente, de 3 de fevereiro de 1791, em que descreve a organização da expedição em que foi à Angra do Negro”, No. 10 (3 February 1791) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 229-232. See also Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 420.

⁷⁵³ “Carta para o Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, secretário da repartição ultramarina” (18 Jan 1786), in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 421-422.

⁷⁵⁴ The coast of Angra dos Negros was dry and cold, with chilling ocean winds, which forced most of the local population to live further inland, in higher and greener terrains: “Cópia de doze documentos que acompanharam o officio com data de 18 de Janeiro de 1786 sobre a exploração de cabo Negro, dirigido ao Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, Secretário de Estado da repartição ultramarina, pelo governador de Angola, o barão de Mossamedes”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 429-430. See also “Relatório de Antonio José Valente, de 3 de fevereiro de 1791, em que descreve a organização da expedição em que foi à Angra do Negro”, No. 10 (3 February 1791) in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 229-232.

⁷⁵⁵ “Cópia de doze documentos que acompanharam o officio com data de 18 de Janeiro de 1786 sobre a exploração de cabo Negro, dirigido ao Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, Secretário de Estado da repartição ultramarina, pelo governador de Angola, o barão de Mossamedes”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de

governor conceded and Captain Mendes left São Filipe de Benguela with a large caravan composed of more than one thousand people, most of whom were his dependents and slaves⁷⁵⁶.

Captain Mendes had personal interests in exploring the coast to the south of Benguela, as well as its backlands. One of the most successful slavers of Benguela in the 1780s, his slaving business was described as “resplendent” and he profited greatly from his investments in what turned out to be a major slaving expedition. This explains his disposition to pay for most of the costs for the soldiers under his command⁷⁵⁷. Captain Mendes was experienced in leading caravans into the *sertões* of Benguela, had an unparalleled knowledge of the interior, and was somewhat versed in some local languages⁷⁵⁸.

After leaving São Filipe de Benguela, Captain Mendes’ caravan crossed the lands of Quipupa and the Coporolo River. He passed through the five major polities that inhabited the Coporolo basin, which included Quizamba, Kalunga, Mama, Capembe, and Chela⁷⁵⁹. From there, he travelled south, staying parallel to the coast. He passed by Angra de Santa Maria, the beach of Equimina (São João de Quimina), and series of dry rivers. Along the way, Captain Mendes fought

Angola”, 431-435; “Relatório de Antonio José Valente, de 3 de fevereiro de 1791, em que descreve a organização da expedição em que foi à Angra do Negro”, No. 10 (3 February 1791), in Alfredo Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização dos planaltos e litoral do sul de Angola*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1940), 229-232.

⁷⁵⁶ “Carta para o Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, secretário da repartição ultramarina” (18 January 1786), in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 421-422; “Copia de doze documentos que acompanharam o officio com data de 18 de Janeiro de 1786 sobre a exploração de cabo Negro, dirigido ao Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, Secretário de Estado da repartição ultramarina, pelo governador de Angola, o barão de Mossamedes”, Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 426; “Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15º de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786” (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 437.

⁷⁵⁷ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 130-131, 138-139.

⁷⁵⁸ “Carta para o Sr. Martinho de Mello e Castro, secretário da repartição ultramarina” (18 January 1786), Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 422. For a fictional description of Captain Mendes’ expedition, see Jorge Arrimar, *O Planalto dos Pássaros* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2002), 67-103.

⁷⁵⁹ There were no “series of forts” built along the Coporolo River, contrary to what is maintained by Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa*, 96.

some local communities who resisted his presence⁷⁶⁰, and managed to impose vassalage on some of them. He also used the service of individuals he captured during the march as local guides⁷⁶¹.

Captain Mendes' caravan was so large that the provisions they carried from São Filipe de Benguela were not enough to sustain its personnel for much time. The caravan consumed 10 cows and 30 sheep a day, as well as a great quantity of water⁷⁶². Hence, the original supplies lasted only for 15 days, after which the slaver began organizing raids to acquire the necessary means for the survival of his expedition. On the first such occasion, he sent one hundred and twenty soldiers supported by seven hundred black warriors to seize the cattle of nearby communities. They acquired 500 head of bovine cattle and more than 2,000 sheep, which sustained the expedition until its arrival in Angra dos Negros⁷⁶³.

Once in Angra dos Negros, the intruders explored the area around a river that Captain Mendes dubbed "River of Deaths" (*Rio das Mortes*), but the inhabitants of the region fled as they saw the huge caravan approaching. The expedition arrested an elder who did not manage to escape and found clothes and other objects that were believed to belong to Captain Sepulveda and his men. The caravan used the captured elder as guide and followed the course of the river to the interior, reaching as far as the lands of Cuvalé (Cubale), within the greater territory of Humbe-

⁷⁶⁰ Captain Mendes' description of the peoples of Quilengues serves as evidence of their cultural and ethnolinguistic heterogeneity, as well as a sign of constant migratory movements of nomadic herders from semi-desert areas through territories controlled by other African authorities. For instance, he met individuals who spoke a guttural language unknown to all members of his caravan, although they lived under the protection of vassal *sobas*, such as Kalunga (Muene Calunga): "Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15° de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786" (1 January 1786), Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 438.

⁷⁶¹ "Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15° de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786" (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 438-442.

⁷⁶² According to Captain Valente, Captain Mendes' male slaves and black soldiers could survive the hardships of the expedition because they were used to drink muddy water (*agoa emlodada*): "Relatório de Antonio José Valente, de 3 de fevereiro de 1791, em que descreve a organização da expedição em que foi à Angra do Negro", No. 10 (3 February 1791), in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 230.

⁷⁶³ "Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15° de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786" (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 439.

Inene, where they found groups of herders and a great quantity of sheep. Along the way, the slavers raided other local communities for supplies and people to serve them as guides⁷⁶⁴.

From the lands of Cubale the caravan moved to Bumbo, a fertile territory in the interior where the Portuguese also envisaged the creation of a permanent market to trade with local communities. According to informants captured during the march, the peoples of this region had never established direct commercial relations with any Europeans. Captain Mendes freed the captured guides after there was no use for them, dressing them in textiles in the hope of inciting interest for imported goods among local communities⁷⁶⁵.

Following a few days in the lands of Bumbo, local inhabitants began to approach the caravan to establish peaceful relations, which Captain Mendes understood as an act of subjugation. Although local warriors soon attacked the expedition with arrows, the captain was able to negotiate a truce. The caravan was subsequently visited by five ambassadors from Bumbo, including three *macotas*, a *quissongo* and a “son” of the *soba*. Days later, the *soba* himself visited the Portuguese camp and agreed to accept the terms of vassalage offered by Captain Mendes⁷⁶⁶.

Upon accepting vassalage, the *soba* of Bumbo promised to capture *soba* Muchuro, responsible for the attack against Captain Sepulveda and his men, and mediate a truce with his local allies who remained opposed to foreign presence in their lands and who had frequently attacked the caravan during the night. The *soba* further guided the expedition to “places of interest” further into the *sertões*. Captain Mendes suggested in his report that the *soba* of Bumbo manipulated the expedition to fight his local enemies, guiding them through their lands to reach

⁷⁶⁴ “Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15º de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786” (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 442-443.

⁷⁶⁵ “Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15º de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786” (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 444-445.

⁷⁶⁶ “Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15º de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786” (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 445-446.

any supposed destination. Indeed, the expedition was a major threat to Bumbo's enemies, who had never engaged a conflict against firearms⁷⁶⁷.

The commander of the expedition also reported on the effects of wars and slaving raids in Quilengues. Places such as the lands of the Bimxiabas were uninhabited due to local conflicts, with the population having been either captured or forced to migrate to other regions. Captain Mendes also informed that the ruler of the Mucuandos or Muquandos, Naquageli, had recently died and that his "sons" had been forced to migrate to Quilengues due to a civil war that followed his death⁷⁶⁸.

Captain Mendes pondered that most of the local African communities of Quilengues that he had crossed paths with were too "rebellious" because of the destructive actions of outsiders who had previously visited them only to raid their villages and seize their cattle⁷⁶⁹. The irony of this realistic commentary seems to have been lost on the captain. In fact, his own slaving operations in the *sertões* helped displace many communities who were forced to flee their land, leaving their crops and cattle behind. Not surprisingly, he was accused of betraying African allies, first summoning them to participate in slaving operations and then attacking them after they were dismissed from the "royal service"⁷⁷⁰. Captain Joaquim Monteiro Moraes, who accompanied the expedition and kept a diary of their itinerary, recorded many of his treacherous actions⁷⁷¹.

Although the expeditions commanded by Captain Pinheiro Furtado and Captain Mendes were considered successful and satisfactory for the "royal service", the third expedition

⁷⁶⁷ "Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15° de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786" (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 437-449; See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 133.

⁷⁶⁸ "Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15° de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786" (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 447.

⁷⁶⁹ "Descrição itinerária da derrota que por ordem dos srs. da junta de comissão estabelecida na cidade de S. Filipe de Benguela, pelo Ilmo. e Exmo. Sr. barão de Mossamedes, governador e capitão general do reino de Angola e suas conquistas, fez o sargento-mor Gregório José Mendes, da mesma cidade até o porto de Mossamedes, na angra do Negro, em 15° de latitude sul, com o exame dos sertões compreendidos entre estes portos, apresentada à mesma junta em 1 de janeiro de 1786" (1 January 1786) in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 448.

⁷⁷⁰ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 138-139.

⁷⁷¹ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 139.

commanded by Captain Costa was considered a failure by his superiors, due to prioritizing his personal slaving interests over the official mission⁷⁷². Dom Martinho de Melo e Castro⁷⁷³ argued that Captain Costa was one of the biggest thieves in the *sertões* of Angola and denounced him of practicing “illegal attacks” against the African potentates of Quilengues⁷⁷⁴.

Despite the accusations, Captain Costa managed to escape punishment due to his close relationship with government officials in Luanda, including the governor of Angola, the Baron of Moçamedes, and the Secretary of the colonial government, João Ribeiro de Sousa. Costa’s daughter lived for some time in the house of the baron and later married Secretary Sousa. According to Melo e Castro, Captain Costa’s father-in-law was Eusebio de Lemos Catela⁷⁷⁵, a professor of Medicine who included the captain’s two sons and his daughter in his will as heirs. Costa’s sons abdicated their rights in the name of their sister, which gave her the means for a good dowry that allowed her to marry Ribeiro de Sousa, formerly an Ensign (*alferes*) from Trás-os-Montes, Portugal⁷⁷⁶.

Sousa arrived in Angola in the company of the Baron of Moçamedes to work as his Secretary, despite the fact the naturalist Joaquim José da Silva already occupied this position. Secretary Sousa soon became an investor in the business of slaving in the interior of Benguela, in association with Antonio Martiniano, a *sertanejo* with whom he acquired a slave ship. In São Filipe de Benguela, Sousa also established a commercial partnership with a slaver named Jacinto José de Brito Romano, and with Captain Manuel Antonio Mourão. Sousa convinced the governor of Benguela that the latter should occupy the position of commander of the town’s Company of Artillery. Despite being the head for the military detachment responsible for the protection of the town, Captain Mourão regularly travelled to Novo Redondo to trade in slaves, ignoring his military

⁷⁷² “Extracto de um officio de Martinho de Melo e Castro ao capitão general de Angola, Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcellos, datado de agosto de 1791”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 451-453; “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 46.

⁷⁷³ Martinho de Melo e Castro was the Portuguese Secretary of State of the Navy and Oversea Possessions (*Secretário de Estado da Marinha e do Ultramar*) from 1770 to 1795.

⁷⁷⁴ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 44. See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 133.

⁷⁷⁵ There is a reference about a certain Doctor Eusébio Catela de Lemos as chief physician (*físico-mor*) of Angola in 1754: *Annaes da Sociedade Literaria Portuense* (Porto: Imprensa de Alvares Ribeiro, 1837), 10

⁷⁷⁶ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 44.

duties and dedicating his time to business with his associates, which included trading with French smugglers on the coast of Benguela⁷⁷⁷.

The main business partner of Secretary Sousa, however, was his father-in-law, Captain Costa. The Secretary of government convinced the Baron of Moçamedes to name Captain Costa commander of the overland trek to Cape Negro that was to move parallel to Captain Pinheiro Furtado's maritime expedition. He also managed to get rid of his direct adversary in former Secretary Joaquim José da Silva, who was enlisted as naturalist of the land expedition commanded by his father-in-law. Moreover, with the inclusion of Captain Mendes in the exploration of the coast by land, Captain Costa's original orders were altered⁷⁷⁸ so that he could launch slaving operations in Quilengues disguised as "punitive" expeditions against "rebel" *sobas*⁷⁷⁹.

The expedition led by Captain Costa to Quilengues attracted the attention of the peoples in the interior of Benguela and excited the ambitions of traders in Benguela who awaited for news about new areas to exploit⁷⁸⁰. Captain Costa marched to the interior with one hundred soldiers in order to assemble a unit of black warriors (*guerra preta*) to help the expedition against the "rebel" *sobas* of Quilengues. He summoned vassal *sobas* to provide warriors and porters for the "royal service", as well as supplies for the maintenance of his troops. These were both obligations predicated on the terms of vassalage that could not be denied by African vassal authorities. However, Captain Costa began accepting bribes (in the form of captives, ivory and beeswax) to free these vassals from their obligations, similar to what he had done in Nano during the wars against the *soba* of Mbailundo⁷⁸¹.

⁷⁷⁷ "Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola" in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 44-46.

⁷⁷⁸ The second mission of Captain Costa in the southern backlands of Benguela consisted of exploring the Cunene basin and the trajectory of that major river. To carry out this venture successfully, he was given one hundred armed soldiers, something that according to Melo e Castro was again made possible through the intervention of his son-in-law: "Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola" in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 46. See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 136.

⁷⁷⁹ "Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola" in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 46-47.

⁷⁸⁰ Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 133.

⁷⁸¹ "Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola" in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 46-47; "Extracto de um officio de Martinho de Melo e Castro ao capitão general de Angola, Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcellos, datado de agosto de 1791", in Oliveira, "Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola", 451. In one case, Captain Costa authorized the return of the *soba* of Quipuças (Dom Paulo in the documentation) to his lands in exchange of slaves for his personal gain: Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 134-135.

In cases where vassal *sobas* refused to provide warriors or pay the bribes, Captain Costa accused them of “rebelliousness” and enslaved their people, profiting from their sale in the market of São Filipe de Benguela⁷⁸². Hence, instead of marching against the “rebel” *sobas* and “*jagas*” of Quilengues, the captain camped out in the lands of African vassals to extort them, pushing many to rebel against him⁷⁸³.

According to accusations made against Captain Costa, he repeated his *modus operandi* after exhausting the resources of any vassal *soba*, moving to the lands of another vassal and restarting the process of exploitation. In the meantime, “rebel” African rulers kept up their attacks on *pumbeiros* crossing Quilengues with no reaction from the expedition. In Dom Melo e Castro’s opinion, the realization that Captain Costa only wanted to enrich himself at the expense of local vassals created new “rebels” amongst the African authorities of Quilengues, who saw their acts of “rebellion” as the only way to protect themselves from such exploitation⁷⁸⁴.

Some vassal *sobas* sent complaints to the governor of Angola about the actions of Captain Costa in Quilengues, as did some members of the community of slave traders from São Filipe de Benguela, who were losing their business because of the inaction of the commander against those robbing their *pumbeiros*. Even officers under Captain Costa’s command wrote to Luanda complaining about their superior⁷⁸⁵. However, Secretary Sousa, his son-in-law, intercepted the complaints, allegedly hiding them from the governor or arguing against the accusations, if they came to light⁷⁸⁶.

⁷⁸² Among the most outrageous attacks undertaken by Captain Costa against the peoples of Quilengues was his betrayal of the *soba* of Quiaca, whom the captain had approached offering vassalage and protection by Portuguese forces against his local enemies. Quiaca accepted the terms of vassalage and offered his warriors for “royal service”. Captain Costa, however, dismissed the vassal *soba* to return to their lands, only to attack the African ruler and his people by surprise when they were leaving. He attacked the vassals from behind and in the first hours in the morning, seizing all his belongings and enslaving his people: Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 134-135.

⁷⁸³ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 46-47; “Extracto de um officio de Martinho de Melo e Castro ao capitão general de Angola, Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcellos, datado de agosto de 1791”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 451.

⁷⁸⁴ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 47; “Extracto de um officio de Martinho de Melo e Castro ao capitão general de Angola, Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcellos, datado de agosto de 1791”, in Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 452.

⁷⁸⁵ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 48-49. See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 133; Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola”, 419-420.

⁷⁸⁶ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 47-48. See also, Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 136.

Captain Costa spent more than two years in Quilengues enslaving people for the Atlantic trade. After the Baron of Moçamedes summoned him back, he arrived in São Filipe de Benguela loaded with slaves, ivory and beeswax. Since he could not find a ship that was big enough to load all of his spoils of war, the commander sold part of them in the local market and embarked with whatever he could transport for Luanda, leaving behind the soldiers under his command. The latter only returned to the capital of Angola after Captain Valente visited São Filipe de Benguela, on his way back from Pernambuco, and transported them back to Luanda⁷⁸⁷.

Rather than being punished for his participation in the “illegal” enslavement of African vassals and for having returned to Luanda with the spoils of “unjust” wars and without the soldiers under his command, Captain Costa was instead rewarded by the governor of Angola. The Baron of Moçamedes promoted him to *sargento-mor* and commander of the prison of Penedo, giving Captain Costa control over soldiers that he continued using to organize new slaving operations⁷⁸⁸.

The surge of the slave trade in Benguela: the 1790s

With the entrenchment and expansion of Portugal’s presence in the interior of Benguela during the second half of the eighteenth century, its slave trade on that coast increased dramatically. During the 1790s, slave embarkations at Benguela experienced a surge and turned the small town into the second largest supplier of captives in the history of the southern Atlantic slave trade. In fact, for a few years during the last decade of the eighteenth century, the number of slaves exported from Benguela surpassed even those of Luanda.

During the 1760s and 1770s, the official slave trade from São Filipe de Benguela involved an annual average of 5200 captives⁷⁸⁹. Of course, this figure does not take into account the contraband trade in uncontrolled points of embarkation, such as Equimina and Cape Negro (Map

⁷⁸⁷ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 48. See also Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 136.

⁷⁸⁸ “Para Manuel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, governador e capitam general do Reino de Angola” in Oliveira, *Angolana*, Vol. 1, 48-49. As Commander of the Penedo prison, Captain Costa continued organizing slaving operations disguised as “punitive” expeditions, as was the case of the attack against Mossul in 1788: Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 2, 140-142.

⁷⁸⁹ Rosa Cruz e Silva, “The Saga of Kakonda and Kilengues. Relations between Benguela and its Interior, 1791-1796”, in José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy eds., *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery* (New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 255.

3). The French, for instance, had greatly increased their participation in the Atlantic slave trade following the end of the Seven Years' War (1763) and featured as important associates of several members of the community of slave traders based in Benguela. Although there is no data to create a precise assessment of the French contraband, Joseph C. Miller estimated that 3000 to 5000 slaves were involved annually, in Benguela alone, during the 1790s surge⁷⁹⁰.

French contrabandists traded imported textiles, alcohol and especially guns for African slaves and ivory. As Miller explains: "South of Luanda, the inability of Portuguese traders to supply firearms left an unmet demand that encouraged French to 'smuggle', as frustrated Luanda governors perceived the situation, along a part of the coast where they did not have to confront British superiority in the weapons trade."⁷⁹¹ The French used alternative places of embarkation immediately south of São Filipe de Benguela, such as Angra de Santa Maria and Equimina, to trade with caravans moving through alternative routes from Quilengues⁷⁹².

In the 1780s, the governors of Benguela, Pedro José de Quevedo Homem de Magalhães (1784-1788) and Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos (July to September 1788), denounced the significant French presence on the coast of Benguela⁷⁹³. The contrabandists could even be found walking along the streets of São Filipe de Benguela. In 1790, the Baron Moçamedes highlighted that their presence in São Filipe de Benguela had become so scandalous that they could be seen trading in the open. When confronted, French smugglers showed no fear of punishment. One of them, according to the baron, stated he would leave town only when he was done with his business⁷⁹⁴.

In a 1790 report sent to Luanda, local officials in Benguela informed the arrival of a French ship from Bordeaux, the *Lampossante*, captained by Pedro Paulim, which remained anchored for eight days in the bay facing Benguela, contradicting official orders that limited the presence of foreign ships to a maximum of three days. When confronted by Ensign Manuel José de Oliveira, Captain Paulim replied that he knew he could only stay three days, but he would stay the time he

⁷⁹⁰ Miller, *Way of Death*, 227; 603.

⁷⁹¹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 78.

⁷⁹² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 70, Doc. 12, "Relatório do governador de Benguela Pedro José de Quevedo Homem de Magalhães", (4 May 1785).

⁷⁹³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 70, Doc. 5, fls. 6-7v., "Relatório do governador de Benguela Pedro José de Quevedo Homem de Magalhães", (24 February 1785).

⁷⁹⁴ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 75, Doc. 35- "Ofício do governador de Angola Barão de Mossamedes", (15 August 1790).

considered necessary to finish his business. The ensign kept an eye on the *Lampossante* and one night caught the French captain in a small boat filled with contraband. After a new confrontation, Captain Paulim revealed that he was going to buy slaves from skipper-major (*patrão-mor*) of São Filipe and ordered his men to take up arms against the colonial patrol⁷⁹⁵.

The French presence in West Central Africa was not a novelty. They had a strong participation in the slave trade in Loango and Cabinda for decades. There, even Luso-African traders and officials spoke good French⁷⁹⁶. The Portuguese accused the French navy of protecting French contrabandists on the coast north of the kingdom of Kongo. A fortified camp built in 1783 in Cabinda was destroyed in the following year by a French naval force. This attack precipitated a discussion between the parts that resulted in a formal convention between Portugal and France in 1786, in which the French agreed not to acquire slaves south of the Zaire River⁷⁹⁷.

Despite the convention of 1786, French smugglers kept sailing along the entire coast of the “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela, as far as the Cunene River⁷⁹⁸. The fight against contraband, the Baron of Moçamedes concluded, should be carried out on land, not at sea. It would be much easier to target contrabandists and their associates while they were trading on land than trying to patrol and seize French ships⁷⁹⁹. Nevertheless, in 1792 the colonial administration in Luanda still sent the old frigate *Loanda* to patrol the coast of Benguela⁸⁰⁰.

Officials in Luanda pressured the governor of Benguela to take measures against contraband in the region, complaining that nobody was ever found guilty of collaborating with French traders. It was obvious that there could be no contraband without the participation of the *moradores* of Benguela. The open presence of French smugglers in this town suggested that the contrabandists had ties to important members of the administration and the military. Such was the case of Antonio da Silva Lisboa, the local judge who the governor of Benguela, Francisco Paim

⁷⁹⁵ Delgado, Ralph. *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela: Catálogo de governadores, 1779 a 1940* (Lisboa: Edições Cosmos, 1940), 19.

⁷⁹⁶ Miller, *Way of Death*, 37.

⁷⁹⁷ José Maria de Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, in *Annaes Maritimos e Coloneaes, 4ª série, parte não oficial*, (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 208

⁷⁹⁸ “Carta de Antonio José Pimentel e Castro, de 27 de janeiro de 1783, para Marinho de Melo e Castro”, Documento No. 12, in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 211.

⁷⁹⁹ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 98v-102, “Carta para o governador de Benguela Francisco Paim Câmara e Ornellas”, (14 November 1791).

⁸⁰⁰ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 168-169, “Carta para o governador de Benguela Francisco Paim Câmara e Ornellas”, (11 March 1792).

Câmara e Ornelas (1791-1796), smeared for being a “*pardo* born in Africa” who protected contrabandists⁸⁰¹.

Governor Câmara e Ornelas was a military officer who became governor of Benguela after the tumultuous and short administration of José Maria Doutel Machado e Vasconcelos (July 1788 to June 1789)⁸⁰². Doutel e Vasconcelos was removed from the position of governor after he clashed with Benguela’s community of slave traders, who accused him of tyranny and corruption. The major businessmen (*negociantes*) of Benguela complained to Luanda that the governor was using their *sertanejos* as personal servants, forcing them to carry his merchandise (*banzos*) to buy slaves in the *sertões*⁸⁰³.

The then governor of Angola ordered an inquiry (*devassa*) into the matter, which found the governor of Benguela guilty of all charges⁸⁰⁴. Doutel e Vasconcelos was subsequently arrested and condemned to serve his sentence in the Limoeiro prison, in Lisbon. On his way to Portugal, however, he was suddenly “freed by death”⁸⁰⁵. After Doutel e Vasconcelos’ arrest, Captain Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos assumed power, once again, as interim governor of Benguela (June 1789 to May 1791), until the governorship was assumed by Câmara e Ornelas. This episode demonstrated the increased power and influence of the community of slave traders based in São Filipe de Benguela at the end of the eighteenth century.

The new governor of Benguela made the fight against contraband a priority, which put him in direct conflict with some of the main traders in Benguela. The judge of Benguela who was previously accused of protecting contrabandists, Antonio da Silva Lisboa, became the spokesman of the members of the community of slave traders in a series of denunciations against Governor Câmara e Ornelas, similar to the campaign they had carried out against his predecessor. The judge

⁸⁰¹ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 20-24.

⁸⁰² The government of Francisco Paim de Câmara e Ornelas was marked by the organization of the archives of Benguela: hence, there is a greater number of primary sources available from 1792 onwards, which facilitates research. His government was also marked by improvements in the sanitary conditions of São Filipe de Benguela, the beginning of the construction of a new hospital in town, and the 1794-1795 expedition of Alexandre da Silva Teixeira to the land of Luvar (Lovale). See Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 20-24. For more on Captain Teixeira’s expedition to Luvar, see “Relação da viagem que fiz desta cidade de Benguela para as do Lovar, no anno de 1794”, Documento No. 21, in Felner, *Angola: Aportamentos sobre a colonização...*, Vol. 1, 236-237.

⁸⁰³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 74, Doc. 49, “Devassa do Governador de Benguela José Maria Doutel d’Almeida e Vasconcelos”, (1790).

⁸⁰⁴ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 74, Doc. 49, “Devassa do Governador de Benguela José Maria Doutel d’Almeida e Vasconcelos”, (1790).

⁸⁰⁵ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 17-18; Delgado, *O Reino de Benguela*, 361.

denounced that the governor worked against the merchant community of Benguela by using the powers invested in him only for personal gain. They accused him, among other things, of forcing *sertanejos* to sell him slaves for a third of their market value. He also, it was alleged, demanded that *sertanejos* and *pumbeiros* transport his merchandise (*banzos*) in exchange for authorization to enter the *sertões*. The community of slave traders of Benguela reminded the governor of Angola that the former governor of Benguela, José Maria Doutel Machado e Vasconcelos, had been arrested for following similar accusations⁸⁰⁶.

The quarrels between the governor and the judge of Benguela upset the governor of Angola, who demanded that colonial officials refrain from personal disputes. “In such an enlightened century”, he complained, “...it is time to forget the old rivalries between civilians and military personnel”⁸⁰⁷. The governor of Benguela struck back: first by using his influence to remove the judge from his position; and secondly by having him replaced by Jerônimo Caetano de Araújo e Beça. Then, the governor of Benguela ordered the new judge to launch an inquiry (*devassa*) into the state of contraband in Benguela. The investigation revealed that a great part of the contraband trade happened in the houses of the *moradores* of São Filipe, including some who had already been caught with “illegal”, imported merchandise⁸⁰⁸.

The investigations implicated some of the most important *negociantes* in Benguela (Joaquim José de Andrade e Silva, José Maria Arsênio de Lacerda, Sebastião Gil Vaz Lobo, and the infamous Captain Antonio José da Costa) as members of the contraband network. They were also accused of trading goods without the official royal stamp, which was “illegal” under Portuguese “colonial law”. All of them were arrested and later released on bail. The *sertanejos* João Coelho and Nazário Marques da Silva, who were actually caught with French contraband, remained under arrest and the merchandise found in their possession was seized by the colonial administration⁸⁰⁹.

⁸⁰⁶ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 76, Doc. 67, “Denúncia contra Francisco Paim da Câmara Ornelas por Antonio da Silva Lisboa”, (18 July 1791).

⁸⁰⁷ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 98v-102, “Carta para o governador de Benguela Francisco Paim Câmara e Ornellas”, (14 November 1791). The governor of Angola also made the same complaint to members of Benguela’s community of slave traders: AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 95-95v., “Carta para o capitão dos auxiliares de Benguela Lourenço Pereira Tavares”, (13 November 1791).

⁸⁰⁸ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 79, Doc. 62, “Devassa de contrabando em Benguela”, (5 December 1793).

⁸⁰⁹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 79, Doc. 62, “Devassa de contrabando em Benguela”, (5 December 1793).

The colonial administration had managed, at least temporarily, to dismantle the main contraband connections in Benguela responsible for deviating considerable amounts of slaves from the local market. In fact, the investigations had shown the involvement of some of the major traders in Benguela with the unauthorized trade. The impact of the dismantling of local contraband trading was immediate, leading to an increase in the numbers of slave exports from São Filipe de Benguela, as reported by the new judge in December 1793. In his opinion, the rise in slave and ivory exports during 1793 was, in comparison to 1791, the result of the administration's fight against contraband⁸¹⁰.

Although the dismantling of the contraband network of São Filipe de Benguela in the early 1790s might have aided the increase in the numbers of the slave trade, there are other factors that also help explain this surge. The Angolan historian Rosa Cruz e Silva has pointed to a direct relation between the sudden increase in the numbers of slaves exported in the first half of the 1790s and the intensification of "punitive" military operations carried out in Caconda and Quilengues during the same period. She argues that the colonial administration premeditated and designed conflicts with African authorities to "produce" slaves for the Atlantic slave trade. "This policy of intervention in the backlands furthered the production of merchandise for the slave market and violated the terms of several agreements signed with the indigenous peoples"⁸¹¹.

Rosa Cruz e Silva focused on the connections between the Atlantic slave trade and military punitive operations in the interior of Benguela between 1791 and 1796, the same years that Captain Câmara e Ornelas governed the captaincy. During this period, the number of slaves legally exported from Benguela rose from 6,329 adults and 10 infants in 1791 to 10,170 adults and 17 infants in 1795, reaching a peak in 1793 with the embarkation of 11,172 slaves and 8 infants. Prior to 1791, the number of slaves legally exported from Benguela had never reached more than 7,200 slaves⁸¹². Hence, the military operations in Quilengues and Caconda authorized by Governor

⁸¹⁰ Judge Araújo e Beça considered 1791 as the peak of the contraband trade in Benguela: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 79, Doc. 62, "Devassa de contrabando em Benguela", (5 December 1793).

⁸¹¹ Silva, "The Saga of Kakonda and Kilengues", 254; Rosa Cruz e Silva, "Benguela e Brasil no Final do Século XVIII: Relações Comerciais e Políticas", in Selma Pantoja and José Flávio Saraiva, eds. *Angola e Brasil nas rotas do Atlântico sul* (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1999), 133.

⁸¹² These are official numbers for the slave trade given in 1796 by the governor of Benguela, Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos, in ANA, Códice 441, fl. 19v, "Mappa dos escravos exportados desta capitania de Benguela para o Brazil" (27 July 1796). The document was published in Silva, "The Saga of Kakonda and Kilengues", 249-263. For a more comprehensive overview of the slave trade from Benguela, see Curto, "The Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Benguela", 101-116; Curto, "Another Look at the Slave Trade from Benguela", 9-26.

Câmara e Ornelas were another significant factor in the surge of captives exported during the first half of the 1790s⁸¹³.

In the process, Governor Câmara e Ornelas swiftly made enemies on two different fronts: In the backlands, the increase in “punitive” expeditions agitated the people and promoted the rise of new warlords. The latter, in turn, took revenge on the *sertanejos* and *pumbeiros* roaming the interior and threatened “white” settlements, such as Salvaterra dos Magos. On the coast, French contrabandists became an increasing threat since the governor began his persecution against their associates and chased them out of town. Hence, the governor wanted to increase the military presence around Benguela in order to protect the town from its new enemies.

Governor Câmara e Ornelas’ plans to reinforce the defenses of São Filipe de Benguela included the construction of a new fortified structure in the Catumbela region. Yet, due to limitations in resources, he was only able to establish three small military outposts (*redutos*) on the outskirts of town, in Marimbombo, Sombreiro and Bimbas. These *redutos* were meant to protect Benguela from both external and internal threats⁸¹⁴. They effectively proved useful when, upon French pirates threatening to invade São Filipe de Benguela, probably in retaliation for Governor Câmara e Ornelas’ interfering in the contraband networks, the governor was forced flee to one of the *redutos*⁸¹⁵.

The governor of Benguela also increased the military presence in the interior colonial settlements. Reinforcing this military presence meant strengthening the slave trade, since military officers in the interior were usually deeply involved in trading. The “colonial” administration relied on the most successful of these slave traders to run the “provinces” as *capitães-mores* (in the case of *presídios*) and *regentes* (in the case of *districtos*). This was the case of Joaquim Vieira de Andrade, a notorious slaver who served several times as regent of Quilengues.

⁸¹³ Daniel Domingues da Silva, “The Transatlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701-1867,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 46, n. 1 (2013): 121-122, Appendix A, shows another surge in slave exports from Benguela between the years of 1836-1845.

⁸¹⁴ For more on *redutos* in the interior of Benguela, see Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 102-108.

⁸¹⁵ The governor ordered the retreat of the urban population to the *reduto* of Bimbas, along with the safe of the Royal Treasury (*Cofre da Real Fazenda*). See Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 20-24.

Slavers in positions of authority

Joaquim Vieira de Andrade was part of a Luso-African family of slave traders based in Quilengues. His brother, João Vieira de Andrade, was listed in 1798 as the single most important owner of cattle among the *moradores* of Salvaterra dos Magos⁸¹⁶. They had at least another brother actively involved in the slave trade, Elias Vieira de Andrade, who appears in some colonial documents leading caravans between Benguela and Quilengues⁸¹⁷.

The Andrade brothers were identified as “white men”, but their birthplace is not certain. Joaquim Vieira de Andrade was the only one serving in the military, although all of them eventually worked for the “royal service”, especially moving slaves and cattle belonging to the royal treasure or delivering official letters. Both Joaquim and João occupied the position of Regent of Quilengues several times during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century⁸¹⁸. This made the Andrade brothers some of the most important and powerful slavers in Quilengues for almost two decades.

The first time Joaquim Vieira de Andrade occupied the position of Regent of Quilengues was in 1789 and the last was in 1808⁸¹⁹. During this period, his family slaving enterprise moved thousands of people captured in Quilengues to São Filipe de Benguela. He became notorious for the violent and disrespectful way he treated *sobas* under his jurisdiction. Although most of his actions, including violence, did not differ much from others who came before or after him, Joaquim Vieira de Andrade marked a new moment in the relationship between the *sobado* of Socoval and the Portuguese “colonial” administration. It was the end of somewhat peaceful and respectful relations and the beginning of an aggressive advance by Luso-African slavers over the lands and people of Socoval, as we will see in the next chapter.

During the 1790s, Quilengues also became increasingly important as a gateway to the southern *sobados* on the Huila/Humpata plateau, as the colonial administration sought to spread

⁸¹⁶ AIHGB, DL 32, 2. 37 (Doc. 146), fls. 37-48v – “Relação dos moradores e *sobas* do Distrito de Quilengues” (18 February 1798).

⁸¹⁷ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 101v, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues Francisco Infante de Sequeira Correa da Silva”, (8 January 1802).

⁸¹⁸ In fact, there were cases in which one of the brothers nominated the other for a position in the colonial administration, see AHU, Angola, Códice 1629, Livro 3, 1792-1793, 112-112v, “Carta para o capitão mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (14 January 1793).

⁸¹⁹ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 306-307

its commercial and political sphere of influence further south. In 1791, for instance, the governor of Benguela struggled to find some “strong and competent candidate” to occupy the Regency of Quipungo⁸²⁰. It also became increasingly important to control the access of *sertanejos* and *pumbeiros* from Benguela to the northern routes of the central plateau, because from there they were crossing into and trading within the “kingdom of Angola”, that is, areas along the Cuanza River under the direct influence of Portuguese traders operating from Luanda⁸²¹.

When he was chosen for the Regency of Quilengues in 1791, Captain Andrade received specific instructions from the governor of Angola, Manuel de Almeida Vasconcelos (1790-1797), to reprimand any kind of violence against African authorities. The governor warned him also not to exceed his orders when collecting tribute from vassal *sobas* and to moderate the use of force to make them comply⁸²². Despite these recommendations, Captain Andrade had many opportunities to exceed all limits of violence while “punishing” the “rebel” *sobas* in Quilengues. He attacked the *sobas* of Quiaca, Ganda and Bongo, who had engaged in hostile actions against the vassal *soba* of Lumbimbe, for which he was congratulated. As a reward, the governor of Angola ordered the governor of Benguela to send more soldiers and a piece of artillery to Quilengues, which should help to maintain “peace” in the *sertões*.⁸²³

In 1792, officials in Luanda recognized Quilengues as the “most agitated province” of Benguela and its *moradores* as the favorite targets of African rulers and warlords seeking revenge. The governor of Angola praised the intelligence of Captain Andrade in the use of the artillery pieces he had sent him to fight the “rebels” and “protect” the settlement.⁸²⁴ Besides the tactical reinforcements in Salvaterra dos Magos, the Regent of Quilengues had created a military outpost (*reduto*) in Cazua, manned by 50 soldiers. This military detachment was meant to help protect the peoples around it from hostile actions by “rebel” *sobas* and *macotas*⁸²⁵. Yet, the governor of

⁸²⁰ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 19v-20, “Carta para o capitão mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (22 August 1791).

⁸²¹ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 13v-16v., “Carta para o governador de Benguela Francisco Paim Câmara e Ornellas”, (18 August 1791).

⁸²² AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 19-19v., “Carta para o capitão mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (16 August 1791).

⁸²³ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 19v-20, “Carta para o capitão mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (22 August 1791).

⁸²⁴ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 168-169, “Carta para o governador de Benguela Francisco Paim Câmara e Ornellas”, (11 March 1792).

⁸²⁵ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 221v, “Carta para o capitão e cabo de Quilengues Hipólito Antônio da Fonseca”, (15 June 1792); AHU, Angola, Códice 1629, Livro 3, 1792-1793, fl. 118, “Carta para o capitão

Benguela still had to dispatch a second military commander to the district of Quilengues, Corporal Hipólito Antonio da Fonseca, to help fight any deserters who were involved in the contraband of slaves and provisions in Quilengues⁸²⁶.

The fight against contraband promoted by the governor of Benguela, Francisco Paim da Câmara e Ornelas, and the expansion of military expeditions carried out by the regent of Quilengues, Joaquim Vieira de Andrade, were the driving forces behind the increasing number of slaves that reached the market of São Filipe de Benguela and boosted exports in the 1790s. Both the governor and the regent were members of complex networks of traders that connected the interior of Benguela to the Atlantic world. The main difference was that the governor of Benguela was an outsider trying to enrich himself as quickly as possible before leaving the country for good, while Captain Andrade was part of well-established social and commercial networks in Benguela. This would eventually put them at odds with each other.

The governor and the regent also had different “methods” of acquiring captives. The governor attacked the contraband networks and channeled the slaves that were being smuggled by the French back to Benguela, where he had the power to control prices, quotas and the embarkation of the captives. The regent of Quilengues, on the other hand, squeezed local African rulers, taking violent measures to make them comply with his orders and often overreached his jurisdiction. Captain Andrade’s goal was to provoke African rulers and make them “rebel”, so as to give him a pretext to “punish” and enslave them. Thus, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the slave trade continued to dominate the Portuguese colonial project throughout the entire region in the backlands of Benguela, namely Quilengues.

e cabo de Quilengues Hipólito António Fonseca” (26 Jan 1793); AHU, Angola, Códice 1630, Livro 4, 1793-1794, fl. 53v, “Carta para o comandante do reduto de Cazua, em Quilengues” (December 1793).

⁸²⁶ Some *moradores* in Quilengues exploited the food market in Benguela by buying all of the local provisions available, such as beans, corn and manioc, and reselling them at a much higher price in the urban coastal centre. The Portuguese colonial administration began to consider this procedure illegal and reinforced military patrols in the interior to hinder such practice: AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 39-39v., “Carta para o capitão e cabo de Quilengues Hipólito António da Fonseca Coutinho”, (22 September 1791).

Conclusion

The rise of São Filipe de Benguela as one of the main slaving towns of the Atlantic in the eighteenth century hinged on internal political, social and environmental transformations, as well as the military actions of Portuguese slavers in the previous century. As this chapter has shown, the association of foreign slavers with Mbangala warlords and other local authorities allowed the development of the trade through constant wars and the displacement of people living in regions such as Quilengues. As mentioned previously, there is sufficient documentary evidence to affirm there was an important participation of Mbangala bands “hunting” slaves in the so-called “kingdom of Benguela” during the centuries of conquest, which contradicts the argument made recently by a historian of Benguela⁸²⁷.

On the other hand, this chapter has also shown that Quilengues remained a major supplier of slaves for the Atlantic trade throughout the eighteenth century, due to the penetration of Luso-African traders far into the interior of Benguela and the development of long-distance trade. This further corroborates recent historiography on the Atlantic slave trade from the West Central African coast⁸²⁸ and its criticism of Miller’s classic thesis about the expansion of the “slaving frontier” deep into the interior of Central Africa⁸²⁹. Nevertheless, this does not completely reject the process of interiorization of the slave trade as proposed by Miller, and Birmingham before him, but rather shows the persistence of violent slaving operations, including raids against peoples living under Portuguese influence, many of whom subjected to the authority of African vassals.

The accounts of raids and slaving operations in Quilengues presented here evidences the continuation of hostilities against African rulers, even after they accepted vassalage. Hence, one should not be surprised by accusations against Portuguese officials, and slavers, of use of their power to advance personal interests or by references of attacks against Africans supposedly protected by their status as “vassals”⁸³⁰. It was not a matter of “incoherence of the legislation”⁸³¹, as Candido has suggested, but a deliberate strategy to generate profit and enhance the Atlantic

⁸²⁷ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 41.

⁸²⁸ Curto, “Rethinking the Origin of Slaves in West Central Africa”, 23-47; Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa*, 18-19, 73-99; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 198-214; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 52-87.

⁸²⁹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 140-169.

⁸³⁰ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 175-188.

⁸³¹ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 204.

slave trade. Vassalage, as we will see in the next chapter, was a tricky concept that could have several meanings in the context of the expansion of Portuguese presence in Benguela.

The surge in the Atlantic slave trade at the end of the eighteenth century was analysed here as having two main causes. First, the fight against contraband and the channeling of slaves previously smuggled by English, French and Portuguese traders allowed the rise in the numbers of the commerce, as argued by Judge Araújo e Beça in 1793. Second, and at the same time, the increase in slaving operations in Quilengues and Caconda, disguised as “punitive” expeditions against “rebel” *sobas*, produced great numbers of captives, thus raising the position of São Filipe de Benguela into one of the major slaving towns in the Atlantic, as highlighted by Rosa Cruz e Silva in 1999⁸³².

Finally, the chapter also shows that, contrary to what Daniel Domingues da Silva has recently argued, the slave trade in Benguela did not start “after Portuguese attempts to find copper mines in the interior of Benguela had failed”⁸³³. Rather, the exploration of these supposed mines was an excuse for the real goal of the pioneers of the slave trade in the region, namely Captain Manuel Cerveira Pereira and Captain Lopo Soares Lasso. Thus, contrary to what some have suggested⁸³⁴, I argue that Captain Cerveira Pereira did not fail in his attempts to find the copper mines in the interior of Benguela, but succeeded in his true and personal mission of developing the Atlantic slave trade from that coast.

⁸³² Silva, “The Saga of Kakonda and Kilengues”, 249-263; See also Rosa Cruz e Silva, “Benguela e Brasil no final do século XVIII: relações comerciais e políticas”, in *Angola e Brasil nas rotas do Atlântico Sul*, Selma Pantoja and José Flávio Saraiva, eds. (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1999), 127-142.

⁸³³ Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa*, 96.

⁸³⁴ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 47-49.

Chapter 4

Conquest, vassalage and African political power

The colonial occupation of Angola was a Portuguese project that took centuries to materialize. The historical process that historians often call “the conquest of Angola” stretched from the foundation of Luanda in 1575 to the downfall of the kingdom of Ndongo in 1671, the year of the defeat of Ngola-a-Ari at his *kilombo* in Pungo-a-Ndongo⁸³⁵. Nonetheless, the defeat of the *ngola* of Ndongo did not result in the consolidation of Portuguese colonial power. It would take more than 200 years for the effective occupation of the colony to materialize, followed by the dismantling of the supremacy of African rulers.

In the case of Benguela and its interior, I argue that the region remained a “conquest” until the “wars of pacification” of the early twentieth century⁸³⁶, in spite of the narrative of “colonial control” found in Portuguese historiography and cartography from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century (Chapter 1). Despite colonialist terminology in seventeenth and eighteenth-century sources concerning the “colony of Angola”, reproduced and reinforced by colonialist historians of the nineteenth century, the reality on the ground was that of a territory under constant dispute⁸³⁷.

Until the consolidation of this Portuguese colonial project, African authorities maintained their sovereignty, even when subjected as vassals. Therefore, although documents from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries produced by Portuguese scientists and colonial officials were clearly “colonialist” in the way they portrayed the so-called “Captaincy of Benguela”, African polities within places like Quilengues were not part of this “colony”. In other words, Portuguese “colonial” sources detailing their presence in the interior of Benguela did not relate to

⁸³⁵ This periodization became a paradigm in the historiography of Angola in English with David Birmingham’s work in the 1960s. There are other dates accepted for the “conquest of Angola”, such as its “liberation” from the Dutch invasion (1648) or the subjugation of Matamba (1683).

⁸³⁶ The Angolan “wars of pacification” are formally understood as the colonial conflicts that took place between the Conference of Berlin (1884-1885) and the end of the First World War (1918)

⁸³⁷ I have argued elsewhere that although the colonization of Angola was a project of the Portuguese Crown since the sixteenth century, it was only consolidated after the proclamation of the Portuguese Republic in the twentieth century. The creation of colonial institutions (such as the *Serviço dos Negócios Indígenas*, 1913) and the promulgation of colonial laws (*Lei Orgânica da Administração Civil das Províncias Ultramarinas*, 1917) dedicated to the usurpation of power from African authorities marked the beginning of the effective colonization of Angola: Estevam C. Thompson, “Fontes coloniais para uma história pré-colonial de Benguela, sécs. XVII a XIX”, *Africana Studia*, No. 25 (2015): 42-45.

effective “Portuguese colonial territories”, since these territories remained largely under the control of local African rulers⁸³⁸.

Moreover, the consolidation of Portuguese and Luso-African influence and power over African rulers in the interior of Benguela through the signing of treaties of vassalage did not mean the complete subordination of African authorities to colonial power, nor the dismissal of the autonomy and authority of these rulers within their territories. As we will see below, the acceptance of vassalage could, paradoxically, mean the independence of vassal African polities from other local rulers and their protection against local enemies. Hence, this chapter points to traces of African resistance where colonialist historians tend to see subjugation.

Therefore, I argue that the acceptance of vassalage could be advantageous to some African rulers who required protection against local enemies and desired access to imported goods that could help spread their political capital and influence, as seen in the previous chapter. Besides, the confirmation of their sovereignty by Portuguese forces played an important role in maintaining power in relation to other African authorities.

If the opening of trade routes and diplomatic relations with Portuguese and Luso-African itinerant traders could bring advantages to African rulers in the interior of Benguela, it could also create dangerous situations. Slavers operating in the region did not respect the independence and the authority of African rulers or the orders of their superiors to avoid conflicts. This chapter discusses the “legality” behind the military expeditions organized by the regents of Quilengues at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. It also discusses the supposed “legal” protection given to the freeborn subjects of Portuguese vassals in the interior of Benguela. Finally, it focuses on a series of inquiries about the conflicts between slave traders in control of the administration of Quilengues and the *soba* of Socoval. According to the documentation at hand, the Portuguese considered the *soba* of Socoval their most important and loyal African ally in Quilengues until the last decade of the eighteenth century, when the relationship changed drastically and he was henceforth accused of being a “rebel”. Recurrent attacks and raids organized by the regent of Quilengues, and disguised as “punitive expeditions”, against the *soba* of Socoval

⁸³⁸ This argument is developed in Thompson, “Fontes coloniais para uma história pré-colonial de Benguela”, 33-69.

led to the apprehension of much cattle and the enslavement of freeborn individuals who were later sold as slaves to Brazil.

The recurrent attacks and raids against the *soba* of Socoval and his people evidence that many of those individuals exported as slaves during the peak of the slave trade in Benguela at the end of the eighteenth century came from areas relatively close to the coast. The wars against Socoval show that the expansion of the “slaving frontier” deep into the interior did not necessarily mean the development of peaceful commercial relations with vassals and other African authorities, as argued by some Angolanists⁸³⁹. I have already raised these points in Chapter 3 and they will be reinforced in this chapter. I will conclude by arguing for the existence of multiple “waves” of enslavement within the boundaries of the “slaving frontier” during its expansion into West Central Africa, and for the presence of a great number of people from Quilengues among the enslaved exported to Brazil during the surge of the Atlantic slave trade in the last decade of the eighteenth century.

Problematizing the idea of a colony

As discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation, the Portuguese developed different forms of occupation in the African territories they “visited”, depending on the political and commercial characteristics of each one of these places. Hence, they built “trading posts” (*feitorias*) in Cacheu and Bissau in West Africa, aimed exclusively at trading with local authorities, without much investment in inland military penetration. In the uninhabited islands of Cape Verde, on the other hand, they built a “colony” where nobles (*fidalgos*) moved to with their families and serfs with the intension of reproducing Portuguese society in the Atlantic, as they had done previously in Madeira and in the Azores. In West Central Africa, they engaged in a long-term “conquest”, with massive military investments, aimed at subjugating local rulers and occupying their lands⁸⁴⁰.

⁸³⁹ As I have previously argued, although Joseph C. Miller developed the “slaving frontier thesis”, David Birmingham had previously developed the main ideas on displacement resulting from wars in the interior and the establishment of peaceful relationships with African communities living close to the coast: David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours Under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 133-161; Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 140-169. See also Chapter 3 above.

⁸⁴⁰ José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas na África Occidental e Oriental; Ásia Occidental; China, e na Oceania*, Vol. 3 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1846), 93.

By questioning the idea of Angola, including Benguela and its interior, as a colony before the twentieth century, my intention is not to relativize the Portuguese early presence amongst and exploitation of the peoples of West Central Africa, but rather to problematize the long historical process of colonization of these territories. Although the Portuguese colonial project formally existed, its completion depended on the definitive subjugation of African authorities in the interior and the effective occupation of their territories. Hence, my intention is to contextualize the slow progression of conquest and the usurpation of the sovereignty of African rulers, as well as to highlight local resistance to this colonial project.

In the case of Angola, following the defeat of Ngola-a-Ari in the seventeenth century, the Portuguese did not gain authority over the territory of Ndongo, but rather earned the chance to support the rise of a ruler favorable to their cause as the new *ngola*⁸⁴¹. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the “Angolan” territory under direct Portuguese influence represented only a narrow slab of territory between the left (south) margin of the Dande River and the right (north) margin of the Cuanza River⁸⁴² (Map 3). In the case of Benguela and its backlands, this direct influence was restricted to a narrow strip of land connecting São Filipe on the coast to Caconda in the interior, through a small corridor in northern Quilengues through Salvaterra dos Magos⁸⁴³. As with Angola to the north, Luso-Africans in Benguela relied on African allies inland to access the *sertões*, as well as to help reprehend those who resisted their presence in the backlands.

So, when did the “conquest” become a “colony”?

⁸⁴¹ David Birmingham, *The Portuguese Conquest of Angola* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1, coined the expression “puppet-*ngola*” to refer to Ndongo rulers placed in power with the support of the Portuguese and who, for that reason, favored their presence in Angola. This concept can be transplanted to Benguela, where the Portuguese also sought to place “puppet-*sobas*” in power.

⁸⁴² “Carta de João Correia de Sousa ao Marquês de Frecilha”, No. 7 (3 June 1622), in *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* (henceforth MMA): *África Ocidental, 1622-1630*, 1st series, Vol. 7, Antonio Brásio, ed. (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1956), 17-24. The exception is Muxima, on the south side of the Cuanza River. See Map 3. See also José C. Curto, “Notas sobre alguns documentos inexplorados para a história de Angola: Os róis dos confessados de 1704”, *Revista Relegens Thréskeia*, Vol. 9, No 2 (2020): 254-269, in press.

⁸⁴³ Although Quilengues was a territory located close to the coast and theoretically under Portuguese/Luso-African direct influence, Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos was aware that there was much unknown about it. He blamed it on the lack of communication with most of the regions he considered part of Quilengues, which included Huila, Humbe and Cape Negro, and argued that only the spread of *sertanejos* throughout the interior could solve this problem: Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos, “Descrição da Capitania de Benguella, suas Províncias, Povos, Rios mais caudelosos, Minas de Ferro, e Enxofre, e outras particularidades que tem, mais consideráveis, por Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcellos, 5º governador, em Benguella 1º d’Agosto em 1799”, *Annaes Marítimos e Coloniaes*, 4ª. Série, Parte Não Oficial (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 148.

Obviously, colonialist historians tend to argue for the existence of a Portuguese colony in Angola before the nineteenth century⁸⁴⁴, but reality on the ground contradicts this narrative. Most of the lands claimed as colonial territory were, in fact, unknown to them⁸⁴⁵, but for a small number of *sertanejos* and *pumbeiros* who dared enter the *sertões*. Despite the recurrent narrative of “colonial control”, a careful assessment of the documentation shows a different reality.

As I have argued previously, I consider the Captaincy of Benguela⁸⁴⁶ to be a “*Conquista*” until the beginning of the twentieth century⁸⁴⁷, despite continuous attempt by colonial officials and

⁸⁴⁴ Among nineteenth and twentieth century colonial writers who consider Angola a colony before the nineteenth century, one finds: J. C. Feo Cardozo de Castello Branco Torres, *Memórias contendo a biographia do vice-almirante Luiz da Mota Feo Torres: A história dos governadores e capitães geraes de Angola, desde 1575 até 1825* (Paris: Fantin, 1825); Antonio Joaquim Guimarães Jr., *Memória sobre a exploração da costa ao sul de Benguela, na África Occidental, e fundação do primeiro estabelecimento commercial na Bahia de Mossamedes* (Lisboa, Typographia de L.C.A., 1842); Joaquim Antonio de Carvalho e Menezes, *Demonstração geográfica e política do território portuguez da Guiné Inferior, que abrange o reino de Angola, Benguela e suas dependências* (Lisboa: Typographia Classica de F.A. de Almeida, 1848); Augusto Saldanha, *Quarenta e cinco dias em Angola: apontamentos de viagem* (Porto: Typographia de Sebastião José Pereira, 1862); Joachim John Monteiro, *Angola and the River Congo, 2 Vols.* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1875); João de Andrade Corvo, *Estudo sobre as províncias ultramarinas*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Academia Real de Ciências, 1883); José Falcão, *A Questão do Zaire* (Coimbra: J. Diogo Pires, 1883); Augusto Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguela”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, série 26, (1908): 5-15, 44-56, 81-99, 135-140, 154-176, 197-207; Francisco Castelbranco, *História de Angola: desde o descobrimento até a implantação da República, 1482-1910* (Luanda, Typographia a Luzitania, 1932); Alfredo Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação e início do estabelecimento dos Portugueses no Congo, Angola e Benguela, extraído de documentos históricos* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1933); Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola*, 3 Vols. (Luanda: Banco de Angola, 1948); Raimundo da Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, [c. 1835] 1963); Carlos Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII* (Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1972).

⁸⁴⁵ In the general introduction to his six-volume collection about the Portuguese oversea possessions, Lima, *Ensaio sobre a statistica...*, II, registered the Portuguese lack of knowledge about the interior of Angola and Benguela. He argued that it was better to “confess what one does not know” than “to conjecture what one does not know, and make the conjecture pass as verified knowledge”. Isabel Castro Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola. Dinâmicas Comerciais e Transformações Sociais no Século XIX* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica e Tropical, 1997), 250, points out that although Lopes de Lima gathered geographical information about the lands under Portuguese control, he did not take interest in independent lands, that is unknown territories.

⁸⁴⁶ As defined in Chapter 1, the “Captaincy of Benguela”, often cited in eighteenth-century documents and cartography as the “Kingdom of Benguela”, was divided into seven “provinces”: Benguela, Quilengues, Caconda, Huambo, Bailundo, Bihé and Galangue. These provinces were founded in 1769 by Governor Sousa Coutinho in an attempt to increase Portuguese control over itinerant traders and deserters who roamed the interior of Benguela. By establishing “white” settlements inland, this governor hoped to contain their mobility and actions, which often conflicted with Portuguese plans of colonization. Although the Portuguese colonial administration in São Filipe de Benguela considered all of these “provinces” within its jurisdiction, most were actually under the direct control of local African rulers. Some, such as the southern portion of Quilengues, would not be reached by *pumbeiros* or black itinerant traders until the nineteenth century.

⁸⁴⁷ This is an argument shared by other historians of Angola. Douglas Wheeler argued that the Portuguese colonial structure in Angola was only in fully operational in the 1930s, with the promulgation of the *Acto Colonial* (1930) and of the *Carta Orgânica do Império Colonial Português e Reforma Administrativa Ultramarina* (1933): Douglas Wheeler and René Pelissier, *Angola* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 130. According to Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 45, the proclamation of Salazar’s dictatorship in 1926 permitted a swift reform of colonial

historians to portray it as a “colony”⁸⁴⁸. By problematizing the classification of Benguela and its interior as a colony, I seek to give nuance to the slow process of subjugation of African vassals, who became subaltern rulers but did not lose authority over their lands and peoples. As could be expected, my argument is not shared by all Angolanist historians.

According to Jan Vansina, the colonial conquest is “the date when administrative control began to be exercised by tax collection, by the nomination of local authorities, and often by the conducting of a census”. He added that “in most cases, the colonial period started with a genuine conquest followed by military occupation”⁸⁴⁹. As this chapter shows, however, military victories over and taxation of local authorities were not sufficient to guarantee “a genuine conquest”, as Vansina argued, and the occupation of the interior of Benguela, nor the creation of a colony.

Mariana P. Candido has recently argued that “the indigenous population of Benguela and its hinterland was under colonial subjugation well before the end of the nineteenth century”. She later concluded that “Benguela in the seventeenth century was already a colony, with a bureaucracy in place and authorities and policies emphasized in territorial occupation and exploration”. Hence, she considers Benguela and its backlands a Portuguese colony from the “first attempts to impose territorial control, extract taxes and set up a colonial bureaucracy”⁸⁵⁰.

Candido has also affirmed that the inhabitants of Benguela, including “settlers, officials and the indigenous population”, were part of an “‘imagined community’ of the Portuguese empire, where Christian values prevailed over local customs and religious systems”⁸⁵¹. This interpretation, however, does not resonate with the constant complains from officials about the settlers’ tendency to distance themselves from Portuguese values, including the use of the Portuguese language and the Christian faith⁸⁵².

policies. The dictatorship did not reject any colonial procedures established by the first Republic, but attempted to make them more effective.

⁸⁴⁸ As argued in Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 18, 29, the process of production of knowledge about Africa remained profoundly dependent of the colonial ideology and the colonial wars until 1974, when the dictatorship ended.

⁸⁴⁹ Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 21-22.

⁸⁵⁰ Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6, 87, 313.

⁸⁵¹ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 43.

⁸⁵² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 52, Doc. 45, “Bando que ordena as feiras nos sertões de Benguela e Caconda”, (23 September 1768); “Carta de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho para Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado”,

Soon after his arrival in Luanda, the governor of Angola, Antonio Álvares da Cunha (1753-1758), complained to his superiors in Lisbon that settlers had forgotten “the religion, the language and the customs of our nation” and that they followed the “gentile laws” and only spoke Kimbundu⁸⁵³. The widespread use of Kimbundu and the acceptance of African customs and religious practices among the “white” population of Luanda remained a concern for Portuguese officials throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.

In the following decade, Governor Sousa Coutinho denounced that even “white” noble families in Luanda did not teach Portuguese to their children. The latter grew up without the knowledge contained in “good books”, deprived of religious teachings, and knowing only the language of the “*Ambundos*” (Kimbundu)⁸⁵⁴. Sousa Coutinho believed that Portugal’s “civilizing mission” in Angola depended on the spread of the Portuguese language. In 1765, this governor issued a decree demanding that parents teach Portuguese to their children and speak it as the language of communication at home, including with their slaves⁸⁵⁵.

Colonial historian Carlos Couto stated that the “white” settlers of Luanda spoke Portuguese as if they were foreigners (*hóspedes*) and Kimbundo as good as Africans. Even worse, in his opinion, “white” girls were raised by African women without ordinary domestic skills (*prendas*) and departed from the Christian faith, not being able to either understand or speak Portuguese⁸⁵⁶. The participation of “whites” in African religious rituals, identified as “witchcraft” in the sources, was also widespread in Angola, to the point that it triggered investigations from the Holy Inquisition⁸⁵⁷.

No. 3 (24 November 1768), in Alfredo Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização dos planaltos e litoral do sul de Angola*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1940), 160-162.

⁸⁵³ Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII*, 65-66 – note 97.

⁸⁵⁴ Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII*, 65-66 – note 97. See also Jan Vansina, “Portuguese vs. Kimbundu: Language Use in the Colony of Angola, 1575-c.1845”, *Bulletin des Seances Académie Royale des Sciences d’Outre-Mer. Mededelingen der Zittingen; Koninklijke Academie voor Overzeese Wetenschappen*, Vol. 47 (2001): 268.

⁸⁵⁵ Liliana Inverno, “A transição de Angola para o português: uma história sociolinguística”, in Luis Reis Torgal; Fernando Tavares Pimenta; Julião Soares de Sousa, eds. *Comunidades Imaginadas: nação e nacionalismos em África* (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 2008), 122.

⁸⁵⁶ Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII*, 66.

⁸⁵⁷ For more on the Inquisition in Angola, see José da Silva Horta, “A Inquisição em Angola e Congo: o inquérito de 1596-98 e o papel mediador das justiças locais”, *Arqueologia do Estado: primeiras jornadas sobre formas de organização e exercício de poderes na Europa do Sul, séculos XIII-XVIII*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: História e Crítica, 1988), 387-415; Francisco Bethencourt and Philip Havik, “A África e a Inquisição portuguesa: novas perspectivas”, *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, No. 5/6, Ano III (2004): 21-27; Selma Pantoja, “Inquisição, degredo e mestiçagem em Angola no século XVIII”, *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*, No. 5/6, Ano III (2004): 117-136; Daniela Buono Calainho, “Africanos penitenciados pela Inquisição portuguesa”, *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões*,

Hence, although the Portuguese attempted to enforce the use of the Portuguese language and of Christian beliefs, Kimbundu remained the most important language in their “colonial capital” and its interior until the twentieth century⁸⁵⁸. The belief that the Portuguese language was dominant among their supposed “African subjects” reflects a myth of an early, long and enduring presence of the Portuguese in Africa⁸⁵⁹. Historical data, however, indicates that the Portuguese language became generalized among the population of Angola only after its independence in 1975⁸⁶⁰.

The same was true for the town of São Filipe and the backlands of Benguela. Although Umbundu, referred to simply as the “Bunda language” in eighteenth century sources, was used in parts of the coast and the central plateau, the peoples of the *sertões* (Quilengues, Seles, Huila, Humbe, Cape Negro, etc.) effectively spoke different languages. Those living within Quilengues, as well as those in Dombe (Ndombe), were also able to speak Umbundu⁸⁶¹. Moreover, there developed local creole languages, such as *olumbali*, in settlements like Moçamedes following 1840. Hence, as was the case further north in Angola, the use of local African languages⁸⁶² was customary in Benguela and its backlands until the twentieth century⁸⁶³.

Therefore, I contend that the Portuguese “imagined community” in Benguela and its interior existed only “in the minds of the bureaucrats in Lisbon”, as suggested by Candido herself⁸⁶⁴. I tend to agree with Selma Pantoja’s conclusion that the “white” population in places such as Luanda and São Filipe de Benguela did not maintain and reproduce much of the Portuguese culture, but rather “Africanized” themselves⁸⁶⁵. And in the interior of these coastal urban centres, the situation was even more acute.

Ano III, No. 5/6 (2004): 47-63; Kalle Kananoja, “Healers, Idolaters and Good Christians: A Case Study of Creolization and Popular Religion in Mid-Eighteenth Century Angola”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2010): 443-465. See also James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 42-54.

⁸⁵⁸ Vansina, “Portuguese vs. Kimbundu”, 270. See also Inverno, “A transição de Angola para o português”, 121.

⁸⁵⁹ René Pélissier, *História das campanhas de Angola: resistência e revoltas, 1845-1941* (Lisboa: Ed. Estampa, [1986] 2001), 18. See also Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 38-39.

⁸⁶⁰ Inverno, “A transição de Angola para o português”, 117-118.

⁸⁶¹ Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 6-7.

⁸⁶² According to Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 8-9, those who could speak the “dialect of Angola” (Kimbundu) did not know the language spoken in Benguela (Umbundu).

⁸⁶³ Inverno, “A transição de Angola para o português”, 122-123.

⁸⁶⁴ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 43.

⁸⁶⁵ Pantoja, “Inquisição, degredo e mestiçagem em Angola no século XVIII”, 131.

Alliances with a shadow of dominance: the treaties of vassalage

The Portuguese had a very clear project to conquer and colonize Angola upon arriving in Luanda during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. As Delgado admitted, they disembarked with the objective of imposing dominance over local African polities by forcing them to accept vassalage⁸⁶⁶. Why, however, did it take them centuries for the realization of this colonial project? A combination of African resistance and Portuguese logistic/material limitations explains the long historical process necessary for the emergence of the colony.

According to the Portuguese colonialist narrative, the “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela belonged to Portugal as “rights of conquest”. The Portuguese attempted to consolidate these rights through vassalage treaties imposed upon African authorities, usually after a military victory. For many African authorities, as we have seen in Chapter 3, accepting the terms of vassalage was an offer they could not refuse⁸⁶⁷. These African rulers not only had their lives spared, earning the chance to fight another day, but were also granted “legal” title to their lands⁸⁶⁸. This happened because the Portuguese could not control conquered territories for long: the logistic difficulties were just too great to overcome.

The lack of personnel and the difficulties of transport and communication with coastal settlements proved to be major problems for the Portuguese colonial project in the interior of Benguela. This led them to sew alliances with local authorities who could help acquire men to fight and to transport their gear; both obligations for those who accepted vassalage⁸⁶⁹. Interpreters and guides, essential for expeditions inland, were also enlisted from local rulers. As we will see in

⁸⁶⁶ Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1 (Luanda: Banco de Angola, 1948), 10.

⁸⁶⁷ Elias Alexandre da Silva Correa, *História de Angola*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Editora Ática, [1787-1792] 1937), 200, labelled the acceptance of vassalage by defeated African rulers a “sacred absolutism”.

⁸⁶⁸ By invoking the statute of “vassals”, *sobas* maintained their political autonomy and sovereignty even in relation to new “colonial” ambitions: Catarina Madeira Santos, “Escrever o poder: os autos de vassalagem e a vulgarização da escrita entre as elites africanas Ndembu”, *Revista de História*, Vol. 155, No. 2 (2006): 93.

⁸⁶⁹ The supply of soldiers and porters for the “royal service” was a vassal obligation. Itinerant traders who required porters for their caravans, however, had to pay *sobas* for this service. Slavers working for the Portuguese “colonial” administration, especially *capitães-mores*, used their position of authority to avoid paying for local porters in their private business dealings, although the practice was prohibited and sometimes denounced by the governors: BNL, Códice 8744, fls. 69-73, “Portaria sobre o pagamento dos negros” (7 December 1770); BNL, Códice 8744, fls. 44v-45- “Carta circular para todos os capitães mores dos presídios e distritos” (3 October 1770). African vassals in the interior of Angola, however, often refused to provide soldiers for the “royal service”, and there was little the Portuguese could do to avoid such disobedience: John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 119. See also Chapter 3 above.

the following chapter, the refusal on the part of the African authorities to comply with these terms could bring any Portuguese “colonial” project to a halt.

The treaties of vassalage in Angola and Benguela resembled those in medieval Portugal, notwithstanding the adaptations that they underwent in the African context⁸⁷⁰. It preserved, for one, the relation of mutual respect found in the European case. Hence, despite constituting an act of submission, vassalage should not mean the complete annihilation of one’s authority and autonomy⁸⁷¹. At least in theory, a vassal should have his authority respected even when he became a prisoner of war⁸⁷². Obviously, such supposed formal protection did not always materialize, as many African vassals continued to be raided by military expeditions led by Portuguese and Luso-African slavers, even when complying with terms of the treaties. Nevertheless, at least formally, the Portuguese crown demanded that its “colonial” officials treat African vassals as free and sovereign polities and respect their customs and laws⁸⁷³.

The relation of dependency established between a lord and a vassal, according to European medieval standards, should not be based on coercion either⁸⁷⁴. The vassal should accept it in good will, which in the African context often became a contradiction since the majority of vassals had previously been defeated in war. This led to the development of markers to identify different forms of vassalage. The Portuguese thus labeled Africans “volunteer vassals” or “conquered vassals” to help distinguish the *sobas* who behaved willingly as subjects of Portugal from those who had only

⁸⁷⁰ Santos, “Escrever o poder”, 127, argues that the terms of the vassalage treaties in Angola maintained the same basic format and presented great regularity throughout the centuries.

⁸⁷¹ According to Beatrix Heintze, “The Angolan Vassal Tributes of the seventeenth century”, *Revista de História Económica e Social*, No. 6 (1980): 57-58, “... Portuguese rule controlled external relations of chiefdoms and interfered, sometimes incisively though never directly, in their military and commercial autonomy and more directly in their religious self-determination. Territorial boundaries, however, remained untouched and likewise internal autonomy was *de jure* and, in the 17th century, mostly *de facto*”.

⁸⁷² Even as prisoners of war, African rulers banished to Brazil in the early seventeenth century paradoxically maintained their status as “free men”, as informed by the governor of Angola, João Correa de Sousa, to the general governor of Brazil, Diogo de Mendonça Furtado: “Carta Régia ao governador do Brasil”, No. 21 (12 December 1622) in MMA, 1st series, Vol. 7, 66.

⁸⁷³ Beatrix Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII* (Viseu: Kilombelombe, 2007), 397-426; Miller, *Way of Death*, 265; Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII*, 252-254.

⁸⁷⁴ After the dissolution of Angola as a private captaincy (1607), the Portuguese crown decided to manage the conquered territories through an appointed governor. It also ordered the abolition of the “*amo*” institution and the cancellation of any grants of African rulers to Portuguese representatives. The “*amo*” institution, created at the time of Paulo Dias de Novais, meant that African potentates and their lands were transferred as hereditary possession in *sesmarias*. After 1607, African vassals were placed under the control of the crown and were to be ruled by “mild and gentle means and without force” so as not to disrupt the slave trade. The vassal tribute, largely rendered in slaves, was transferred to the royal treasury: Heintze, “The Angolan Vassal Tributes of the seventeenth century”, 58-60.

accepted vassalage to escape a tragic end, and who often “rebelled” after the departure of the Portuguese forces from their lands⁸⁷⁵.

Besides the vassalage treaties⁸⁷⁶, the Portuguese established “peace” or “friendship” treaties with strong African rulers who they did not have the means to conquer. This was the case with the *soba* of Socoval, as we will see below. These “peace treaties” were rare and, in theory, could only be signed with explicit authorization of the Portuguese crown. They were thus different from vassalage, which could be granted by any Portuguese official and, in some cases, even mere traders (Chapter 3)⁸⁷⁷.

Finally, it is important to consider that the treaties of vassalage were not instruments of domination completely unknown to Africans, since analogous political treaties composed the repertoire of diplomatic relations in West Central Africa long before the arrival of Europeans. The hierarchy imposed by the Portuguese vassalage treaties indeed added to the African forms of hierarchy⁸⁷⁸. The payment of tribute, for instance, was a common demand of powerful African rulers who subjugated others⁸⁷⁹.

It was not difficult for the Portuguese to adapt their medieval vassalage treaties to African forms of subjugation and dominance. Indeed, the repetitive use of the culture of vassalage in Africa validated and revitalized it as a “colonial tool”⁸⁸⁰. Over time, the Portuguese adapted the original meanings and procedures of vassalage to the African context, as was the case of the medieval ritual

⁸⁷⁵ There was also the generic use of the term “vassal” in the Angola and Benguela in reference to all African rulers defeated in battle: Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII*, 388.

⁸⁷⁶ For more on treaties of vassalage in Angola, see Heintze, “The Angolan Vassal Tributes of the seventeenth century”, 57-78; Beatrix Heintze, “Luso-African Feudalism in Angola? The Vassal Treaties of the 16th to the 18th Century”, *Separata da Revista Portuguesa de História*, No. 18 (1980): 111–131; Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII*, 81-95.

⁸⁷⁷ Vassalage, indeed, ranked the lowest in the hierarchy of Portuguese diplomatic treaties: Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII*, 398-399.

⁸⁷⁸ Santos, “Escrever o poder”, 93.

⁸⁷⁹ Besides paying tribute, the other obligations of an African vassal *soba* in the eighteenth century included the supply of labor and soldiers for the “royal service”, opening trading routes and authorizing the transit of slave traders within their lands, accepting the presence of officials, clerics and military personnel, prohibiting the protection of criminals and runaway slaves, and maintaining peaceful relation with other vassals: Catarina Madeira Santos, “Um governo ‘polido’ para Angola: reconfigurar dispositivos de domínio, 1750- c.1800” (Phd Dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2005), 127. See also Santos, “Escrever o poder”, 81-95.

⁸⁸⁰ Santos, “Escrever o poder”, 93.

of “investiture” which was combined with traditional “Mbundu”⁸⁸¹ rituals of submission to give origin to “*undamento*”⁸⁸².

Undamento was an amalgamation of African and Portuguese political rituals. On the African side, it was inspired by the *kuunda* (Kimbundu), a traditional ceremony of recognition of submission of an African ruler to another. On the Portuguese side, *undamento* was inspired by the formulary of homages (*Formulário das Homenagens*) issued by King Dom João II during the assembly of the estates of the Portuguese realm in Évora (*Cortes de Évora*) in 1481⁸⁸³. The Portuguese also included the signature of documents as part of the *undamento*, while Africans reproduced their own rituals of subjugation by clapping their hands and bowing before their new overlord or his representative⁸⁸⁴.

Near the end of the eighteenth century, the governor of Angola, Dom Miguel Antonio de Melo, explained to his superiors in Lisbon that the ritual of *undamento* was an act of subjugation of African rulers before the Portuguese crown through a pact that connected them to their lands and their subjects. According to this governor, the *undamento* guaranteed the efficacy of the treaties of vassalage, which he defined as “alliances with a shadow of dominance”⁸⁸⁵.

A treaty of vassalage was not concluded without the *undamento*, and neglecting it could lead to the refusal of new vassals to abide by their obligations. They were independent but inseparable rituals⁸⁸⁶. The *undamento* was essential for the confirmation of the power of a vassal

⁸⁸¹ The term “Mbundu” is used here in a broad sense, as in the documentation at hand, to identify the peoples in the interior of Angola and Benguela, who combined speakers of Kimbundu, Umbundu and other local languages.

⁸⁸² Luso-Africans in Angola forged a new Portuguese verb: *undar*. For a brief explanation of the ritual according to governor of Angola, Fernão de Sousa (1624-1630), see Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 472.

⁸⁸³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX. See also Santos, “Um governo ‘polido’ para Angola”, 127; Santos, “Escrever o poder”, 81-95.

⁸⁸⁴ Over time, some other practices and demands were added to the rituals of vassalage and *undamento*. For instance, the baptism of *sobas* and their conversion to Christianity, which initially featured as a ritual of celebration of the investiture of a vassal as sovereign of his lands, became mandatory by mid-seventeenth century. Similarly, the supply of labor for the construction of public buildings as part of the “royal service” was not an initial demand, but became a specific term of the vassalage treaties in the eighteenth century. See Santos, “Um governo ‘polido’ para Angola”, 127 – note 316; Santos, “Escrever o poder”, 81-95.

⁸⁸⁵ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX

⁸⁸⁶ Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII*, 541.

not only to the Portuguese, but also to other African authorities⁸⁸⁷. As Vansina noted, this Portuguese recognition of their vassals' sovereignty legitimized the latter's power. Hence, paradoxically, the acceptance of vassalage made African rulers autonomous in relation to other African political authorities⁸⁸⁸.

Colonialist historians, mainly concerned with questions relating to Portuguese penetration in the “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela and the consolidation of “colonial power”, tend to see a vassalage treaty as a sheer act of subjugation of African authorities, disregarding the different aspects of resistance that it entails. This usually occurs because they envision this historical process as a dispute between two sides: Portuguese colonizers conquering and imposing themselves onto subjugated African authorities. However, the African political landscape was very complex, especially in Benguela, a region populated by numerous African independent and autonomous polities, built around lineages and through kinship structures, that established temporary alliances and dependencies with one another, as we will see in the following chapter. Disputes between rival polities were very intense, including the ritualistic practice of cattle raids⁸⁸⁹, which drove some African rulers to opt for establishing alliances with outsiders against their local enemies⁸⁹⁰.

Hence, African rulers could choose to accept vassalage in exchange for military protection against strong local enemies. The same was true in the case of new rulers who needed confirmation of their authority among neighboring polities or those with ambitions to rule. Moreover, the Portuguese served as mediators in conflicts between African vassals, which avoided wars and disruption along slave trade routes⁸⁹¹. As we saw in Chapter 3, some African rulers in the interior

⁸⁸⁷ Felner, *Angola: Aportamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 472.

⁸⁸⁸ Jan Vansina, “Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade, c. 1760-1845”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2005): 8. See also Santos, “Escrever o poder”, 93.

⁸⁸⁹ For more on ritualistic cattle raids, see Marta Salokoski, “Symbolic Power of Kings in Pre-Colonial Ovambo Societies” (Licentiate Thesis in Sociology / Social Anthropology, University of Helsinki, 1992); Marta Salokoski, “How Kings are Made – How Kingship Changes: A Study of Rituals and Ritual Change in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Owamboland, Namibia” (PhD Thesis, University of Helsinki, 2006), 117-131. See also Thomas J. Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 16-25; Joseph C. Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, No. 32, December (1997): 20.

⁸⁹⁰ A similar argument can be found in the work of the colonial historian Carlos Couto, although his intention was not to show traces of “resistance” in the acceptance of vassalage by African authorities, but rather to argue that they were better off as protected vassals than as independent polities: Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII*, 254-255

⁸⁹¹ In March 1800, for example, the governor of Benguela ordered the regent of Quilengues to intervene in the conflicts between vassal *sobas* Aicolla, Pomba-Aculo and Quipia. The Andrade brothers had developed good relations with *soba* Quipia since mid-1790, because of the episode involving *sobeta* Cacombo seen above. According to the

of Benguela tried their best to manipulate Portuguese forces against their enemies. This and the following chapter will provide other examples of Africans co-opting Portuguese military forces against local enemies, as well as the use of their “legal” status as vassals to complain about “illegal attacks” against them and their subjects.

“Legal” protection and procedures of enslavement

Although there were some advantages for African rulers to establish regular commercial relations with the *pumbeiro* and *sertanejo* led caravans crossing their lands, these relationships were not without risks. The same open roads that brought caravans with imported goods, facilitated the penetration of slaving expeditions and raids. As José C. Curto pointed out, “the gains from enslaving others tempted many people in West Central Africa down this perilous road, with not a few eventually experiencing the twisted irony of being enslaved themselves”⁸⁹².

The opening of regular commerce with slave traders also brought transformations to the institution of slavery and the forms of enslavement⁸⁹³. Curto has argued that “to produce the millions of captives necessary to support rising volumes of slaves exported, African captors expanded existing or developed new mechanisms to turn free individuals into slaves”⁸⁹⁴. These included the expansion of warfare, an increase in slaving raids, a rise in kidnapping, the contortion of court procedures to enslave people, sometimes for trivial “crimes”, the intensification of tribute exactions and the upsurge in sales of kin. Not even large polities with long-standing commercial relations with the Portuguese were spared from raids organized by greedy *capitães-mores*⁸⁹⁵.

governor, *soba* Aicolla was fomenting hostilities towards Quipia because he had accepted another *soba* called Pomba Aculo in his lands as a less powerful political ruler (*menos poderoso*). Since they were all vassals of Portugal, the “colonial” administration could not admit such conflicts. Captain Andrade reached out to *soba* Aicolla and convinced him to refrain from aggression against *soba* Quipia, threatening that he would be considered a “rebel” otherwise. ANA, Códice 443, fl. 43, “Ofício dirigido ao morador de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (7 March 1800). See also *Fontes e Estudos: Revista do Arquivo Nacional de Angola*, Nos. 6-7 (Angola: Ministério da Cultura: 2011), 23.

⁸⁹² José C. Curto, “Struggling against Enslavement: The Case of José Manuel in Benguela, 1816-20,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 39, n. 1 (2005): 96-122. See also José C. Curto, “Experiences of Enslavement in West Central Africa,” *Histoire Sociale/ Social History*, No. 41 (2008): 381-415.

⁸⁹³ I borrow this idea of “transformations in slavery” from Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: a History of Slavery in Africa*, 3rd. Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁸⁹⁴ Curto, “Struggling against Enslavement”, 97.

⁸⁹⁵ Curto, “Struggling against Enslavement”, 96-122.

At the same time, the increasing amount of imported goods circulating in the *sertões* of West Central Africa inflated the dependency of African potentates involved in trading, since it reoriented all productive activities towards the Atlantic slave trade⁸⁹⁶. Moreover, the consumption of luxury goods acquired on credit drew many African rulers into debt, allowing their creditors to justify raids against them or the kidnapping of their subjects⁸⁹⁷. Itinerant traders developed different strategies to maintain a constant flow of merchandise into the *sertões* and to increase African debt toward them. In fact, although some African rulers willingly indebted themselves, others were effectively forced into incurring debts⁸⁹⁸.

Historians of Angola have recently raised questions about the social implications of the presence of slaving caravans in the *sertões* and the dangers associated with the opening of commercial relations with Luso-African itinerant traders. They have also demonstrated interest in analysing how the increase in the Atlantic demand for captives helped corrupt African customary legal procedures in favor of the slave trade. At the core of this analysis, one finds a discussion about the “legality” of enslaving African vassals and their peoples⁸⁹⁹, including the corruption of the “system of reversible dependency”, also known as “pawnship”⁹⁰⁰.

⁸⁹⁶ Miller, *Way of Death*, 70.

⁸⁹⁷ As Roquinaldo Ferreira A. *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 68, argues “...there is little doubt that debt incurred by Africans in the *sertões* largely drove the vicious cycle of debt-induced enslavement”.

⁸⁹⁸ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação...*, 471-472, listed a series of strategies used by *sertanejos* and *pumbeiros* to force *sobas* to take on debt. One of them, *imfuca*, consisted of giving merchandise on credit to *sobas*, suggesting they did not have to pay for them, or that they could be paid much later, and then attacking *sobas* to recuperate the “loans”. Traders were not averse to enslaving the “wives and sons” of indebted *sobas* and sell them in the coastal markets.

⁸⁹⁹ Curto, “Experiences of Enslavement in West Central Africa”, 381-415; José C. Curto, “Un butin illégitime: razzias d’esclaves et relations luso-africaines dans la région des flueves Kwanza et Kwango en 1805”, in *Déraison esclavage et droit: Les fondements idéologiques et juridiques de la traite négrière et de l’esclavage*, Isabel Castro Henriques and Louis Sala-Molins, eds. (Paris: Éditions UNESCO, 2002), 315-327; José C. Curto, “A restituição de 10.000 súbditos Ndongo ‘roubados’ na Angola de meados do século XVII: Uma análise preliminar,” in Isabel C. Henriques, ed., *Escravidão e Transformações Culturais: África-Brasil-Caraíbas* (Lisbon: Vulgata, 2002), 185-208; José C. Curto, “The Story of Nbená, 1817-1820: Unlawful Enslavement and the Concept of ‘Original Freedom’ in Angola,” in Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London: Continuum, 2003), 43-64; Curto, “Struggling against Enslavement”, 96-122; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 52-87; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 191-236; Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 142-166.

⁹⁰⁰ In 1770, there was an attempt by Governor Sousa Coutinho to prohibit the practice of pawnship in Angola. This governor of Angola was especially concerned with the increasing practice of slave traders embarking people originally offered as collateral (pawns) for the Americas as enslaved individuals: BNL, Códice 8744, fls. 57-58, “Bando que proíbe aos pais e parentes mais velhos empenharem os seus filhos, ou dá-los em caução de dívidas” (7 November 1770). Miller, *Way of Death*, 179, has argued that pawns were ordinarily used as collateral for slaving transactions

In many African societies, slavery was an integral part of prescribed punishment in judicial proceedings, even for full members of these communities⁹⁰¹. The increase in demand for slaves in the Atlantic caused a surge in criminal accusations, such as witchcraft and adultery, that could lead to enslavement⁹⁰². With the further corrosion of African customary laws, other lesser crimes became punishable by enslavement, while the condemnation of one individual could trigger the enslavement of their entire kin⁹⁰³.

Failure to repay incurred debts also often resulted in the enslavement of debtors or their dependents⁹⁰⁴. Many of the accusations and legal procedures against African individuals were indeed associated with commercial disputes⁹⁰⁵. Hence, slavers occupying positions of authority recurrently corrupted “legal” procedures to advance their slaving businesses⁹⁰⁶. Roquinaldo Ferreira has argued that the recurrent use of local judicial courts for the enslavement of people routinized it into an acceptable form of conflict resolution, since enslavement became an ordinary

between Atlantic traders and African brokers on the coast of Angola. See also Joseph C. Miller, “Credit, captives, collateral and currencies: debt, slavery, and the financing of the Atlantic world,” in *Debt and Slavery in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds*, G. Campbell and A. Stanziani, eds. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 105-121. More recently, Paul E. Lovejoy, “Pawnship, Debt and ‘Freedom’ in Atlantic Africa during the Era of the Slave Trade: A Re-Assessment”, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 55 (2014): 1-24, has cast doubt on the use of pawning in Portuguese Angola, although in a previous work, Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, “The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c. 1600-1810”, in *Pawnship, Slavery and Colonialism in Africa*, Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, eds. (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 37, pointed to references to pawnship in Loango and Mpinda (kingdom of Kongo) still in the seventeenth century. Vanessa dos Santos Oliveira, “The *Donas* of Luanda, c. 1770-1867: From Atlantic Slave Trading to ‘Legitimate’ Commerce” (PhD Dissertation, York University, 2016), has even more recently shown that pawning (*hipoteca*) can be found in commercial transactions in nineteenth-century Angola in the form of land and enslaved people. For more on the institution of pawnship in Africa, see Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds. *Pawnship in Africa: Debt Bondage in Historical Perspective* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, eds. *Pawnship, Slavery and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003). G. Campbell and A. Stanziani, eds. *Debt and Slavery in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013). See also Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson. “Trust, Pawnship and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (1999): 333-355.

⁹⁰¹ Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 158; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 66-67.

⁹⁰² Vansina, “Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade”, 12-13; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 71; Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 164.

⁹⁰³ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 70-71.

⁹⁰⁴ Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 159.

⁹⁰⁵ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 76.

⁹⁰⁶ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 71.

form of punishment recognized in the African customary laws followed throughout Angola's interior⁹⁰⁷.

Ferreira also affirmed that punishment by enslavement in the seventeenth century was “restricted to outsiders or people already born into slavery” because institutional mechanisms existed to prevent the enslavement of individuals considered “freeborn people”⁹⁰⁸. As Curto explained, in mid-seventeenth-century Angola, there were two groups outside the range of what was considered the “legal” enslavement of Africans. The first was made up of “freeborn Africans” who had been born within a Portuguese settlement, especially Luanda and Benguela, and thus comprised a relatively small number of individuals. The other, much larger, group included the subjects of African vassal rulers. However, even though Portuguese, Luso-African and Africans slavers clearly understood that individuals from either group could not be enslaveable, the principle was often disrespected⁹⁰⁹.

Historians have also recently discussed the enslavement of freeborn individuals in African communities through raids. Despite constituting a serious crime punishable by death, accusations of enslavement of Africans born of a “free womb” became common by the end of the seventeenth century. Weak colonial regulations did not curb the enthusiasm and defiance of slave traders in an environment of increasing Atlantic demand for enslaved labour⁹¹⁰. By the eighteenth century, these practices were widespread not only among Portuguese and Luso-African slavers roaming the *sertões*, but among Africans as well⁹¹¹. According to Daniel Domingues da Silva, “as demand for slaves increased, it would be not surprising that African elites felt particularly tempted to manipulate the laws governing the sale of criminals, debtors and others on the coast of West Central Africa”⁹¹². Curto, on his turn, was precise when he argued that few people were immune from captivity in the context of increasing demand of slaves in the Atlantic and the proliferation

⁹⁰⁷ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 69-70.

⁹⁰⁸ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 67-68.

⁹⁰⁹ José C. Curto, “A restituição de 10.000 súbditos Ndongo ‘roubados’ na Angola de meados do século XVII: Uma análise preliminar,” in Isabel C. Henriques, ed., *Escravidão e Transformações Culturais: África-Brasil-Caraíbas* (Lisbon: Vulgata, 2002), 186-187.

⁹¹⁰ As Frank Luce, “A history of Labor Law in Angola” (M.A. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1990), 20, explains, “a legal norm which is never enforced cannot properly be described as law, because it is not a part of any juridic relationship. The law is not found exclusively in legal norms, it is found in juridic relationships, which are determined by the articulation of legal norms and social relations”.

⁹¹¹ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 82.

⁹¹² Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 165.

of violence and insecurity associated to it⁹¹³. Despite formal concerns over the protection of the African “freeborn” subjects of Portugal, enforcement of these “legal” protections was rare⁹¹⁴.

As argued in Chapter 3, the apparent contradiction that Ferreira and Candido⁹¹⁵ observed in the way that the “colonial” administration seemed to try to protect “freeborn individuals” while at the same time supporting the expansion of the slave trade was, in fact, a deliberate attack by slavers with little concern about orders emanating from Luanda or even Lisbon. Although it is true that the disregard for the rights of free individuals caused unrest among colonial officials in high positions⁹¹⁶, such as governors, who repeatedly asked for constraint in the violence associated with the collection of tribute from and the overall treatment of African vassals, *capitães-mores* in the interior repeatedly disrespected such recommendations.

The increase in demand for enslaved persons at the beginning of the eighteenth century also promoted the corruption of African traditions and customary laws, especially those regarding enslavement as punishment for crimes. It corrupted traditions regarding the institution of pawnship as well, since individuals used temporarily as collateral for debts became commodities sold into permanent slavery⁹¹⁷. The commercial opportunities opened by the slave trade further encouraged the kidnapping of young men, the preferred victim of this kind of abduction⁹¹⁸. There were also cases in which freeborn Africans became slaves by sheer trickery, like in the extraordinary case of Nbena, a slave-owning free woman from Ndombe who was deceived into captivity by an old female slave⁹¹⁹.

⁹¹³ Curto, “Experiences of Enslavement in West Central Africa”, 381-415; Curto, “Struggling against Enslavement”, 96-122.

⁹¹⁴ José C. Curto, “The Story of Nbena, 1817-1820: Unlawful Enslavement and the Concept of ‘Original Freedom’ in Angola,” in Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London: Continuum, 2003), 60.

⁹¹⁵ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 84; Mariana P. Candido, “African Freedom Suits and Portuguese Vassal Status: Legal Mechanisms for Fighting Enslavement in Benguela, Angola, 1800-1830,” *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2011): 455.

⁹¹⁶ Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 154.

⁹¹⁷ Vansina, “Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade”, 12; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 78. See also Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 161-163; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 79.

⁹¹⁸ Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 152.

⁹¹⁹ For more on the case of Nbena, see José C. Curto, “The Story of Nbena, 1817-1820: Unlawful Enslavement and the Concept of ‘Original Freedom’ in Angola,” in Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London: Continuum, 2003), 43-64. See also Curto, “Experiences of

Sometimes individuals who worked for slave traders became victims of their employers as well. Ferreira has brought to light a case of kidnapping involving twenty-five porters from Bailundo who had come to São Filipe de Benguela working in the caravan of *sertanejo* Jerônimo Corrêa Dias. After their arrival, this *sertanejo* organized a celebration in which he distributed large amounts of alcohol to the African porters, later enslaving the intoxicated men. To justify their enslavement, Dias alleged that the *soba* of Mbailundo owed him ten slaves. Since he planned never to return to Bailundo, he decided to sell the porters in the slave market of São Filipe de Benguela to clear the *soba*'s debt. This kind of justification for the enslavement of subjects of vassal *sobas* who were in debt to slave traders was far from a rare occurrence, as Ferreira's research has shown⁹²⁰.

In the episode presented above, the *soba* of Mbailundo tried to intervene in favor of his subjects by writing to his commercial partners in Benguela and threatening to take revenge on future caravans crossing the *sertões*, to which the traders replied assuring the *soba* that Dias would be punished for his treachery. The slave traders feared attacks on their caravans in Bailundo and the closing of the trade routes to the central plateau. Nevertheless, the then governor of Benguela, Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos (1796-1800), had an arrangement with Dias. The governor provided military support and allowed Dias to complete the sale of his slaves, receiving in recompense four captives for his assistance⁹²¹.

The cases of unlawful enslavement of Africans rarely resulted in the reversion of the "illegal" status of the enslaved person and the reestablishment of their freedom. The case of Nbena, a freeborn woman enslaved along with her daughter at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Benguela, is a rare case in which claims of "original freedom" by African subjects of Portugal resulted in their release. Even the subjects of powerful African rulers, such as the *ngola* of Ndongo, were not protected from the claws of slavers in the interior of Angola⁹²².

Enslavement in West Central Africa", 381-415; Curto, "Struggling against Enslavement", 96-122; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 221-225; Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 153-156.

⁹²⁰ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 52-57.

⁹²¹ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 57-58.

⁹²² Curto, "Struggling against Enslavement", 96-122; Curto, "Experiences of Enslavement in West Central Africa", 381-415.

African rulers were not the only ones under pressure to settle debts incurred with the slave market. The same was true for itinerant traders (*sertanejos* and *pumbeiros*) who also acquired merchandise on credit from major businessmen (*negociantes*) in the coastal areas of embarkation, such as Luanda, Benguela and Novo Redondo (Map 3). In order to guarantee the means necessary to settle their debts, these itinerant traders acted aggressively against their African debtors in the interior. Failure to re-pay their loans could not only hinder further credit, but could also send them to jail⁹²³. As brought to light by Curto, the case of José Manuel, a *pumbeiro* in Benguela during the later 1810s, is a good example of the dangers of debt for Luso-African itinerant traders⁹²⁴.

In brief, the submission of African rulers by Portuguese and Luso-African slavers through debt exposed everyone in the *sertões* to the threat of sudden enslavement. Itinerant traders sold much of their merchandise to *sobas* on credit and routinely forced African rulers to buy goods they did not want or could not afford. Many of them expected *sobas* to default on their payments, which created the “legal” justification for the violent settlement of the debt through the enslavement of their subjects⁹²⁵.

I will now turn to the conflicts between the regents of Quilengues and the *soba* of Socoval during the last decade of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. As the following sections of this chapter show, Socoval was subjected to many of the “illegal” procedures discussed above and became a recurrent victim of slavers in positions of authority in the “colonial” administration. These slavers repeatedly overreached their jurisdiction, extorting the *soba* and “illegally” enslaving his people, ultimately pushing the African ruler into “rebellion”. News of the conflicts between the regents of Quilengues and the *soba* of Socoval reached Luanda in 1797 and triggered a “legal” defense by the governor of Angola in favor of the African ruler and those of his subjects who had been “unlawfully” enslaved and forcibly embarked for Brazil.

⁹²³ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 68.

⁹²⁴ Curto, “Struggling against Enslavement”, 96-122.

⁹²⁵ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 63.

From ally to rebel *soba*: the case of Socoval

The territory of Quilengues (Map 1), as defined by Governor Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos in 1799⁹²⁶, consisted of several powerful *sobados*, such as Quipungo, Huila, Njau, Gambos, Handa and Humbe, among others⁹²⁷ (Map 3). Although the power of these “southern” *sobados* was never underestimated, Socoval featured as the most powerful polity in Quilengues according to eighteenth and nineteenth-century colonial sources. Until the end of the eighteenth century, Portuguese and Luso-African officials also regarded the *soba* of Socoval as their greatest ally within Quilengues⁹²⁸.

It is not clear exactly when Socoval established diplomatic and commercial relations with Portuguese and Luso-Africans traders from Benguela, but it is safe to say this relationship dates back to the second half of the seventeenth century. Ralph Delgado affirmed that by 1672 the *soba* of Socoval had already developed stable commercial relations with itinerant traders who crossed the region. This was a moment in which Portuguese and Luso-Africans tried to “contain the rebelliousness” of the *soba* of Kakonda and his allies. Socoval did not participate in the military expeditions then organized by Captain Francisco da Távora to “punish” Kakonda, as did the *sobas* of Peringue e Molundo. But, by that time, Delgado pointed out that both Socoval and Quipungo had developed “the best relations” with the *presídio* of Caconda-a-Velha⁹²⁹.

In 1768, Governor Sousa Coutinho listed the *soba* of Socoval as an old vassal of Portugal, together with the potentates of Huila, Quipungo, Luceque, Bembes, Caluquembe, Quimalangue,

⁹²⁶ Vasconcelos, “Descrição da Capitania de Benguela”, 147-161.

⁹²⁷ As discussed in Chapter 1, not only the geographical extension, but also the general “ethnolinguistic” composition of Quilengues changed over time. In the seventeenth century, it was considered a separate territory from Quipungo and Huila. In the eighteenth century, however, Quilengues came to encompass an enormous region that included the entire Humpata/Huila plateau, the inner Cunene basin and the territory that would become the district of Moçamedes after 1840. It remained the largest “province” of Benguela for most part of the nineteenth century, until it was reshaped and reclassified as both a municipality and a small village, formally known as Salvaterra dos Magos, within the province of Huila. After Angola became independent in 1974-75, Quilengues became a *comuna*, which constitutes the third level of Angolan administrative bureaucracy. To this day, the *comuna* of Quilengues is composed by Quilengues, Dinde and Impulo.

⁹²⁸ In the twentieth century, the *sobado* of Socoval decreased in power and political importance. Carlos Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola: The Nyaneka-Nkumbi Ethnic Group* - Vol. II (New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, 1979), 10, acknowledged Socoval (Socovala) and Impulo (Empulu) as the two most important *ombalas* of the Tyilenge-Muso. He stated that Socoval was less important than Impulo, despite being better known. The U.S. Army map of Benguela from 1943 corroborates this information, showing the location of Impulo but bearing no reference to Socoval: “Benguela” (1943), by U.S. Army Map Service. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas Library.

⁹²⁹ Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola*, Vol. 3 (Luanda: Banco de Angola, 1948), 356.

Catala (where they would soon build Caconda-a-Nova), Quitata, Quingolo, Bailundo, Tinde, Bongo (Caconda-a-Velha), Jangalla and Quipasso⁹³⁰. Despite this old reference about Socoval as a vassal of Portugal, a closer examination of the relationship (below) shows that he was not “legally” subject to the Portuguese, because no vassalage treaty was ever signed. Indeed, he was not a vassal, but an ally.

In the 1780s, as seen in Chapter 3, Quilengues was raided for several years by military expeditions commanded by Captain Antonio José da Costa, who camped within the lands of local vassal *sobas*, extorting them and attacking those who did not comply with his demands. During these slaving campaigns, Captain Costa developed a good relationship with the *soba* of Socoval, having remained for some time in his company while in Quilengues. This relationship was registered by the naturalist Joaquim José da Silva, who accompanied Captain Costa’s expedition and wrote an account of their time in Socoval, with details about its social and military organization, oral traditions, religious beliefs and even burial rituals⁹³¹. There is no reference to conflicts between Costa’s expedition and the *soba* of Socoval, which indicates the existence of previous good diplomatic and commercial relations between the African ruler and Portuguese slavers.

Chapter 3 also showed the relationship between the early 1790s surge in slave exports from Benguela and the increase in slaving operations disguised as military expeditions in Quilengues and Caconda during the first years of that decade. Socoval, however, seems to have kept good relations with both slavers and the regent in Quilengues during this period as well. This peaceful relationship with the slave traders ended in the second half of the 1790s, when the *soba* of Socoval allegedly morphed from “ally” to “rebel”.

⁹³⁰ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 52, Doc. 45, “Bando que ordena as feiras nos sertões de Benguela e Caconda”, (23 September 1768). For a similar version of this document, see “Províncias que compreendem os sertões de Benguella e Caconda, 1770”, Documento No. 9, in Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a colonização...*, 187. See also BNL, Códice 8744, fl. 1, “Províncias conquistadas desde o tempo do descobrimento, e nos governos de vários Exmo. governadores”, c. 1770.

⁹³¹ Joaquim José da Silva, “Extracto da viagem que fez ao sertão de Benguela no anno de 1785: Viagem ao sertão de Benguella”, in *O Patriota: Jornal Litterário, Político, Mercantil*, Nos. 1-3 (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Régia, 1813), 49-100, spent at least two months in the *sobado* of Socoval between September and November of 1785. Naturally, his description of Socoval was guided and limited by his knowledge of and prejudices over “Africans”. His informants and translators were mainly Luso-Africans and he must have heard some of the stories and opinions he reproduces in his work from *sertanejos* in Benguela. Hence, it is a biased and in many ways uninformed description of the *soba* of Socoval and his people. Nevertheless, it is a valuable and unique source, which includes an oral tradition about the origins of the people of Socoval.

As seen previously, the slaver and military officer Joaquim Vieira de Andrade occupied the position of regent of Quilengues on several occasions between 1789 and 1808 and helped to transform his family into the most powerful slaving enterprise in Quilengues during the peak in slave exports from Benguela. The Andrade brothers – Joaquim, João and Elias – controlled most of the slave business in Quilengues and were also the biggest cattle owners among the *moradores* of the region. Captain Andrade became infamous for his violent methods and the disrespectful way he treated *sobas* under his jurisdiction, often being accused of extorting local rulers and of waging “unjust” wars against them.

During the administration of Manuel de Almeida Vasconcelos, governor of Angola during 1790-1797, Captain Andrade commanded several military expeditions against *sobetas* in Quilengues, such as Quiaca, Ganda and Bongo, many of them related to Socoval. In 1795, he decided to turn against the *soba* of Socoval himself. Captain Andrade convened the *moradores* under his jurisdiction to help him “punish” Socoval for refusing to pay the annual tribute. He gathered an army composed of *moradores*, local slaves and *quimbares*⁹³², and proceeded to raid the *sobado* of Socoval, looting the *libatas* of its *soba* and of his *macota* and setting everything on fire on their way out⁹³³.

According to Delgado, the regent of Quilengues expected that the governor of Benguela would arrest the *soba* of Socoval for insubordination, so that they could find a more “friendly” ruler to replace him. He informs that the regent of Quilengues considered the current *soba* a problem because of his resistance to vassalage. The colonial historian thus concluded that the constant complaints about the “rebelliousness” of the people of Socoval were the tragic result of a “policy of despoilment” practiced against African rulers⁹³⁴.

The governor of Benguela, Botelho de Vasconcelos, was outraged when he learned about the raid against the *sobado* of Socoval. This unprovoked violence was counterproductive and

⁹³² Ralph Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza: Ocupação e aproveitamento do antigo reino de Benguela, 1843-1942*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional. 1940), 112, defined *quimbares* as “a kind of private militia with good and bad intents”.

⁹³³ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 4-4v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (11 August 1796).

⁹³⁴ Ralph Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela: Catálogo de governadores, 1779 a 1940* (Lisboa: Edições Cosmos, 1940), 32.

against colonial instructions on how to deal with African rulers⁹³⁵. The governor of Benguela advised Captain Andrade by letter that the *sertões* should be governed through “finesse” (*jeito*), not violence. He also complained that tribute should be collected from every vassal *soba* in Quilengues, not only Socoval. Finally, he demanded that the regent treat all *sobas* under his jurisdiction with the same respect demanded from them. He ordered the regent to summon the *soba* of Socoval and send him to Benguela to be judged for his “rebelliousness”⁹³⁶.

In August 1796, the governor wrote again to the regent of Quilengues ordering him to resume the collection of tribute from all vassals within his jurisdiction. Nevertheless, he warned Captain Andrade that he should only collect from those who were accustomed to paying the royal tithe (*Quinto Real*). He could try to convince new *sobas* to voluntarily pay annual tributes, but never through violent means. As the governor explained, only the Crown could authorize the collection of such tribute, and he believed that with time, and “finesse”, they would peacefully convince every *soba* to pay up⁹³⁷.

One month later, the governor of Benguela received the visit of the *sobeta* of Quipuças, Cacombo. He had come to town to make a representation against the regent of Quilengues, whom he accused of attacking him and enslaving his people. The *sobeta*’s denunciation of the regent generated an official inquiry (*devassa*). The governor also complained to the judge of Benguela about the regent of Quilengues. He had heard rumors that Captain Andrade treated the *soba* of Socoval and his *sobetas* with “disaffection and disrespect”. The governor informed the judge that he had sent troops to Quilengues to escort the *soba* of Socoval to Benguela, in order to have an audience about the case. He also informed that the *soba*’s defense would be presented by the *tendala* or interpreter used to communicate with African authorities from the backlands, since it was a matter that deserved much attention⁹³⁸.

⁹³⁵ BNL, Códice 8744, fls. 44v-45, “Carta circular para todos os capitães mores dos presídios e distritos” (3 October 1770); BNL, Códice 8744, fls. 88v-89, “Carta circular para todos os capitães mores das povoações de Benguela e Caconda” (26 February 1771).

⁹³⁶ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 4-4v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (11 August 1796).

⁹³⁷ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 5, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (18 August 1796).

⁹³⁸ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 8, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o Juiz de Fora de Benguela Jerônimo Caetano Barros Araújo e Beça”, (15 September 1796); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 6, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o Juiz de Fora de Benguela Jerônimo Caetano Barros Araújo e Beça”, (16 September 1796).

I will now turn to two of these inquiries (*devassas*) regarding the alleged “crimes” committed by the regent of Quilengues against local African authorities. The first one, the *devassa of Quipuças*, confirmed rumors of an attack commanded by the regent of Quilengues against *sobeta* Cacombo of Quipuças. These accusations against the regent of Quilengues were backed by the *soba* of Socoval in private audience with the governor of Benguela, and later confirmed by the regent’s attempt to pay the royal fifth for his slaving operations in the interior with slaves who were, in fact, free subjects of Cacombo.

The second inquiry referred to attacks commanded by the regent of Quilengues against the *soba* of Socoval himself. This *devassa of Socoval* is a very detailed inquiry about the administration and the general behaviour of the regent of Quilengues, including questions regarding bribery and use of his position for personal gain, especially drawing upon groups of *quimbare* soldiers under his command to raid *sobados* and defying the authority of local African rulers. This second inquiry also produced more knowledge on the crimes committed against the *sobeta* Cacombo and the involvement of the regent of Quilengues in the rise of a new ruler in Quipuças.

The investigations about the crimes committed against the *soba* of Socoval did not curb the actions of slavers in Quilengues, who under the orders of a new regent carried out another attack against Socoval and his people. Despite previous conclusions presented by both inquiries – exonerating the *soba* of Socoval of any wrongdoings and pointing out the unjust and violent way in which the regent treated him and his allies – the community of slave traders in Benguela mobilized to justify such more attacks and to continue the enslavement of the peoples of Quilengues. They launched a series of new “investigations”, led by the judge of Benguela, which concluded that all attacks against the *soba* of Socoval were justifiable because he was a “rebel” who had committed “crimes of disobedience” and resisted to pay the tribute he owed.

The sources containing these *devassas* were gathered from different archives in Angola and Portugal. The first inquiry comes from the *Arquivo Nacional de Angola* in Luanda, while the second from the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* in Lisbon. Combined, these sources allows us a good glimpse into the strategies used by the slave traders operating in the interior of Benguela to acquire slaves and evidence the boldness of slavers occupying positions of authority in the “colonial” administration, in this case the regent of Quilengues. The governor of Angola, Manuel

de Almeida e Vasconcelos de Soveral (1790-1797), had access to both inquiries regarding the *soba* of Socoval and the regent of Quilengues. He sought to enforce what he considered the right interpretation of the regulations and instructions given by Lisbon about the treatment dispensed to African vassals and allies.

The inquiries about the conflicts between Socoval and the regents of Quilengues were also followed closely by the governor of Angola, *Dom* Miguel Antonio de Melo (1797-1802), a career bureaucrat from Lisbon who had recently arrived in Angola and was only too willing to leave his mark. After studying them, he absolved the *soba* of Socoval, thus reverting the judge's decision that condemned the African ruler and ordering the return of those sold as slaves to Brazil, as we will see below.

Inquiry 1: The *devassa* of Quipuças

The inquiry into the case of Quipuças confirmed rumours that the regent of Quilengues, Captain Andrade, had raided *sobeta* Cacombo and enslaved his people. According to witnesses, Captain Andrade's *quimbares*, with the help of some *moradores*, attacked the *libata* of Cacombo, capturing more than thirty people and much cattle. The governor of Benguela, Botelho de Vasconcelos, could personally confirm the veracity of the raid upon Quipuças because Captain Andrade's solicitor, the *sertanejo* Joaquim José Coimbra, had recently arrived in the coastal urban centre with three slaves to be "deposited" in the royal treasury as payment of the royal fifth from raids commanded by the regent of Quilengues. The slaves were identified by *sobeta* Cacombo as his subjects from Quipuças. The governor, unsure of how to proceed, sent the slaves to the judge of Benguela, who was to decide if the "colonial" administration could receive revenues originating from an "illegal" war⁹³⁹.

The *soba* of Socoval arrived in São Filipe de Benguela in September 1796 for his audience with Botelho de Vasconcelos. At the audience, Socoval made serious accusations against Captain Andrade. He told the governor of Benguela about raids against he and his people and confirmed the denunciations of *sobeta* Cacombo. Among the "crimes" promoted by the regent of Quilengues,

⁹³⁹ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 8-8v, "Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade", (22 September 1796).

Socoval highlighted the treachery against Quilumata. In July 1796, Captain Andrade was on his way from Benguela to Salvaterra dos Magos and made a stop in Quilumata to request porters for his caravan. According to reports, the *soba* of Quilumata provided him with five of his subjects in good faith. When his caravan arrived in Salvaterra dos Magos, however, Captain Andrade enslaved the porters and gave them to Manuel José de Sousa as payment for a debt that the *soba* of Quilumata had with that *morador*. Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos wrote to the regent of Quilengues reprimanding and ordering him to free the individuals thus enslaved and return them to Quilumata⁹⁴⁰.

Besides these accusations made by the *soba* of Socoval and the *sobeta* of Cacombo, the governor of Benguela collected testimonies from settlers (*moradores*) and African “potentates” from Quilengues denouncing the regent for sponsoring unjustified acts of violence. They accused Captain Andrade’s *quimbares* of roaming the *sertões* of Quilengues armed with guns and committing all sorts of extortions. They acted like bounty hunters, collecting other people’s debts (*dividas alheias*), often without their consent. Captain Andrade would often keep the collected debts for himself and use his power to hinder distressed settlers from going to Benguela to complain about his “crimes”⁹⁴¹.

Botelho de Vasconcelos heard Socoval’s complaints, but also used the opportunity to lecture the *soba* about maintaining peace and about the respect and obedience he owed to the regent. He also warned the *soba* not to offend the “whites” living within Quilengues, or the *sertanejos* crossing its *sertões* with passports and licences to trade. After some preaching, the governor gave the *soba* of Socoval authorization to return to his land. The *soba*, however, made a rather surprising request: he asked Botelho de Vasconcelos to give him another land to settle with his people, somewhere outside the district of Quilengues. The *soba* justified his extraordinary request by saying that he wanted to avoid the constant violence practiced by the regent of Quilengues. The governor did not grant the request for new lands, but promised the *soba* of Socoval that he would order the regent to stop all aggression against him and his people⁹⁴².

⁹⁴⁰ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 7-7v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (22 September 1796).

⁹⁴¹ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 7-7v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (22 September 1796).

⁹⁴² ANA, Códice 443, fl. 7-7v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (22 September 1796).

Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos effectively ordered Captain Andrade to leave Socoval and Cacombo in peace, at least until a decision from his superiors ordering otherwise. He revealed that *sobeta* Cacombo was afraid of being attacked again by forces stationed in Quilengues after returning to his lands with the *soba* of Socoval⁹⁴³. The governor of Benguela also wrote to Luanda informing on the findings of the inquiry regarding the crimes of Captain Andrade against the *soba* of Socoval and the *sobeta* Cacombo. In the meantime, Socoval and Cacombo returned to their lands without further conflicts with the regent⁹⁴⁴.

In Luanda, the governor of Angola, Almeida e Vasconcelos, read what he classified as “horrifying” accusations of crimes against the regent of Quilengues and demanded a second inquiry (*devassa*) into the matter. He was not satisfied with the evidence presented, or the quality of the witnesses and their testimonies. Almeida e Vasconcelos wanted a proper investigation in which witnesses and testimonies followed the necessary formality for such serious cases. The inquiry should obey all legal procedures because the consequences were dire. If the gravity of the accusations were confirmed, the governor of Angola declared that he would authorize “the greatest punishment” (*o maior castigo*) against the regent of Quilengues and the complete restitution of losses⁹⁴⁵. As for the regent of Quilengues, he should be removed from his position, escorted back to Benguela and arrested upon arrival. His patrimony should be seized to provide means for the restitution and indemnification due to those he had wronged. According to Almeida e Vasconcelos, seizing Captain Andrade’s property was not only justifiable, but should serve as example against this type of “thefts” (*ladroerias*). It was dishonorable and useless to try to steal in the *sertões*, the governor of Angola concluded⁹⁴⁶. Almeida e Vasconcelos then ordered his counterpart in Benguela to find a replacement for the regent of Quilengues from among the “whites” in the region⁹⁴⁷.

The governor of Angola also sent two letters attached to his orders to Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos in Benguela: one was addressed to the disgraced regent of Quilengues and the other to his substitute. In the first letter, he ordered Captain Andrade to surrender his position to the new

⁹⁴³ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 7-7v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (22 September 1796).

⁹⁴⁴ ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 25-25v, “Autos de inquirição do *soba* do Socoval”, (27 October 1796).

⁹⁴⁵ ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 25-25v, “Autos de inquirição do *soba* do Socoval”, (27 October 1796).

⁹⁴⁶ ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 25-25v, “Autos de inquirição do *soba* do Socoval”, (27 October 1796).

⁹⁴⁷ ANA Códice 4094, fls. 23-25, “Ofício do Exmo. Snr. Genal. para o governador de Benguela com duas cartas, uma para o capitão-mor de Quilengues e outra para o oficial que o deve render”, (27 October 1796).

regent, handing over all military equipment and official documents under his possession. He should also leave the official residence immediately and return to the town of Benguela to present himself to his superiors. Almeida e Vasconcelos made special recommendations about the future collection of tribute, which should suffer no alteration following these administrative changes. The tribute collected by the regency of Quilengues was much needed in the Hospital of Benguela, the governor of Angola explained⁹⁴⁸.

The second letter, addressed to the new regent, brought instructions about the transition of power, including recommendations that he should base his actions on “love and fear” for the laws of God and men. Hence, he should always seek to improve the “*Santa Religião*”, or “Holy Religion” and to impose respect and obedience to the Portuguese crown. He should also make sure that the peoples under his jurisdiction lived in peace and prosperity, freeing them from “idleness”, the root of all their vices, according to Almeida e Vasconcelos⁹⁴⁹. The new regent of Quilengues should further take good care of commerce, assuring business flowed without grievances or dishonesties. He should punish those who behaved with indolence. Nevertheless, before applying any kind of punishment, the regent had to be sure of the faults committed by those to be punished and the consequences of such punishment. Moreover, the governor of Angola made a series of recommendations on how to collect tribute in arrears. The collection should be based on common sense and with limited use of force. Thus, in case a vassal proved that he could not pay the full tribute, the regent should try to collect whatever was possible and reasonable⁹⁵⁰.

Governor Almeida e Vasconcelos ended his letter to the new regent of Quilengues reminding him that he owed total obedience to his immediate superiors in Benguela. He should execute every order from both the governor and the judge of that “colonial” urban centre. The governor of Angola also declared that experience had shown him that regents and *capitães-mores*

⁹⁴⁸ ANA Códice 4094, fls. 23-25, “Ofício do Exmo. Snr. Genal. para o governador de Benguela com duas cartas, uma para o capitão-mor de Quilengues e outra para o oficial que o deve render”, (27 October 1796). In another document, the successor of Governor Almeida e Vasconcelos further explained that the Hospital of Benguela was maintained by the tithe collected in the interior, but the amount collected was so small that it could not even cover the acquisition medicine and other basic needs of the hospital: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798). See also *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

⁹⁴⁹ ANA Códice 4094, fls. 23-25, “Ofício do Exmo. Snr. Genal. para o governador de Benguela com duas cartas, uma para o capitão-mor de Quilengues e outra para o oficial que o deve render”, (27 October 1796).

⁹⁵⁰ ANA Códice 4094, fls. 23-25, “Ofício do Exmo. Snr. Genal. para o governador de Benguela com duas cartas, uma para o capitão-mor de Quilengues e outra para o oficial que o deve render”, (27 October 1796).

were quickly inebriated by their power and the assurance of impunity provided by the distance from his superiors, who rarely left town to venture into the *sertões*. Governor Almeida e Vasconcelos finally ordered the new regent to make sure to notify Captain Andrade that he had fifteen days to present himself back in town⁹⁵¹. As we will see below, Captain Andrade was never punished for his “crimes”.

Inquiry 2: The *devassa* of Socoval

The governor of Benguela, Botelho de Vasconcelos, chose Captain Miguel Antonio Serrão to replace Captain Andrade as regent of Quilengues. Captain Serrão received orders to assume the post of regent of Quilengues in late November 1796, but it took him another month to make his way to Salvaterra dos Magos⁹⁵². Shortly after his arrival in the settlement, he began looking for witnesses among local residents to testify for the new inquiry ordered by the governor of Angola about the crimes committed against the *soba* of Socoval and his *sobeta* Cacombo. The governor of Benguela elaborated a detailed questionnaire concerning Captain Joaquim Vieira de Andrade’s behaviour towards *moradores* and African rulers under his jurisdiction⁹⁵³.

The new inquiry included questions about Captain Andrade’s personal behaviour, such as if he feared God and worked for the expansion of the Christian faith, as well as his role as regent, including if he collected tribute in arrears and allowed the development of trade without negative interference. There were also questions about certain of his decisions as regent and if they were driven by attempts at bribery or “personal passions”. Much of the questionnaire focused on the relationship of Captain Andrade with *sobas* in Quilengues, and if he had overreached his powers

⁹⁵¹ ANA Códice 4094, fls. 23-25, “Ofício do Exmo. Snr. Genal. para o governador de Benguela com duas cartas, uma para o capitão-mor de Quilengues e outra para o oficial que o deve render”, (27 October 1796).

⁹⁵² ANA, Códice 443, fl. 10, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (29 November 1796); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 11v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o Tenente de Infantaria Miguel Antonio Serrão”, (25 December 1796).

⁹⁵³ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 12, “Edital do Regente de Quilengues e Tenente de Infantaria Miguel Antonio Serrão”, (1796); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 12, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o Tenente de Infantaria Miguel Antonio Serrão”, (7 January 1797).

by interfering in African “legal matters” (*mucanos*⁹⁵⁴). One question in particular enquired if he had enslaved any “freeborn” person or freed any slave for his personal gain.

In another part of the inquiry, there was a series of specific questions about the relationship between the regent of Quilengues and the *soba* of Socoval. Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos believed that the *soba* of Socoval was loyal because he had been paying tribute and had personally participated in an expedition to defend Caconda, providing many porters for the artillery. Most of the questions were based on rumors circulating in Benguela about the infamous regent: Was it true that Captain Andrade received gifts of slaves, cattle and ivory from the *soba* of Socoval? Did he usurp Socoval’s right to decide local legal matters (*mucanos*), especially those concerning “witchcraft”, that is “crimes” punishable with enslavement, because of personal ambition?

Moreover: Was it true that Captain Andrade’s *quimbares* crossed the district of Quilengues insulting *sobetas* and *macotas*, attacking their *libatas*, all with the deliberate support of their master? Was it true that these *quimbares* became so audacious that they looted the *libata* of the *soba* of Socoval, despite the fact that the said *soba* had previously given them some cattle to avoid any problems? What happened after the attack? Once the *soba* of Socoval defended himself from the offenses and provocations of the regent and his *quimbares*, did Captain Andrade turn against him? Was it true that the regent organized a military expedition merging his *quimbares*, slaves and some *moradores* to attack the *libata* of Socoval, who was forced to flee for his life? Rumors also indicated that after the *soba* escaped, Captain Andrade decided to destroy and burn his *libata* and threatened to kill the *soba* in case he complained to the governor of Benguela, all the while stating that he was not subject to the authority of the latter.

Another set of questions revolved around *sobeta* Cacombo: Did Captain Andrade betray Cacombo, helping his nephews to take over power? If so, this was against customary law and the will of the *macotas*, who should be the only ones responsible for choosing the next *soba*. Cacombo denounced this betrayal to the governor of Benguela, who issued orders for the regent of Quilengues to support Cacombo as the legitimate ruler of Quipuças: Was it true that Captain Andrade received ten slaves from Cacombo’s nephew (Quipia) to disobey the orders from

⁹⁵⁴ Catarina Madeira Santos, “Entre deux droits: les Lumières en Angola, 1750-1800”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 60e, (2005): 821, explains that *mukano* derives from Mbundu customary laws connected to their social and religious practices aiming at establishing social balance. As we will see below, Luso-African agents in Angola and Benguela had their own understanding of “*mucanos*”.

Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos? Was it true that the regent attacked the *libata* of Cacombo, capturing thirty-five slaves and four hundred and eighty head of cattle, keeping most of the loot for himself?

According to witnesses, the conflicts with Cacombo started when the Andrade brothers tried to influence the succession of power in the *sobado* of Quipuças, located on the western margin of the Calunga River, a region close to the settlement of Salvaterra dos Magos and the *sobado* of Socoval (Map 4). Quipuças was ruled by *soba* Gongga. Cacombo was his brother. Besides sharing blood ties, Cacombo was very close to Gongga, and they lived together in Quipuças for a long time. *Sobeta* Cacombo was the next in line to assume power in Quipuças, should anything happen to his brother.

Cacombo had a nephew called Quipia. For reasons not explained in the testimony, Gongga and Quipia hatched a plan to kill Cacombo, with his nephew replacing him. They attacked Cacombo, who managed to gather his “minions” (*sequazes*) and resist the strike long enough to escape to the lands of Nano. During the attack, Cacombo’s warriors allegedly killed *soba* Gongga. This left the way open for Quipia to become the *soba* of Quipuças⁹⁵⁵.

Cacombo then travelled to Benguela to have an audience with the governor of Benguela, Francisco Paim de Câmara e Ornelas (1791-1796), to reclaim his right over the territory of Quipuças. The governor decided in favor of Cacombo and sent orders to the regent of Quilengues to ensure that he re-assumed the position as *soba* of Quipuças. Captain Andrade, however, did not obey the orders emanating from Benguela because he already had an agreement with Quipia. According to witnesses, when Quipia learned that Cacombo had travelled to Benguela to have an audience with the governor, he sent a bribe of ten slaves to the regent of Quilengues⁹⁵⁶.

Cacombo returned to Quilengues, but Quipia remained as ruler of Quipuças. After some time, Cacombo received a message from his nephew, inviting him to return to Quipuças. In his message, Quipia said that he wanted to have his uncle once again by his side. Cacombo accepted the invitation in good faith and returned to Quipuças, only to meet Quipia and his warriors waiting

⁹⁵⁵ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁵⁶ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

for him, guns in hand. Quipia's men fired upon Cacombo, who managed to defend himself long enough to escape once again. Nonetheless, another of Cacombo's nephew died during the fight⁹⁵⁷.

Cacombo decided then to move to the *libata* of Miguel Joaquim Ignácio, an important *sertanejo* in Quilengues, who was also his creditor and business partner. When Captain Andrade learned that he was living in this *sertanejo*'s compound, he invited Cacombo to move to his own *libata* and live amongst he and his brother, João Vieira de Andrade. The Andrade brothers also promised to help Cacombo get back into power as *soba* of Quipuças. But the *sobeta* feared that was another trap. Cacombo knew that Captain Andrade had accepted a bribe of ten slaves sent by Quipia. He refused to move into the compound of the Andrade brothers, saying that he felt better living within the domains of his associate Ignácio because they had business together⁹⁵⁸.

Fearing that Captain Andrade would be displeased with his refusal to move to his *libata*, Cacombo sent him five slaves, including a “*molecona*”, or young female. Despite this gift, Captain Andrade sent orders to Quipia to dispatch his warriors to Salvaterra dos Magos. Quipia's warriors did not enter the settlement, but rather camped in the surrounding bush. Captain Andrade sent them a good ox for their ritual feast before the raid. At night, Captain Andrade gathered his *quimbares*, joined Quipia's warriors and marched on the *libata* where Cacombo was living. They looted and razed it to the ground. Captain Andrade and his men also killed one of Cacombo's slaves. They captured thirty-nine people and more than four hundred head of cattle. In a last act of betrayal, Captain Andrade kept most of the loot for himself, giving the warriors from Quipuças only ten slaves and twenty head of cattle, threatening with death anyone who complained about it. There is no register that the royal fifth was put aside for the royal treasury⁹⁵⁹.

The witnesses called for the inquiry confirmed most of the rumors regarding the crimes committed against Socoval. In their view, the *soba* of Socoval was a humble and loyal friend of Portugal who paid annual tribute and obeyed the regent of Quilengues as his superior. He used to send the regent “gifts” such as slaves, cattle and ivory. He had also served the “royal service” on different occasions, including participating in a recent expedition sent from Luanda to punish

⁹⁵⁷ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁵⁸ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁵⁹ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

“rebel” *sobas* in Caconda. Socoval had personally led his porters, who carried the military equipment of the expedition, all the way up to the *presidio* of Caconda⁹⁶⁰.

According to the witnesses, moreover, Socoval became seriously ill during this journey to Caconda. He asked the commander of the Luanda expedition permission to return home, which was granted. Socoval left one of his *macota* representing him in Caconda and returned with his people to his *libata*. However, he did not ask permission from the then regent of Quilengues, allegedly because he thought it was not necessary. In the *soba*’s understanding, permission from the commander of the Luanda expedition should have been enough. The regent of Quilengues, however, began using this “fault” as the reason to accuse the *soba* of “insubordination”⁹⁶¹.

According to the witnesses, from this moment onwards the regent of Quilengues became hostile towards the *soba* of Socoval, displaying signs of “open hatred” against him. He began by usurping the *soba* of his rights to decide *mucanos* in his territory, especially those concerning witchcraft and the inheritance of land. Captain Andrade’s overreach was based on greed, the witnesses reported. Interestingly, the same witnesses testified that the *soba* of Socoval decided not to denounce Captain Andrade because he did not dislike the regent⁹⁶².

The inquiry revealed that the *quimbares* of Captain Andrade boldly roamed the *sertões* of Quilengues attacking and pillaging *libatas* with the approval of their master. They also repeatedly attacked the *sobado* of Socoval, despite the fact that the *soba* tried to maintain good relations with them, even offering gifts of cattle in order to avoid conflict. Recent news received by the new regent of Quilengues informed that Captain Andrade had ordered a man called Francisco Xavier, also known as Quiçonde, to move to a residence in an undisclosed place in the *sertões*. He ordered his *quimbares* to escort Quiçonde to his new residence. Along the way, they passed by *libatas* of subjects of Socoval and, as usual, decided to raid them. After pillaging them, Andrade’s *quimbares* decided to attack the big *libata* of the *soba* of Socoval himself. When Socoval’s subjects noticed that his *libata* was about to be attacked, they rushed to block its entrance. The *quimbares* did not

⁹⁶⁰ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁶¹ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁶² ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

take this obstruction kindly and attacked the “sons” of Socoval. The people of Socoval resisted and struck back, seriously injuring one of Captain Andrade’s *quimbares* in the head⁹⁶³.

After the attack, Andrade’s men returned to Salvaterra dos Magos and complained to their master that they were injured by the people of Socoval, omitting the truth about who started the fight, according to witnesses. The regent of Quilengues, who was known for his “impetuous” and “heated” personality, decided to remove the *soba* of Socoval from Quilengues for good. He summoned the “white” *moradores* in Quilengues with their slaves to join his *quimbares* in the march against Socoval. Captain Andrade personally commanded this raiding expedition⁹⁶⁴.

Captain Andrade then attempted to assassinate the *soba*, who managed to escape with some of his people. The raiders seized the belongings of the *soba* and of his subjects and, once again, set his *libata* on fire. Still according to witnesses, the *soba* of Socoval refused to send his warriors to attack any official of the “colonial” administration, which indicated that he was still a “loyal friend”. Captain Andrade, in turn, threatened to kill the *soba* of Socoval in case he complained to the governor of Benguela. He still defied the authority of his superiors by openly stating that he was the subordinate of no one⁹⁶⁵.

The inquiry about the conflict between the *soba* of Socoval and Captain Andrade pointed towards the acquittal of the former and the condemnation of the latter. Despite orders to arrest the regent as soon as he arrived in Benguela, there is no record of such a development. Indeed, after Dom Miguel Antonio de Melo, who succeeded Almeida e Vasconcelos as governor of Angola in 1797, carried out his own investigation into the denunciations of unauthorized attacks against Socoval, he issued a new order on 11 March 1798 to arrest Captain Andrade for the crimes he had committed while serving as regent of Quilengues⁹⁶⁶. But this order, too, was never carried.

⁹⁶³ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁶⁴ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁶⁵ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 12v-16, “Auto de Devassa sobre o capitão-mor de Quilengues Joaquim Vieira de Andrade”, (1797).

⁹⁶⁶ ANA Códice 4094, fls. 77-77v, “Ofício do governador de Angola Dom Miguel Antonio de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos”, (11 March 1798); AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42 - “Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão”, (11 March 1798).

New attacks against Socoval

The man chosen by the governor of Benguela to replace Captain Andrade as regent of Quilengues was not much different from his predecessor. As one governor of Angola once acknowledged, violent slavers were the only ones who could do the job of managing the outposts in the *sertões*. Captain Serrão had become Lieutenant of the Infantry of Benguela on 18 August 1791, under orders from Governor Francisco Paim da Câmara e Ornelas⁹⁶⁷. A Few years later, he rose to the position of regent of Quilengues and thus became responsible for the maintenance of the slave routes that passed through the region.

The new regent, Captain Serrão, took over the administration of Quilengues towards the end of 1796. He spent most of the following year working on the inquiry about Captain Andrade's alleged crimes against Socoval, collecting testimony from various witnesses and writing extensive reports about his findings. As a result, Captain Serrão was not able to carry out as many slaving expeditions in Quilengues as his predecessor had managed to undertake. This had two immediate consequences. The number of captives arriving in Benguela decreased considerably, pushing slave exports downwards from more than eleven thousand slaves in 1795 to some six thousand in 1797⁹⁶⁸. On the other hand, the sudden decrease in "punitive" expeditions in Quilengues made the *sobas* and warlords more audacious in their attacks on *sertanejos* and *moradores*. In September 1797, the regent of Quilengues complained to the governor of Benguela that the *soba* of Socoval had turned quite "insubordinate" following the departure of Captain Andrade⁹⁶⁹.

Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos saw this lack of activity on the part of the new regent of Quilengues as a sign of weakness. If the former regent was too violent and too eager to impose his

⁹⁶⁷ AHU, Angola, Códice 1628, Livro 2, 1791-1792, fls. 13v-16v., "Carta para o governador de Benguela Francisco Paim Câmara e Ornellas", (18 August 1791).

⁹⁶⁸ The numbers of legal exports from Benguela kept on falling in the following years: 4,581 slaves in 1798 and 3,834 in 1799, see José C. Curto, "The Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Benguela, Angola, 1730-1828: A Quantitative Re-Appraisal," *África*, 16-17, no. 1 (1993/1994): 101-116. In José C. Curto, "Another Look at the Slave Trade from Benguela: What We Know and What We Do Not Know", *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (forthcoming), 7-10 – Table I, he estimates 6554 slaves exported from Benguela in 1798 and 5862 in 1799. Daniel Domingues da Silva, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701-1867," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 46, n. 1 (2013): 121-122 – Appendix A, also presents a decline in slave exports from Benguela in the second half of the 1790s, in comparison to the first half of that decade. According to Silva's estimates, Benguela would experience another surge in slave exports between 1836 and 1850.

⁹⁶⁹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, "Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval", (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX; AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42 - "Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão", (11 March 1798).

authority over Africans and Luso-Africans alike, Captain Serrão was seen as too prudent. The governor of Benguela wrote Captain Serrão a harsh letter on 4 October 1797, arguing that his “excess of prudence” was detrimental to both the royal service and peaceful relations with local subjects, because it made the Portuguese seem weak. According to the Botelho de Vasconcelos, Captain Serrão’s excessive prudence was the reason why his subordinates abused him and did not respect his authority. Hence, the governor of Benguela dispatched a contingent of soldiers to help the regent of Quilengues re-establish order in his district⁹⁷⁰.

Not surprisingly, the following month saw Captain Serrão organize a new slaving expedition against the *soba* of Socoval. The regent of Quilengues returned from this expedition in late November 1797 with forty-five captives and seventy-nine head of cattle seized from Socoval: representing the royal fifth of the raid just carried out, this booty was handed over to the royal treasurer in Benguela, Joaquim José de Almeida⁹⁷¹. The latter produced a list describing the forty-five slaves received from Captain Serrão⁹⁷². It is important to bear in mind that these individuals represent only the royal fifth of the slaving operation that carried out, not the actual number of captives (and cattle) apprehended during the raid⁹⁷³.

As soon as the captives representing the royal fifth were handed over to the royal treasurer, José de Almeida named two of the most important members of the community of slave traders in Benguela, Antonio José Viana and Joaquim José Coimbra, to gauge the value of the “merchandise” to be sold in the local market. The traders quickly examined and priced the enslaved individuals,

⁹⁷⁰ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 19v, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão”, (4 October 1797); AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42 - “Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão”, (11 March 1798).

⁹⁷¹ ANA, Códice 516, fls. 51-51v, “Relação de escravos e gado trazidos de Quilengues pelo capitão Miguel António Serrão, (26 November 1797); AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 28 - “Devassa dos crimes do Soba do Socoval, com o inventário do confisco dos seus bens”, (27 November 1797 to 26 January 1798).

⁹⁷² “*Relação dos escravos que de Quilengues trouxe o Capitão Miguel António Serrão, pertencentes a Sua Majestade. A 1ª dezanove Negras Velhas = três ditas ditas com cria = Duas molequinhas de quatro palmos = Quatro moleconas, uma dita muito magra = Cinco barbados = hum dito cego de um olho = hum molecão = hum dito com os pés inchados = hum molecote muito magro e pés inchados = Duas molecas de 5 ½ palmos = duas ditas de seis ditos = um moleque de seis ditos = um dito dito com umbigo grande = hum dito de 5 ½ palmos = hum dito de quatro palmos = são quarenta e cinco = Benguela 26 de 9bro de 1797 = O Tesoureiro e Almoxarife da Real Fazenda Joaquim José de Almeida = Botelho = Relação das cabeças de gado que vieram de Quilengues em companhia do Capitão Miguel António Serrão pertencentes a Sua Majestade = Sessenta e oito vacas = Quatro ditas, quatro crias das ditas = três Touros = São setenta e nove = Benguela 26 de 9bro de 1797 = O Tesoureiro e Almoxarife da Real Fazenda Joaquim José de Almeida*”: ANA, Códice 516, fls. 51-51v, “Relação de escravos e gado trazidos de Quilengues pelo capitão Miguel António Serrão, (26 November 1797).

⁹⁷³ We can estimate a minimum of 225 slaves and 395 head of cattle as captured, overall, during this raid.

classifying them with “positive qualities” to increase their market value (see table below). On the following day, the human merchandise was already available for purchase⁹⁷⁴.

1- List, made by the Treasurer of the <i>Real Fazenda</i> Joaquim José de Almeida, of the captives and cattle from Socoval brought by <i>capitão-mor</i> Miguel Antonio Serrão (regent of Quilengues) to Benguela on 26 November 1797 ⁹⁷⁵ .			2- List of the slaves and cattle from Socoval to be sold in the public market of Benguela as evaluated by Antonio José Viana and Joaquim José Coimbra on 27 November 1797 ⁹⁷⁶ .		
#	Classification	Portuguese version	#	Re-classification	Portuguese version
19	old black women	<i>negras velhas</i>	3	premium black slaves	<i>negros peças da índia</i>
3	old black women with children	<i>negras velhas com crias</i>	3	boys	<i>moleques</i>
2	small infant girls	<i>molequinhas de 4 palmos</i>	6	old black men	<i>negros velhos</i>
4	teenage girls, one very thin	<i>moleconas, 1 muito magra</i>	25	black women skilled in leatherworking	<i>negras talabardeiras</i>
5	bearded men	<i>barbados</i>	6	teenage girls	<i>molecas</i>
1	bearded man, blind of one eye	<i>barbado cego de 1 olho</i>	2	infants	<i>crias de pé</i>
1	teenage boy	<i>molecão</i>			
1	teenage boy with swollen feet	<i>molecão com os pés inchados</i>			
1	small boy, very thin and with swollen feet	<i>molecote muito magro e pés inchados</i>			
2	girls	<i>molecas de 5 ½ palmos</i>			
2	girls	<i>molecas de 6 palmos</i>			
1	boy	<i>moleque de 6 palmos</i>			
1	boy, with a big bellybutton	<i>moleque de 6 palmos com umbigo grande</i>			
1	boy	<i>moleque de 5 ½ palmos</i>			
1	small boy	<i>moleque de 4 palmos</i>			
	Total: 45			Total: 45	
3	Bulls	<i>Touros</i>	3	bulls	<i>Touros</i>
68	Cows	<i>Vacas</i>	72	cows	<i>Vacas</i>
4	Calves	<i>Crias</i>			
	Total: 79			Total: 75	

⁹⁷⁴ “Relação dos escravos, e gado que se apreendeu para a Real Fazenda ao soba do Socoval da província de Quilengues = Quarenta e cinco escravos, a saber três negros peças da Índia, três moleques, seis negros velhos, vinte e cinco negras talabardeiras, seis molecas, e duas crias de pé avaliados todos na quantia de oitocentos e cinquenta e quatro mil seiscentos réis = setenta e cinco cabeças de gado vacum que são setenta e duas vacas e três touros, avaliados tudo na quantia de cento e oitenta mil réis = soma esta relação a quantia de um conto trinta e quatro mil e seiscentos réis. Benguela, vinte e seis de janeiro de mil setecentos e noventa e oito = Bento Fernandes Barreto, escrivão do Foro Contencioso da Provedoria da Real Fazenda”: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 28, “Devassa dos crimes do Sova do Socoval, com o inventário do confisco dos seus bens”, (27 November 1797 to 26 January 1798).

⁹⁷⁵ ANA, Códice 516, fls. 51-51v, “Relação de escravos e gado trazidos de Quilengues pelo capitão Miguel António Serrão, (26 November 1797).

⁹⁷⁶ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 28, “Devassa dos crimes do Sova do Socoval, com o inventário do confisco dos seus bens”, (27 November 1797 to 26 January 1798).

The two documents concerning the captives from the *sobado* of Socoval, located in archives in two different continents⁹⁷⁷, provide a unique window into the operation of the slave trade in Benguela, allowing us to better understand the process of evaluation and sale of captives. The first document shows the victims of the slavers as they arrived from Socoval, while the second reveals the process of labeling them for the slave market⁹⁷⁸. They represent a *documental manifestation* of the process of transforming African captives into enslaved individuals for the Atlantic trade.

Although both lists account for the same forty-five captives from Socoval, their classification in each list is dissimilar. The first is a list of the captives as they arrived in Benguela from the *sertões* of Quilengues. It focuses on identifying them as best as possible, highlighting their physical characteristics and “defects”. The captives are loosely classified by sex and age groups. The age groups were determined using Portuguese expressions that there and then tried to convey the approximate age of the individual: *molequinha*, *moleca*, *molecona*, *negra*, *negra velha*, and so on⁹⁷⁹. Some of the physical features presented were also meant to determine age, for instance “bearded” (*barbado*). Others were meant to determine the health condition of the captives, such as “blind of an eye”, “swollen feet”, “very thin” or yet “big bellybutton”⁹⁸⁰.

In the second list, all of the physical features that could be considered “defects” are eliminated, as are those that tried to determine age. Hence, the number of “classifications” on the second list is reduced to less than half, while a few new ones are added. The new labels were meant to increase the value of the “merchandise” in the slave market. Perhaps the most important classification was “*peça d’Índia*”, which meant a “premium” male slave with the right age and physical stature, who fetched the highest price in the Atlantic slave trade⁹⁸¹. Skills were also added

⁹⁷⁷ Produced only one day apart from each other (26 and 27 November 1797) these documents are today found in different archives. The first list comes from the *Arquivo Nacional de Angola* (Luanda), while the second is in the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* (Lisbon). Both are copies of original documents. See also AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42 - “Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão”, (11 March 1798).

⁹⁷⁸ Although Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 206, analyses the first document, she does not deal with the second and more readily accessible one, where the captives are reclassified for market. Thus, Candido erroneously concludes that they must have been sold at a lower price.

⁹⁷⁹ See José C. Curto, “The Population of the Lower Kwanza Valley, 1792-1796”, *Ponta de Lança*, Vol. 12, No. 23 (2018): 97-117, for similar classifications.

⁹⁸⁰ ANA, Códice 516, fls. 51-51v, “Relação de escravos e gado trazidos de Quilengues pelo capitão Miguel António Serrão, (26 November 1797).

⁹⁸¹ According to the glossary included in a document about vassalage in Angola in early sixteenth century, the expression “*peças de índias*” referred originally to those slaves of Angola sold to the “*Índias de Castella*”, that is

to this second list, as in “*talabardeiras*”, a term derived from old Portuguese “*talabarte*”, meaning the leather “belt” used for holding the sword or yet a horse “saddle”⁹⁸². Hence, “*talabardeiras*” were women skilled in leatherworking⁹⁸³.

The analysis of the valuation and reclassification undergone by the captives from Socoval as they were “transformed” into slaves for the Atlantic market is a fascinating exercise. All old black women “disappeared”, as did the partly blind man. Similarly, those with swollen feet were no longer found in the new list, although one day was surely not enough to change their condition. The twenty-five skilled women in the second list in fact included the twenty-two “old black women” (three of them who had just lost their young babies, since the babies disappeared from the new list) and three of the four female teenagers, since the fourth was probably “too thin” to be re-classified as a “woman”.

The first list also records seventy-nine head of cattle captured in Socoval as handed over to the royal treasurer on 26 November 1797. Four of these were calves. The second list, on the other hand, presents only seventy-five head of cattle, which suggests that the calves met another destiny (as did the babies). The final list of slaves ready for market was presented to the governor of Benguela on 27 November and he authorized their sale that same day. The value of all of the slaves was placed at 854\$600 *réis*, while the seventy-five head of cattle were evaluated at an overall 180\$000 *réis*. According to the source, most of the 1:034\$600 *réis* acquired with their sale was used to pay the costs of their own maintenance (food and shelter). The rest was deposited in the royal treasury⁹⁸⁴.

The investigations of a corrupted judge

Although the governor of Benguela, Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos, swiftly authorized the sale of the captives from Socoval, probably under pressure from members of the

Spanish America and the Caribbean. Later, it became a term to identify premium slaves who had “greater value than the others”: BPE, Códice 531, (Manizola), “Autos de Vassalagem e Baculmento”, 1619, fl. 20.

⁹⁸² Rafael Bluteau, *Diccionario da Lingua Portuguesa*, Tomo I (Lisboa: Simão Thaddeo Ferreira, 1789), 440.

⁹⁸³ The word “*talabarte*” is still used in the Spanish language in reference to “saddlery” and other objects made of leather.

⁹⁸⁴ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 28, “Devassa dos crimes do Sova do Socoval, com o inventário do confisco dos seus bens”, (27 November 1797 to 26 January 1798).

local community of slave traders, he seems to have suspected that something was wrong with this sudden supply of enslaved individuals personally brought to town by the regent of Quilengues. Botelho de Vasconcelos ordered the new judge in Benguela, Alberto Antonio Pereira, to lead an investigation into the origins of the captives brought from Quilengues by Captain Serrão. The judge began his investigation on 1 December 1797⁹⁸⁵.

Antonio Pereira, the new judge, had been having a series of conflicts with Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos, keeping up with the tradition of clashes between the executive and the judicial powers in Benguela. There was a constant dispute over jurisdiction between the two powers, due to lack of specific colonial legislation about them. This was an old complaint from governors of both Angola and Benguela regarding the administration of the captaincy⁹⁸⁶. The animosity between the two parties was public knowledge and generated moments of petty disputes and awkward social interactions. Besides, judge Antonio Pereira took the side of Benguela's community of slave traders, as his predecessors had done, by supporting their misconduct and extortions. He forwarded to the governor a request from its principal members demanding the immediate punishment of the *soba* of Socoval, who they blamed for recent attacks on the *moradores* of Quilengues. These declared that they feared that Socoval's aggressions would only get worse if nothing was done to punish his "rebellious" attitudes⁹⁸⁷.

Judge Antonio Pereira finished his inquiry at the beginning of 1798. Contradicting previous investigations, his conclusions exonerated Captain Serrão and instead condemned the *soba* of Socoval. He determined that Socoval committed "crimes of disobedience", including non-compliance as a vassal of Portugal and encroaching upon Portuguese royal jurisdiction by resisting to pay tribute. Judge Antonio Pereira also accused the *soba* of Socoval of deserting during a military venture against the *soba* of Huambo. Moreover, the *soba* of Socoval had not only abandoned his position by the side of the colonial forces, but began "fomenting, animating and

⁹⁸⁵ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, "Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval", (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX

⁹⁸⁶ Ralph Delgado highlights this conflict between governors and judges in Benguela in several of his books. In his opinion, the executive power in Benguela was an institution weakened by the members of the judicial and ecclesiastical powers, who often used their positions for personal gain. Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 29-30, cites Sousa Coutinho to argue that this was an old problem and that it was at the core of a supposed "failure" of the colonial administration to colonize Angola properly.

⁹⁸⁷ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 28, "Devassa dos crimes do Soba do Socoval, com o inventário do confisco dos seus bens", (27 November 1797 to 26 January 1798).

sustaining” the rise of the “gentiles” against them after deserting. And, last but not least, the *soba* of Socoval allegedly took advantage of the weakness of the colonial forces in Quilengues to stir up his allies against Luso-African settlers, using threats and extortion to promote insubordination and total disobedience. As a result, the “gentiles” turned against the “white” *moradores* of Quilengues, who were “viciously and inhumanely” attacked, according to the investigation. The “blacks”, the judge reported, had committed terrible acts of cruelty. In summary, “a perfect revolt” had developed, he argued⁹⁸⁸.

In conclusion, Judge Antonio Pereira found the *soba* of Socoval guilty of being the main leader of this “perfect revolt”. The *soba* was soon arrested and sent to Luanda to be questioned by the governor of Angola. His properties were seized, including cattle and slaves. The judge argued in his sentence that the regent of Quilengues had heard and rightfully addressed the “just pleas” of the *moradores* and *negociantes* against the *soba* of Socoval. He warned the governor of Benguela, however, that he should be careful with future rebellions that could result from current events. Judge Antonio Pereira predicted that the peoples of Quilengues would not take peacefully this attack on the *soba* of Socoval, to whom most of them (if not all) paid homage⁹⁸⁹.

The verdict of the judge of Benguela was transmitted to Luanda, where a new governor, Dom Miguel Antonio de Melo (1797-1802), had recently arrived. Dom Melo was a career bureaucrat who would later occupy the position of governor of the Azores, before returning to Lisbon to become Minister and Secretary of State (*Ministro e Secretário de Estado dos Negócios da Fazenda e Presidente do Real Erário*). He assumed his position as governor of Angola very motivated to leave his mark⁹⁹⁰.

In his verdict, Judge Antonio Pereira had ultimately justified the attack against Socoval by saying that the governor of Benguela had authorized it. He explained that the governor’s decision was based on complaints forwarded by the regent of Quilengues because the *soba* of Socoval refused to pay tribute. According to Dom Melo’s own investigation, however, the governor of Benguela had given the regent authorization to reach out to the *soba* peacefully, with the help of

⁹⁸⁸ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 28, “Devassa dos crimes do Sova do Socoval, com o inventário do confisco dos seus bens”, (27 November 1797 to 26 January 1798).

⁹⁸⁹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 28, “Devassa dos crimes do Sova do Socoval, com o inventário do confisco dos seus bens”, (27 November 1797 to 26 January 1798).

⁹⁹⁰ Or as Governor Luis da Mota Feo e Torres later put it: “with the greatest zeal for the royal service, giving many and excellent orders related to military and civil affairs”: Torres, *Memórias contendo a biografia...*, 296-297

the *moradores*, and to use “soft means” (*meios suaves*) to pressure him to pay tribute. Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos had not authorized the regent of Quilengues to raid Socoval⁹⁹¹.

Besides, *Dom* Melo had learnt that, prior to the raid, the regent of Quilengues was investigating similar crimes committed by his predecessor against Socoval. Captain Serrão had concluded in his own inquiry that Socoval was a victim of Captain Andrade’s ambition, exonerating the former of any wrongdoing and condemning the latter. Both cases seemed very similar, but with very different verdicts. *Dom* Melo became suspicious and decided to take a closer look into the inquiries to reach his own conclusions.

***Dom* Melo’s conclusions about the case of Socoval**

On 12 March 1798, the governor of Angola presented his conclusions regarding the inquiry into the case of the *soba* of Socoval. He included new information that confirmed the victimisation of African rulers at the hands of slavers in charge of the administration of Quilengues. According to the governor’s report, sometime between October and November of 1797, probably after being accused of “excessive prudence” by the governor of Benguela, Captain Serrão summoned the *soba* of Socoval to the settlement of Salvaterra dos Magos, with a request to fulfill his duties to the “royal service”. Socoval, who did not suspect that the new regent of Quilengues was targeting him, showed up and was immediately seized upon arrival. With the *soba* arrested in Salvaterra dos Magos, Captain Serrão sent a “rigorous war” against the people of Socoval, which the governor of Angola classified later as a “most barbaric diligence”. More than two hundred people were captured, many of them free subjects of Socoval, who were turned into slaves for the Atlantic market. Also apprehended, among goods and provisions found in the main *libata* of Socoval were more than four hundred head of cattle⁹⁹².

⁹⁹¹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42, “Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão.”, (11 March 1798); ANA Códice 4094, fl. 72v. “Edital sobre o soba do Socoval, publicado a toque de caixas”, (28 March 1798); A transcription of the latter document can be found in Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 444, Document 2.

⁹⁹² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42, “Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão.”, (11 March 1798); ANA Códice 4094, fl. 72v, “Edital sobre o soba do Socoval, publicado a toque de caixas”, (28 March 1798).

The governor of Angola highlighted the “injustices” carried out by the regent of Quilengues. Firstly, the regent did not try to solve the problems with the *soba* of Socoval through “soft means”. *Dom* Melo argued that the Portuguese crown explicitly prohibited the type of violence that Captain Serrão practiced against the *sobado* of Socoval, actions that resembled more “the deeds of a ruffian than of a regent”. The military expeditions against Socoval were not “legitimate” wars, because they lacked the “scrupulous formalities” that granted “legality” to such “aggressive maneuvers”. The governor of Angola also noted that the *soba* was tricked by the regent into coming to Salvaterra dos Magos in the name of the “royal service” and then was arrested for insubordination. He pointed out the contradiction in this account: if the *soba* was a rebel, why had he showed up when summoned? This was further proof that the *soba* of Socoval had been lured into a trap⁹⁹³.

Dom Melo concluded that the attack on the *sobado* of Socoval was “illegitimate”, as were the spoils it produced. He thus ordered immediate measures to rectify the wrongdoings of the regent of Quilengues, which included:

1. Disapproval and nullification of the seizing of captives and cattle from Socoval and his people. The governor also recognized that there were “free” people among the captives sent to Benguela and sold as slaves.
2. Release of all “free” people made prisoners during the raid on Socoval and return of those who were slaves to their rightful masters. All cattle and provisions apprehended should be handed over to the colonial administration and deposited in the royal treasury.
3. Restitution and release of the free subjects of Socoval taken to Brazil as slaves. The governor and the judge of Benguela should provide the necessary legal and documental support to guarantee their release and return to Quilengues.
4. Refunding (at its just cost) of any cattle or provisions consumed during the period between the raid and the end of the inquiry. Compensation for slaves from the *soba* of Socoval and his subjects who had been sold to the Americas and could not be recovered should also be provided.

⁹⁹³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42, “Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão”, (11 March 1798).

5. Return of all revenue of the royal fifth that originated from any properties seized from Socoval.
6. Nomination of the governor and the judge of Benguela as personally responsible for the execution of these orders, especially the release of those unjustly captured. They should also make sure to return their slaves and cattle.
7. Publication of these orders for all *moradores* to be informed of these decisions. All those who failed to comply with them should be arrested⁹⁹⁴.

On 24 March 1798, the governor of Benguela ordered the release of the subjects of Socoval captured by Captain Serrão. According to Botelho de Vasconcelos' order, those proven "free" subjects of Socoval should be released immediately, or rescued from the hands of their captors if necessary. Those who were identified as slaves of the *soba* or his subjects should be "deposited" in the royal treasury until a subsequent order⁹⁹⁵. Four days later, on 28 March, the governor of Benguela reinforced his previous orders while replying to a letter from the regent of Quilengues. Botelho de Vasconcelos instructed the regent to report back and register all of his actions in writing (*certidão autenticada*), to be forwarded to the governor of Angola⁹⁹⁶. On this same day, *Dom* Melo issued an edict with the verdict about the case of the *soba* of Socoval. The document was produced "on the double" (*a toque de caixas*), meaning that its publication was hastened⁹⁹⁷. Time was of the essence in trying to rescue those individuals sold into slavery before their tracks were forever lost in the Atlantic world.

The *soba* of Socoval had been arrested and dispatched to the capital before the conclusion of *Dom* Melo's investigations (accompanied by at least one of his *macotas*), which constituted further evidence of "illegality". Since the *soba* of Socoval was already in the dungeons of the Penedo prison, in Luanda, *Dom* Melo ordered the governor of Benguela to sell his properties and those of his *macotas*, and send the proceeds to the capital. In the same letter, *Dom* Melo reprimanded Botelho de Vasconcelos for allowing crimes to be committed in Quilengues under

⁹⁹⁴ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 42, "Devassa sobre a guerra contra o soba do Socoval liderada pelo regente de Quilengues Miguel António Serrão", (11 March 1798).

⁹⁹⁵ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 26, "Ofício para o capitão regente de Quilengues", (24 March 1798).

⁹⁹⁶ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 27, "Ofício para o capitão regente de Quilengues", (28 March 1798).

⁹⁹⁷ ANA Códice 4094, fl. 72v, "Edital sobre o soba do Socoval, publicado a toque de caixas", (28 Mar 1798).

his watch: both regents of Quilengues accused of starting illegal wars against the *sobado* of Socoval, Joaquim Vieira de Andrade (1796) and Miguel Antonio Serrão (1798), had been chosen by the governor of Benguela himself⁹⁹⁸.

One month after the publication in Angola of the edict on the case of Socoval, *Dom* Melo informed his superiors in Portugal about the conflicts between the regent of Quilengues and the *soba* of Socoval. On 30 April 1798, he wrote to his Portugal's Secretary of State⁹⁹⁹, *Dom* Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho¹⁰⁰⁰, explaining the case. It is a very long and complex document¹⁰⁰¹, in which *Dom* Melo summarizes and explains the context surrounding the crimes committed against Socoval and why the actions of the regents of Quilengues should be considered "illegal"¹⁰⁰².

Dom Melo began his exposition by saying that as soon as he received the inquiry (*devassa*) concerning the case of Socoval from the governor of Benguela, accompanied by documents signed by the secretary¹⁰⁰³ and the judge of Benguela¹⁰⁰⁴, he realized that the issue required attention. He decided that the first step should be to determine if the *soba* of Socoval was indeed a "rebellious vassal", so as to determine the measures to punish him. *Dom* Melo explained that before being a rebel, the *soba* was supposedly a vassal of Portugal. Therefore, his people were under the protection of the Crown. Any punishment should be limited to the *soba* as the leader of the supposed "rebellion" and to those who joined him. Punishment should not be extended to his peaceful subjects¹⁰⁰⁵.

⁹⁹⁸ ANA Códice 4094, fls. 78v-79, "Ofício do governador de Angola Dom Miguel Antonio de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos", (28 April 1798).

⁹⁹⁹ *Ministro e Secretário de Estado da Marinha e do Ultramar*.

¹⁰⁰⁰ He was also son of the former governor of Angola, Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho.

¹⁰⁰¹ Although this document repeats issues already discussed above, it is important to go over it again for the sake of the bigger argument in this thesis, concerning the Portuguese "colonial" administration's lack of control (and sometimes even knowledge) and the unapologetic way in which slavers in positions of authority behaved to improve their personal business. Moreover, *Dom* Melo's report to his superiors contains important additional information about the social and political organization of the interior of Benguela and the relationship between the "colonial" administration and local African rulers.

¹⁰⁰² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, "Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval", (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰⁰³ *Secretário do Governo*.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ouvidor Geral and Juiz de India e Mina*.

¹⁰⁰⁵ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, "Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval", (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

According to *Dom Melo's* interpretation of the colonial regulations of 12 February 1676 (Chapters 27 and 28), if the *soba* of Socoval had disobeyed his duties as a vassal of Portugal, he should be punished through normal procedures and in accordance with the law, and not by a violent attack on all of his people. Indeed, even if the *soba* was not a vassal of Portugal, he continued, the attack on Socoval was “illegal” because the governor of Benguela had not authorized it¹⁰⁰⁶.

The governor of Angola also pointed out the absurd contradiction in the attitude of those involved in the punishment of Socoval, who only ordered the inquiry on the supposed misdeeds committed by the *soba* after the attack. According to the timeline elaborated by *Dom Melo*, the first complaints about the *soba* of Socoval from the regent of Quilengues were sent to the governor of Benguela on 19 September 1797, and were answered on 4 October. By 24 November, the regent of Quilengues was writing back to the governor of Benguela informing about the success of the attack on the *sobado*. The governor of Benguela, however, only launched the inquiry on the crimes of Socoval on the day his subjects were put on sale in the local slave market, that is 27 November. The judge of Benguela, in turn, only began his investigation on 1 December 1797.¹⁰⁰⁷

In order to clarify the intricacies of the case to his superiors in Lisbon, *Dom Melo* summarized the main issues covered by the *devassas* into five questions: (1) How much tribute did Socoval pay per year?; (2) Since when did Socoval pay tribute?; (3); Did *mucanos* belong exclusively under the jurisdiction of the regent of Quilengues or were they under that of the *soba's*?; (4) Did the *soba* of Socoval always decide upon the *mucanos* or was there doubt over this, and was the *soba* really a vassal of Portugal?; (5) What was the meaning of *mucano* in the local languages (*línguas Benguella e Ambunda*)?¹⁰⁰⁸.

Dom Melo began his verdict explaining that the settler population (*moradores*) in the Captaincy of Benguela was very small and weak, and that the territory was largely populated by “blacks”. He informed that Benguela had only one *presídio*, Caconda, but there was no real

¹⁰⁰⁶ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰⁰⁷ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰⁰⁸ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

fortification in it. *Dom* Melo stated that the “gentiles” in the interior of Benguela were braver warriors than those from north of the Cuanza River, that is Angola, and that they were more difficult to dominate than were their northern counterparts. The governor of Angola confirmed that the earnings of the colonial administration through the royal tithe in the *sertões* of Benguela were insignificant. In fact, only “a few blacks” in Caconda were “real” subjects of Portugal and paid tribute regularly. In reply to the first question of the questionnaire, he also confirmed there was no record in the archives (*Contadoria Geral da Junta da Real Fazenda*) about the collection of any tribute in Quilengues before 1788¹⁰⁰⁹.

In response to the second question, *Dom* Melo affirmed that the *soba* of Socoval was not obliged to pay tribute to Portugal. He presented two arguments for this interpretation. First, he explained that “blacks” in the *sertões* of Benguela were all “gentile”, meaning that they had not converted to Christianity¹⁰¹⁰. Proof of this fact was the lack of the presence of the Church in the interior of Benguela. There was only one parish and one clergyman settled in Caconda. Secondly, *Dom* Melo explained that the tithe was a royal right that should be used for the “maintenance of the Ministers of the Catholic Church in Benguela”. Hence, those who were not members of the Church should not be forced to pay the said tithe¹⁰¹¹. He concluded that only African rulers who had been baptized should pay tribute destined for the Church. In the case of Quilengues, there were not even a church to receive such revenue¹⁰¹².

From this point onwards, *Dom* Melo began to analyze the motives used by the regent of Quilengues to justify his attack on the *soba* of Socoval. The main reason presented by Captain Serrão was desertion from defending the *presídio* of Caconda in the war against the *sobas* of Quitata and Huambo in 1796. The governor of Angola explained that such conflict among African rulers and “potentates” was quite common, and that these constant wars were largely responsible

¹⁰⁰⁹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰¹⁰ This information contradicts Candido’s statement that the *soba* of Socoval embraced the Christian faith: Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 205-206.

¹⁰¹¹ A similar argument was put forth earlier by Governor Sousa Coutinho. He argued that only *sobas* who had been baptized and converted to Christianity should be forced to pay taxes and that “gentiles” were exempt from such tribute: Santos, “Um governo ‘polido’ para Angola”, 127.

¹⁰¹² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

for producing the slaves exported to Brazil. He highlighted, however, that the supposed desertion of Socoval did not happen during the regency of Captain Serrão, but during that of his predecessor, Captain Andrade¹⁰¹³. Ironically, in his own inquiry Captain Serrão had found Captain Andrade guilty of crimes against Socoval during that period.

Dom Melo, at this point, added a new, revealing piece of information showing that Socoval had only recently began paying regular tribute. He found an old *devassa* in the *Cartório da Ouvidoria* of Benguela detailing the participation of Socoval in the war against Quitata and Huambo and the alleged crimes he had committed. In 1796, the then regent of Quilengues, Captain Andrade, had sentenced the *soba* of Socoval to pay a “temporary tithe” as punishment for his supposed desertion during the war against Quitata and Huambo, which the *soba* initially agreed to pay¹⁰¹⁴. Captain Serrão had attempted to make the tribute permanent.

Dom Melo found yet another document, a “*Devassa de Residência*” of Captain Andrade, containing important information that confirmed his suspicions about the violence suffered by the *sobados* and “potentates” of Quilengues. He was surprised to learn that Captain Andrade, now a resident of Benguela, was one of the witnesses in the investigation conducted by Judge Antonio Pereira against Socoval, although he had recently been condemned for crimes against its *soba*. The governor of Angola also noticed that all other witnesses consulted by the judge were “exiles” (*degredados*) who had been condemned for committing various crimes, and thus had a “bad reputation”. Just like Captain Andrade, these witnesses had personal interests in the matter and were often accused of exploiting “local blacks” in name of the “royal service”¹⁰¹⁵.

According to *Dom* Melo, the greatest proof of the “evil nature” of the business carried out by these slavers in the *sertões* of Benguela was the fact that although they sponsored many wars, they did not generate any revenue for the Crown, including the “*Quintos de Guerra*”, or the royal fifth. In fact, the costs of the “punitive expeditions” carried out by the regents of Quilengues were

¹⁰¹³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰¹⁴ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰¹⁵ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

so high, the governor of Angola argued, that even when they were “just, legal and commanded by competent militaries” they were rarely profitable¹⁰¹⁶.

Replying to the third question of the *devassa*, concerning the jurisdiction over *mucanos* in Quilengues, the governor of Angola began by giving an important explanation about what was a “*mucano*” and the different kinds of *mucanos* found in Angola and Benguela. He defined “*mucano*”, as understood by *capitães-mores*, as legal cases regarding one’s condition as a free person or a slave. The “*Juízo dos Mucanos*” was also known as “*Juízo das Liberdades*”, or the “Court of Freedom”. In practice, due to the lack of colonial officials in the interior, regents also assumed the role of judges. Hence, he should judge cases that happened within his jurisdiction, but only where the “Portuguese code of law” could be applied, that is in those cases predicted by the Portuguese legislation. *Sobas*, on the other hand, should judge cases founded in “gentile law”, according to their customs and traditions. Dom Melo complained that there had always been disputes over jurisdiction between African rulers and colonial officials. He predicted that these problems would continue to happen, as long as the Portuguese crown did not decide what exactly were the rights of *sobas* in the *Conquista*¹⁰¹⁷.

The colonial historian Carlos Couto tried to explain this constant conflict for power between colonial officials and African authorities and the endless accusations of the usurpation of jurisdiction by both sides. Similar to Dom Melo, he blamed the lack of clear regulations and basic instructions given to military commanders in Angola. Many of them had no previous administrative experience and did not know the range of their jurisdiction and power. Couto used the case of the governor of Benguela, Francisco Paim da Câmara Ornelas, to make his point, highlighting that that governor complained to Martinho de Melo e Castro in 1792 about the lack of administrative instruments, such as a formal statute¹⁰¹⁸.

¹⁰¹⁶ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX. This statement by the governor of Angola contradicts the analysis by Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 205, about the importance of the revenue acquired from slaving campaigns. She has affirmed that “It is clear that slaves paid as part of the royal fifth were fundamental to the colonial budget...”.

¹⁰¹⁷ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰¹⁸ Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores de Angola no Século XVIII*, 118.

Dom Melo explained that *sobas* always argued for their “right” to judge their own people. The regents of Quilengues, however, got involved in local legal disputes (*mucanos*) because they could profit from the “exorbitant and unjust costs” they imposed upon these legal procedures. *Dom* Melo indicated that *sobas* usually yielded jurisdiction to the regents depending on how much they respected them. In this case, such “respect” was directly related to the amount of threats and pressure the local *sobados* and potentates could support. This was especially true for those closer to a center of the Portuguese “colonial” administration, such as Salvaterra dos Magos¹⁰¹⁹.

According to *Dom* Melo, colonial officials in Angola had more jurisdiction over the *mucanos* because of its greater number of *presídios* and the fact that Portuguese presence there was older and better consolidated. Moreover, according to this governor, the peoples of Angola were more docile and more inclined to subjugation. In the *sertões* of Benguela, one found the opposite situation: an early “*Conquista*” with only one *presídio* and inhabited by warrior peoples who did not respect the authority of “whites”¹⁰²⁰.

While complaining about the insubordination of Africans in the interior of Benguela, *Dom* Melo made a revealing commentary. He highlighted that the lack of respect for the “whites” inhabiting the *sertões* originated from the “great vices” of the Portuguese over the “blacks of Benguela” (*negros Benguellas*), in a clear reference to the enslavement of local people for the Atlantic slave trade. He added that these Africans only sought “just defense” against their aggressors. They only wanted to “extirpate their stalkers” (*extirpar seus perseguidores*). Unfortunately, the governor of Angola lamented, the “blacks” could not see that these “injustices” came from the hands of “bad Portuguese men” and not from the “just” and “gentle” colonial administration. The Portuguese Crown, *Dom* Melo fantasized, did not have preferences while administering justice, and treated equally “Christians and Gentiles, whites and blacks, freemen and slaves, men and women”¹⁰²¹.

¹⁰¹⁹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰²⁰ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰²¹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

Replying to the fourth question, regarding the jurisdiction of the *soba* of Socoval over *mucanos* in Quilengues and about his vassalage to the Portuguese Crown, the governor of Angola confirmed that Socoval was always responsible for deciding *mucanos* among his people. In fact, the *soba* had previously complained to the previous governor of Angola, Almeida e Vasconcelos (1790-1797), that Captain Andrade wanted to usurp the *mucanos* from his jurisdiction. This governor of Angola had made inquiries into the matter, but witnesses from Salvaterra dos Magos declared that the regent had not made such an attempt. Still, Governor Almeida e Vasconcelos decided that Captain Andrade did not have the right to judge the *mucanos*.

Hence, if it was established long ago that the jurisdiction of *mucanos* belonged to the *soba* of Socoval, Dom Melo asked rhetorically, how could the judge in Benguela have accused the *soba* of usurping the said jurisdiction? “Isn’t this a clear indication, if not proof, of the ambition of the colonial officials that cause and move questions of this order?” He consequently concluded that *sobas* deserved more “justice” than did the regents, and that the accusations of usurping jurisdiction against the *soba* of Socoval were only an excuse to attack him and enslave his people¹⁰²².

While discussing the “rebelliousness” of the *soba* of Socoval, Dom Melo argued that it was necessary to demonstrate if he was, in fact, a vassal of Portugal. Did he or his ancestors promise obedience and vassalage to the Portuguese Crown? According to his investigations, there was no vassalage treaty (*Auto de Vassalagem*) signed by the *soba* of Socoval in the colonial archives. The governor of Angola concluded that since there was no record of the acceptance of vassalage by the *soba* of Socoval he could not be considered a rebel and a traitor. Socoval was an “ally and a friend” of Portugal, not a vassal: therefore, there was no rebellion. All of the military campaigns against Socoval and other potentates of Quilengues under the same circumstances were thus “illegal wars”. Even worse, the regent of Quilengues betrayed the good faith of an African ally when he arrested the *soba* in order to attack his people. Dom Melo highlighted that the *soba* of Socoval was lured into a trap, thinking that he was working for the royal service¹⁰²³.

¹⁰²² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰²³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

Replying to the fifth and last question, concerning the meaning of “*mucano*” in the local languages, the governor of Angola explained that the expression “*tanar mucanos*” meant “to verbally decide litigation according to the customs of the country”. The Portuguese had created the verb “*tanar*” to describe all actions in the oral proceedings, but Dom Melo clarified that the actual verb was “*huacatana*”. He also explained that the term “*mucano*” was used in Angola, but that in Benguela the proper local term was “*obimbo*”. Hence, the people inhabiting the backlands of Benguela would use the term “*obimbo muquiti*” when deliberating about crimes of homicide; “*obimbo biohuanga*” in judging cases of witchcraft; “*obimbo biafuca*” in litigating over debts; “*obimbo buimuno*” in accusations of theft; and “*obimbo biombaro*” in cases of insult and injury¹⁰²⁴.

As such, Dom Melo saw no option but to reverse the previous verdict over case of the *soba* of Socoval. In his view, the “whites” should be punished for what happened, not the “blacks”. He continued to blame the decadence of the *Conquista* for the wrongdoings of Europeans living in this part of Africa. In the opinion of this governor of Angola, despite the “barbaric nature of the blacks”, which he blamed on the geography and the climate, it was the “lack of good white men” that drove the whole region into chaos. Most of those working for the “colonial” administration, he gasped, did not have the “consciousness” and the “honor” required to occupy their positions¹⁰²⁵.

The fate of Socoval and his people

According to Dom Melo’s decision on the offenses committed against Socoval, all of his subjects who had been enslaved during the unauthorized raids should be returned to Quilengues, including those who had been embarked for Brazil. The first group of thirteen captives from the *sobado* of Socoval returned to Quilengues in August of 1798, escorted by Corporal José Valentim and four other soldiers to “guarantee their safety”. Once in Quilengues, the regent was to request the help of *moradores* and *sobas* to figure out which captives were in fact slaves and which ones

¹⁰²⁴ Although colonial officials in both Angola and Benguela used the word “*mucano*” in reference to any civil or criminal judicial case, the term took a different meaning in the colonial statute (*Regimento dos Capitães-Mores*) of 1775, according to which “*mucanos*” was reserved for cases related to the enslavement of local “free” people (*causas de mucanos de liberdades*): AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

¹⁰²⁵ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 80, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo sobre as injustiças praticadas contra o Soba de Socoval”, (30 April 1798); *Arquivos de Angola, 1790-1797*, 1ª Série, No. 6. (Luanda: Arquivo Nacional, 1933), Doc. IX.

were free. The latter should be released immediately, while the former were to be returned to their rightful owners. The governor of Benguela also ordered the regent of Quilengues to send him the *soba*'s "wife" or *nana*, Naculo, who was under his custody¹⁰²⁶. She embarked for Luanda the following month and remained with the *soba* awaiting his trial.¹⁰²⁷

On 9 October 1798, Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos, informed his superiors in Luanda that all subjects of Socoval had been freed¹⁰²⁸. Three months later, however, he wrote again informing that he had just learned that the regent of Quilengues had not properly followed orders. Botelho de Vasconcelos did not explain which part of the orders were not executed properly, but assured his superiors that he had taken the necessary measures to solve the issue. Despite protests from Judge Antonio Pereira, the governor of Benguela decided to replace Serrão as regent of Quilengues¹⁰²⁹.

In the meantime, the *soba* of Socoval was kept under arrest in Luanda in the company of his *nana* and at least one of his *macotas*. While in custody in the dungeons of Penedo, the *soba* became seriously ill and died before his final trial. On 7 November 1798, in a letter to the governor of Benguela, Dom Melo informed that the *soba* of Socoval had passed from an "unidentified illness".

The governor of Angola ordered his counterpart in Benguela to oversee the return of Socoval's properties that had been confiscated to his rightful heirs. In case no one appeared to claim what was rightfully theirs, the valuables were to be deposited in the royal treasury. Unsurprisingly, there was no order to inform the subjects of Socoval that their *soba* had perished in Luanda.¹⁰³⁰ On 18 February 1799, the governor of Benguela wrote to the local judge informing about the execution of the orders concerning the *soba* of Socoval's properties that had been

¹⁰²⁶ ANA, Códice 518, fls. 70-71v, "Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos", (23 August 1798); ANA, Códice 518, fl. 71v, "Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos", (24 August 1798); ANA, Códice 442, fl. 63v-64, "Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcellos", (29 August 1798).

¹⁰²⁷ ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 84v-85, "Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos", (26 September 1798).

¹⁰²⁸ ANA, Códice 442, fl. 64v-65, "Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcellos para o Exmo. Snr. General do Estado", (9 October 1798).

¹⁰²⁹ ANA, Códice 442, fl. 72v-73, "Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcellos para o Exmo. Snr. General do Estado", (3 January 1799).

¹⁰³⁰ ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 85-85v, "Ofício do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos", (7 November 1798).

apprehended during 1796-1797.¹⁰³¹ There is, however, no information on the return of captives from Brazil.

Six of one, half a dozen of the other

Dom Melo's verdict condemning the regent of Quilengues for crimes against Socoval led the governor of Benguela to replace him. There were, indeed, several previous accusations against Captain Serrão, some even from soldiers under his command. The governor of Benguela complained to his superiors that he knew of no military officer in the *sertões* of Benguela who possessed the virtues necessary, "honor, zeal and probity", to occupy the position of regent of Quilengues. There was perhaps one exception, a certain ensign in Caconda, Manoel de Carvalho Rabelo: but the latter had just received authorization to leave for Brazil. Hence, the governor of Benguela chose a civilian as the new regent of Quilengues¹⁰³².

Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos chose Antonio Pires Louzada, a well-established slaver who had been living in the interior of Benguela for decades, to assume the position of regent of Quilengues. In 1800, Louzada was listed as a "white" member of a militia operating in the *sertões* of Benguela, but with no information about his birthplace. There were rumours that he was a Portuguese exiled criminal (*degradado*) but the governor could not confirm this. Louzada had been in the *sertões* of Benguela for so long that specific information about his origins had faded away¹⁰³³. In a list of *moradores* of Quilengues from 1798¹⁰³⁴, Captain Louzada¹⁰³⁵ was described as a 47-year-old, single man. Several complaints had been made against him for involvement in

¹⁰³¹ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 35-35v, "Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o Juiz de Fora de Benguela Alberto Antonio Pereira", (18 February 1799).

¹⁰³² ANA, Códice 442, fl. 72v-73, "Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcellos para o Exmo. Snr. General do Estado", (3 January 1799).

¹⁰³³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 100, Doc. 29, "Relação dos postos de milícia desta cidade e de ordenanças das províncias do sertão, que foram providos pelo governador que foi Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos" (9 November 1800).

¹⁰³⁴ AIHGB, DL 32, 2. 37 (Doc. 146), fls. 37-48v, "Relação dos moradores e sobas do Distrito de Quilengues" (18 February 1798)

¹⁰³⁵ Although Captain Louzada was not part of the Portuguese military he was often called "captain" as a sign of respect, which also evidences his importance and power as slave trader.

“unauthorized” purchase of slaves. These accusations came from both *moradores* and “blacks of the *sertões*”, meaning *sobas* and potentates in Quilengues¹⁰³⁶.

Captain Louzada assumed the position of regent of Quilengues on 24 April 1799¹⁰³⁷. The governor of Benguela ordered him to maintain peace and resume the collection of the royal tithe from all *sobas* in Quilengues, which included everyone from Lumbimbe and Quilumata in the northwest to Quipungo in the south (Map 3). During the following month, the new regent began sending caravans to Benguela with cattle collected from some local *sobados* as the annual tithe. On 22 May 1799, Botelho de Vasconcelos confirmed that he received forty-three head of cattle from Quilengues (meaning Socoval), twelve from Lumbimbe and six from Quilumata. The governor warned the regent that Lumbimbe still owed two cows, so the regent should make sure to order his soldiers conducting the cattle to collect them on their way to Benguela. The regent had previously informed that he had sent collectors to Quipungo to gather the cattle owed to the royal treasury, but there was still no response¹⁰³⁸.

On 24 September 1799, the governor of Benguela wrote again to the regent concerned about the collection of tithes in Quipungo. Located far from Salvaterra dos Magos, the *sobado* of Quipungo was known for its resistance against vassalage. Botelho de Vasconcelos instructed the new regent to act with the utmost moderation when collecting tribute from this potentate. He should bear in mind the troubles caused by the lack of his predecessors’ temperance in the case of the *soba* of Socoval. The amount of cattle charged should not exceed “the largest possible safe number” (*o número mais prudente que se possa conseguir*)¹⁰³⁹. The governor even sent reinforcements to help the regent with the collection of this tribute, dispatching Corporal João Valentim and six soldiers for the task¹⁰⁴⁰.

¹⁰³⁶ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 100, Doc. 29, “Relação dos postos de milícia desta cidade e de ordenanças das províncias do sertão, que foram providos pelo governador que foi Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos” (9 November 1800).

¹⁰³⁷ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 100, Doc. 29, “Relação dos postos de milícia desta cidade e de ordenanças das províncias do sertão, que foram providos pelo governador que foi Alexandre José Botelho de Vasconcelos” (9 November 1800).

¹⁰³⁸ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 36-36v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o regente de Quilengues Antonio Pires Louzada”, (22 May 1799).

¹⁰³⁹ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 36-36v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o regente de Quilengues Antonio Pires Louzada”, (22 May 1799).

¹⁰⁴⁰ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 40-40v, “Carta do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos para o regente de Quilengues Antonio Pires Louzada”, (24 September 1799); Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 38.

Despite some initial accomplishments, the new regent of Quilengues was soon accused of also overreaching his jurisdiction and using his position for personal gain. A new governor of Benguela, José Maurício Rodrigues (July 1800 to October 1801), began receiving complaints from different sources that Captain Louzada committed much violence against “blacks” in Quilengues and acquired slaves through shady means. The regent often ignored denunciations by *moradores* of Salvaterra dos Magos that slaves were being sold by people other than their real owners. In fact, one of the slaves sent by Captain Louzada to the governor of Benguela was under dispute of ownership. Since he did not know who the slave’s legitimate owner was, Governor Rodrigues decided to “deposit” the captive in the royal treasury until he could figure out what was happening¹⁰⁴¹.

There were at least three formal representations against Captain Louzada during his time as regent of Quilengues. His accusers declared that he acquired his slaves “more by force than by justice”. In one of these complaints, a “black man” accused him of buying one of his slaves from someone else. Since the governor of Benguela did not have anyone else to investigate such accusations, he ordered the regent of Quilengues himself to identify and punish those who had been selling stolen slaves to him. In other words, the regent was supposed to arrest his own business partners for these wrongdoings, which obviously never happened¹⁰⁴².

Although the governor of Benguela was more worried about avoiding insurrection and conflicts in the *sertões* that disrupted commerce and the collection of tribute than to punish the actions of slavers who abused their positions of power, he could not ignore the complaints against Captain Louzada, who accumulated accusations of violence and crimes against African rulers and Luso-African settlers alike. The governor worried that violence promoted by “punitive expeditions” triggered many people to flee from Quilengues, which caused loss to commerce and, consequently, decreased in the revenues of the royal treasury. Governor Maurício Rodrigues again wrote to the regent demanding that he respect the African rulers under his jurisdiction and rightfully deliver justice to them. He also ordered the regent to stop intimidating and threatening settlers who wanted to go to Benguela to complain about what was going on in the interior¹⁰⁴³.

¹⁰⁴¹ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 48-48v, “Ofício para regente de Quilengues António Pires Louzada”, (27 August 1800).

¹⁰⁴² ANA, Códice 443, fl. 48-48v, “Ofício para regente de Quilengues António Pires Louzada”, (27 August 1800).

¹⁰⁴³ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 48-48v, “Ofício para regente de Quilengues António Pires Louzada”, (27 August 1800).

In October 1800, the governor of Benguela finally ordered Captain Louzada to hand over the administration of Quilengues to João Vieira de Andrade, brother of former regent Joaquim Vieira de Andrade. Governor Maurício Rodrigues justified the replacement of Louzada by arguing that he was “too old” to perform the duties of regent and briefly citing “other justifiable reasons”¹⁰⁴⁴.

With this decision, the Andrade brothers returned to power in Quilengues less than four years after the dismissal of Captain Joaquim Vieira de Andrade for crimes against Socoval. The governor of Benguela later registered that the transfer of power in Quilengues did not go as smoothly as it should have. He had to order Captain Louzada twice to hand over the regency, which included turning in all official papers and letters related to the administration of Quilengues. Governor Maurício Rodrigues explained that the orders and official papers should remain with whoever was succeeding him, but authorized Captain Louzada to make copies of them¹⁰⁴⁵.

The complaints about the misconduct of Captain Louzada did not cease with his departure from Quilengues. The new regent quickly and duly informed the governor of Benguela that his predecessor did not take good care of the military equipment under his responsibility. Captain Louzada was blamed for mishandling the royal ammunitions (*munições reais*), that is letting the stockpile spoil. The mishandling of military equipment was such that one of his soldiers had sold his gun to an undisclosed person. The governor complained that even if Captain Louzada had not colluded with the soldier to sell his gun, he was at least negligent for not having noticed that one of his men was walking around without a gun. Governor Maurício Rodrigues ordered the new regent to punish the soldier and arrest whoever had bought the gun from him. In the same letter, the governor of Benguela repeated his prohibition of war against any of the *sobados* and potentates under his jurisdiction, especially the so-called “*currarias*”, or attacks on local “corrals” (*currais*) where Africans kept large quantities of cattle¹⁰⁴⁶.

¹⁰⁴⁴ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 55-55v, “Ofício que nomeia João Vieira de Andrade regente de Quilengues”, (15 October 1800); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 69v, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (2 March 1801); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 71-71v, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (11 March 1801).

¹⁰⁴⁵ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 59-59v, “Ofício para regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (21 November 1800).

¹⁰⁴⁶ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 61v.-62, “Ofício para regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (6 December 1800).

The return of the Andrade brothers to power

After the fall of Captain Louzada, the regency of Quilengues returned into the hands of the Andrade brothers, owners of the greatest slaving enterprise operating in the region during the late eighteenth century. With their return to power, the Andrade brothers slave enterprise remained in control of the trade in Quilengues for almost another decade.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the new regent of Quilengues, João Vieira de Andrade, was one of the most important *moradores* in Quilengues since the last decade of the eighteenth century. He was the first *morador* listed in the 1798 nominal census of Quilengues, which indicates his importance in Salvaterra dos Magos. He was also the single largest proprietor of cattle in Salvaterra dos Magos, with more than double the amount of the second largest owner. He also had twenty slaves in his household, thirteen male and seven female¹⁰⁴⁷. His ascension to administrative power meant the return of the Andrade brothers in directly controlling the slave routes that crossed the settlement, although they had never really lost their leading role as major slavers in Quilengues.

After being expelled from the regency of Quilengues, Captain Joaquim Vieira de Andrade moved to Benguela, where he had direct access to imported goods that the Andrade brothers used to acquire slaves from their associates in Salvaterra dos Magos. Despite his absence from the regency, Joaquim kept working on behalf of the “royal service”, sometimes leading caravans of slaves and cattle destined for the royal treasury in the coastal town, at others making payments for the troops stationed in Quilengues¹⁰⁴⁸. Although he no longer commanded “colonial troops”, the former regent of Quilengues maintained control over his family’s militia, composed of the Andrade Brother’s slaves and *quimbares*, which he used to protect and further his business in the interior. In addition, Joaquim used his influence and authority to recruit soldiers as private *pumbeiros*, as in the case of a certain Henrique Pedro de Almeida¹⁰⁴⁹.

¹⁰⁴⁷ AIHGB, DL 32, 2. 37 (Doc. 146), fls. 37-48v, “Relação dos moradores e *sobas* do Distrito de Quilengues” (18 February 1798).

¹⁰⁴⁸ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 55-55v., “Ofício que nomeia João Vieira de Andrade regente de Quilengues”, (15 October 1800); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 69v., “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (2 March 1801); ANA, Códice 443, fls. 71-71v., “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (11 March 1801).

¹⁰⁴⁹ ANA, Códice 442, fls. 123v-128., “Ofício do governador interino de Benguela José Mauricio Rodrigues”, (17 August 1800).

In an attempt to hinder the abuse of power and the use of the regent position for personal gain, Governor Maurício Rodrigues instructed the new regent of Quilengues to abstain from receiving any payments in the name of the royal treasury. The governor also repeatedly advised Captain João Vieira de Andrade about delivering justice to Africans under his jurisdiction without grievances or humiliation (*sem vexames*), a clear reference to his brother's behavior towards Socoval while occupying the regency¹⁰⁵⁰. Despite these attempts, the Andrade brothers could neither be controlled, nor have their local power curbed.

The Andrade brothers used their militia to keep their grip on Quilengues and to extort African rulers as well as local Luso-African settlers¹⁰⁵¹. Some settlers in Salvaterra dos Magos also accused the brothers of stealing from *sertanejos* trading within Quilengues. According to these allegations, the former regent, Joaquim Andrade, had associated himself with a *tendala* from Quilengues, called Agostinho. Together, they had taken imported goods on credit from *sertanejos*, which they later refused to pay¹⁰⁵².

The Andrade brothers tried to maintain control over the new *soba* of Socoval, after the previous one was arrested by Captain Serrão in 1797. They sought to manipulate military forces sent to Caconda to fight on behalf of their slave business. The military detachments from Benguela had camped in Quilengues and, once no longer required, were to return immediately town, where their presence was much needed¹⁰⁵³. However, the new regent of Quilengues, João Andrade, detained these soldiers and their commander, Captain Domingos Pereira Diniz, arguing that the new *soba* of Socoval was also a rebel who needed to be punished¹⁰⁵⁴.

The accusations against the new *soba* of Socoval were the same as those against the previous one: insurrection and refusal to comply with the “royal service”. It was understandable,

¹⁰⁵⁰ ANA, Códice 443, fls. 55-55v., “Ofício que nomeia João Vieira de Andrade regente de Quilengues”, (15 October 1800).

¹⁰⁵¹ One of the accusations of abuse against João Vieira de Andrade as regent of Quilengues alleged that he seized the slaves of deceased *morador* Ventura Ferreira and sent them to a certain Dona Maria, who lived in Quitata, without following the “lawful” procedures that the case required: ANA, Códice 443, fl. 77v-78, “Ofício para o regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (27 April 1801).

¹⁰⁵² ANA, Códice 443, fl. 76-76v., “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (10 April 1801); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 84v-86, “Ofício dirigido ao capitão-mor e regente de Caconda Francisco Ignácio de Mira e Araújo”, (15 May 1801).

¹⁰⁵³ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 63, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (7 January 1801).

¹⁰⁵⁴ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 70v-72, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (11 March 1801).

in the opinion of the governor of Benguela, that the people of Socoval did not trust the new regent of Quilengues. The people of Socoval had not forgotten the destruction sponsored by the new regent's brother, Joaquim Andrade. As we have seen above, many of Socoval's subjects who had been captured and sold in Brazil as slaves never returned to Quilengues. Even worse, their *soba* had been taken away and died in the hands of his captors. The memory of what Captain Andrade had done while in power made the people of Socoval leave their *libatas* and take refuge in the nearby hilltops¹⁰⁵⁵.

João Vieira de Andrade remained in power until 1801, when he was replaced by his predecessor, the "old" slaver Antonio Pires Louzada. The regency of Quilengues thus circulated through the hands of the same major slavers operating during the early nineteenth century. João Vieira de Andrade would also return to power in 1806, accompanied by his brother Joaquim Vieira de Andrade and by Miguel Antonio Serrão¹⁰⁵⁶.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 has shown that, although the Portuguese defeated the kingdom of Ndongo in the second half of the seventeenth century, the effective conquest of the landscape that later became known as "Angola" and the dismantling of the supremacy of local African rulers only happened centuries later. The region dubbed by colonists as Benguela remained a "conquest" until the so-called "wars of pacification" during the early twentieth century, in spite of previous narratives of colonial control put forward by Portuguese colonial historians regarding their early presence in West Central Africa. Until then, African rulers held their sovereignty over their lands and peoples, even when subjected as vassals by Portuguese forces. Hence, I argue that the documentation produced by Portuguese colonial officials and explorers before the twentieth century was "colonial" in its essence and in the way it portrayed Benguela and its backlands, while the territories they referred to were beyond any "colonial control". This was the case of Quilengues.

I have also argued in Chapter 4 that the acceptance of vassalage by some African authorities was often an act of resistance. By becoming a vassal of Portugal, these African rulers earned the

¹⁰⁵⁵ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 70v-72, "Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade", (11 March 1801).

¹⁰⁵⁶ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 306.

chance to fight another day and withheld foreign control over their lands and people. Hence, while many historians highlight only subjugation in the acceptance of vassalage by Africans in Angola and Benguela, I argue for traces of resistance in this same context. Additionally, the acceptance of vassalage by African authorities marked their independence from other African polities. And, no less significant, regular access to imported goods expanded the political capital of many of these African vassals, allowing them to spread their influence among other local polities, and thus shift the power structures of the interior.

Nevertheless, the opening of regular commercial and diplomatic relations with the Portuguese could mean the beginning of the end for many of these African vassals and allies, since the same routes that brought itinerant traders with valuable foreign goods also facilitated the invasion of exogenous raiders that could decimate entire communities at once to feed the increasing demand for enslaved people in the Atlantic world. This was especially true by the end of the eighteenth century, in the case of Quilengues. Therefore, this chapter also discusses the “legality” of such slaving raids in the interior of Benguela, which were often disguised as “punitive” military expeditions against “rebel” vassals.

Moreover, this chapter scrutinizes the supposed “legal protections” given to “freeborn” African subjects of Portugal. Although the acceptance of vassalage by African rulers should protect them and their peoples from the claws of the slave trade, in practice it did not guaranteed that they, including those “born of a free womb”, would not eventually fall into the hands of Portuguese and Luso-African slavers. Itinerant traders overflowed African polities with imported goods on credit, expecting payments to be defaulted by *sobas*, which triggered the so-called “punitive” expeditions and the kidnapping of individuals to settle those debts. The greater the demand for slaves in the Atlantic world, the greater the dangers for Africans in the interior of Benguela, no matter if vassals or allies.

The inquiries (*devassas*) about the attacks perpetrated by the regents of Quilengues against subsequent *sobas* of Socoval and their allies show the process of transforming former African allies into rebels and enemies of the Luso-Africans, pushed by increasing demands for slaves that reached the interior of Benguela. The sources presented in Chapters 3 and 4 show that a significant amount of slaves sold in Benguela in the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century came from Quilengues. This provides further proof of a great number of slaves

sold into the Atlantic market, especially Brazil, came from areas much closer to the coast than was previously thought, an argument recently developed by historians such as Curto, Silva, Ferreira, and Candido¹⁰⁵⁷.

Moreover, it also indicates that the expansion of the “slave frontier” did not mean the consolidation of peaceful commercial relations and the end of violence as the main form of the acquisition of slaves in the areas closer to the coast, as previously argued by Miller and Birmingham¹⁰⁵⁸. In fact, numerous “waves” of enslaving operations constantly hit areas in the close interior of Benguela, such as Quilengues and Caconda. Nevertheless, rather than discrediting Miller’s “slaving frontier” thesis, I suggest that these were simultaneous processes. As the slaving frontier expanded eastward, the areas within Portuguese influence remained subject to constant “waves” of slaving raids, many of them commanded by “colonial” officials and disguised as punitive expeditions.

Despite repeated attempts by the Portuguese Crown and their higher representatives in Luanda, such as Governor *Dom* Miguel Antonio de Melo, to curb the slaving operations commanded by their subordinates, slavers operating in the interior of Benguela were virtually outside the reach of “colonial” jurisdiction, often disrespecting orders and promoting conflicts to improve their personal business. Powerful Luso-African families, such as the Andrade brothers, used their positions of authority and social connections to maintain a steady inflow of foreign merchandise and outflow of slaves, many of the latter “illegally” acquired through war, kidnapping and debt. These powerful and well-connected Luso-African slavers, whether stationed in Benguela or throughout its backlands, were rarely punished for their crimes and often remained important members of the local “white” community.

¹⁰⁵⁷ José C. Curto, “Rethinking the Origin of Slaves in West Central Africa”, in *Changing Horizons of African History*, Awet T. Weldemichael, Anthony A. Lee and Edward A. Alpers, eds. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2017), 23-47; Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa*, 18-19, 73-99; Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 198-214; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 52-87. For more, see Chapter 3 above.

¹⁰⁵⁸ For more on the “slave frontier”, see Miller, *Way of Death*, 140-169. See also Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, 133-161. For complementary information, see Chapter 3 above.

Chapter 5

Strategies of resistance in Quilengues in the first half of the nineteenth century

As we have seen, slave exports from Benguela experienced a surge during the last decade of the eighteenth century, when an average of 8,362 human beings were forcibly embarked for the Americas. This surge was particularly acute during the first half of that decade, after which the commerce began to slowly contract. The first decade of the nineteenth century saw an annual medium of 7,140 enslaved individuals “legally” shipped from this town. The decline continued onto the 1810s, when 5,463 captives were annually shipped therefrom. By the 1820s, the volume of the traffic contracted further still to 4,718 enslaved persons exported per annum. Benguela’s trade in human beings then reached one of its lowest ebbs in 1830, when 3,926 captives were embarked against their will for destinations on the other side of the Atlantic¹⁰⁵⁹.

Yet, in spite of declining slave exports, the commerce in enslaved individuals continued as the major economic activity in Benguela during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially if we considered a probable increase in contraband trade as the Portuguese announced the end of the slave trade in 1830. To be sure, governors and Luso-African officials engaged in various initiatives to diversify the dependence on slave exports, including the development of agriculture and the consolidation of the production of sulfur in the mines of Dombe Grande¹⁰⁶⁰. But even then, the economy of Benguela was to remain largely related to the acquisition and movement of slaves from the interior and their embarkation to the Americas until the middle of the nineteenth century¹⁰⁶¹.

¹⁰⁵⁹ For more numbers of the slave trade from Benguela from the first half of the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth century, see José C. Curto, “The Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Benguela, Angola, 1730-1828: A Quantitative Re-Appraisal,” *África*, 16-17, no. 1 (1993/1994): 101-116; José C. Curto, “Another Look at the Slave Trade from Benguela: What We Know and What We Do Not Know,” *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2015): 9-26.

¹⁰⁶⁰ See Estevam C. Thompson, “A Caustic Smell: Dombe Grande’s Sulfur Industry in the Nineteenth Century”, (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁶¹ The estimated data in Daniel Domingues da Silva, “The Transatlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701-1867”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 46, n. 1 (2013): 121-122, Appendix A, show that there was a new surge in the export of enslaved people from Benguela between 1836 and 1850, before the import of slaves into Brazil was prohibited in 1851. This allowed slaving to remain the main economic activity in Benguela and its immediate backlands until the mid-nineteenth century: 51,107 captives were exported during 1836-1840; 54,314 enslaved persons were forcibly embarked between 1841 and 1845; and another 47,184 individuals in shackles were shipped from 1846 to 1850.

As detailed in Chapter 4, historians of Angola have recently argued that many of the slaves exported from Benguela in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came from areas relatively close to the coast such as Quilengues and Caconda¹⁰⁶². This means that many were subjects of African vassals of Portugal and that they, at least in theory, should have been shielded from enslavement. Such prohibitions, however, were largely ignored by slave traders operating in the interior of Benguela, especially those in positions of authority¹⁰⁶³. As a result, we need to revise existing theories about the development of peaceful commercial relations between Luso-African traders and African vassals of Portugal in the nineteenth century, as put forth by Birmingham and Miller¹⁰⁶⁴. This chapter therefore develops a critique of the “slaving frontier” and refines the process.

According to Mariana P. Candido, new data on the origins of slaves in regions like Dombe Grande, Quilengues and Caconda during the nineteenth century show that “the slaving frontier was not moving inland”¹⁰⁶⁵. I have argued in the previous chapter, however, the thesis of an expanding “slaving frontier” is not completely wrong, since there is plenty of documentation on long-distance trading routes moving eastward: but such expansion did not bring peace to those living inside its boundaries¹⁰⁶⁶. Neither did it replace raids or warfare as violent means of acquiring

¹⁰⁶² José C. Curto, “Rethinking the Origin of Slaves in West Central Africa”, in *Changing Horizons of African History*, Awet T. Weldemichael, Anthony A. Lee and Edward A. Alpers, eds. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2017), 23-47; Daniel Domingues Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Roquinaldo A. Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁶³ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 201, points out that “During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Angolan authorities accused Benguela officials of being more interested in seizure than in being committed to maintain order and security”.

¹⁰⁶⁴ David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours Under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 133-161; Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 140-169. For complementary information, see Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 209.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Miller, *Way of Death*, 140, defends the idea that the advancement of the “slaving frontier” into Central Africa during the nineteenth century “drove its violence off toward the east”.

slaves in Quilengues or Caconda¹⁰⁶⁷. As pointed out by Roquinaldo Ferreira, warfare in the interior of Benguela coexisted with commercialized forms of slaving¹⁰⁶⁸.

As I have also argued in Chapter 4, the realization that violent raids and wars still played an important role in the enslavement of individuals living in areas close to the coast, many of them under vassalage, does not necessarily mean there was no expansion of the “slaving frontier”. In fact, these are not mutually exclusive arguments. The matter at hand is not whether the “slaving frontier” expanded to the interior¹⁰⁶⁹, but rather that its expansion did not result in the establishment of peaceful commercial relations with peoples behind the frontier and the end of raids organized by Luso-African and Portuguese slavers.

In this Chapter 5, I will thus bring to life more examples of slaving operations disguised as “punitive expeditions” against “rebel” African authorities in Quilengues, to show that violence remained one of the main ways for Luso-African slavers to acquire their “merchandise” during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The case study presented here revolves around the slaving campaigns commanded by Captain Domingos Pereira Diniz, a Luso-African literate black slaver born in Benguela who had a successful military career and a thriving slaving business¹⁰⁷⁰. They show the persistent continuation of violent means to acquire captives in areas under the direct influence of the Portuguese, including among some of their African vassals.

This chapter also shows some strategies used by African rulers to protect themselves and their subjects from the claws of the slave trade¹⁰⁷¹. As we will see, they used a variety of tactics to avoid becoming the victims of Luso-African slavers, including spying on military and trading caravans crossing the *sertões* in order to flee to nearby rocky hills before the slavers’ arrival in their lands. African ruling authorities also intercepted messages exchanged between slavers and

¹⁰⁶⁷ Although Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, 136, defends the thesis that there developed peaceful commercial relations in the “back country” of Angola, but admits that this fragile peace was eventually disrupted by the participation of “colonial” military officers in the slave trade.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Roquinaldo Ferreira, “Slaving and Resistance to Slaving in West Central Africa”, in David Eltis and Stanley Engerman, *The Cambridge World History of Slavery, AD 1420 – AD 1804*, Vol. 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 118.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 213-214.

¹⁰⁷⁰ For more about Captain Domingos Pereira Diniz’s trajectory as a slave trader in Benguela, see Estevam C. Thompson, “Um indigno deste paiz: a trajetória de um militar luso-africano no comércio de escravos em Benguela”, 1800-1830” (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁷¹ For more on resistance in Angola, see José C. Curto, “Resistência à Escravidão na África: O Caso dos Escravos Fugitivos Recapturados em Angola, 1846-1876,” *Afro-Ásia*, 33 (2005): 67-86.

used their contacts in Luso-African settlements to learn on the objectives of “punitive expeditions” before these reached the interior. Additionally, African rulers blocked the advance of expeditions inland by refusing to provide the necessary porters for caravans. As we will see below, the *sobas* of Quilengues understood the logistic limitations of invading soldiers and were aware that invaders could not pursue them without local porters.

Chapter 5 further reinforces some ideas discussed in Chapter 4 related to indebtedness on the part of *sertanejos* and other agents of the slave trade in Benguela. African political authorities were not the only ones who could suffer serious consequences from defaulting on payment of imported goods acquired on credit. In fact, *pumbeiros* and *sertanejos* could also lose their freedom for not honoring their debts, as discussed previously. This chapter brings new insights onto the strategies adopted by indebted itinerant traders to escape the consequences of not settling their debts with their creditors. As one military officer from Benguela, who commanded several “punitive expeditions” in Quilengues and Caconda revealed, many of the conflicts between Luso-African traders and African rulers were in fact attempts by indebted itinerant traders to find a way out of their situation. Whenever they could not repay their creditors, *pumbeiros* and *sertanejos* passed on the blame of their failure to local African rulers, accusing “blacks” of assaulting their caravans and taking all the merchandise. In order to validate their accusations, these itinerant traders provoked African rulers into conflicts, attacking them with the help of “white” deserters who also roamed the *sertões* of Benguela.

Meanwhile, Chapter 5 throws more light on the complex political landscape in the interior of Benguela, where *sobas* from different regions found themselves involved in a series of cattle raids that often developed into full warfare. Those under vassalage tried to manipulate Portuguese forces to help them defeat local enemies, while simultaneously trying to protect their own local allies in the path of these “punitive expeditions”. As mentioned above, African vassals knew the real commercial intentions of slavers in command of “punitive expeditions” and feared that they could not safeguard their own people from becoming spoils of war that would later be sold as slaves to the Americas.

Finally, this chapter shows the power of the community of slave traders in Benguela in the first decades of the nineteenth century, and how their members, especially those in positions of authority, disregarded their duties and orders from their superiors in favor of their personal slaving

businesses. After the independence of Brazil from Portugal in 1822, the most important slavers of Benguela organized themselves around a “Brazilian party” to guarantee the continuation of their slaving transactions with the new Brazilian Empire. The slavers took the streets of Benguela, declared the independence of the province and rose the Brazilian flag. The proclamation of the end of the “legal” slave trade in Benguela in 1830 led to the rise of new cycles of violence on the coast and in the backlands: On the coastal town, the slave traders tried to maintain the regular outflow of captives to the Atlantic, while in the *sertões* the African rulers fought to maintain their autonomy and their own slaving transactions.

Luso-African classifications for the peoples of Benguela

I have argued in Chapter 1 that the territory of Quilengues was formed by a multiplicity of “ethnolinguistic” groups from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. These communities developed specific economic and social structures that allowed them to adapt to the geographic and environmental characteristics of the lands they occupied. As mentioned previously, in areas of higher precipitation levels and richer soils, there developed agropastoralist societies, while in dry and desert areas there emerged a prevalence of nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralist societies. The political landscape also depended on these natural features, as Jean-Luc Vellut has explained: “Ethnic solidarity among the peoples of the region resulted from sharing a common historical experience dictated by environmental similarities”¹⁰⁷².

Most of the African communities in the interior of Benguela lived far from the coast when the first Portuguese traders disembarked at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In fact, the population density of the semi-arid coastal lowlands (Mbuelo) was much lower than that of the highlands (Nano). Most of the local communities in Quilengues preferred to build their settlements close to water streams, but the prevalence of perennial rivers and the recurrence of long droughts incentivised mobile features even in agropastoralist societies. It was not rare for a *sobado* to move to another location due to environmental concerns or because of wars, triggering constant waves of transhumance and internal migration. Besides, as seen in previous chapters, running into the

¹⁰⁷² Jean-Luc Vellut, “The Congo Basin and Angola”, in J. F. Ade Ajayi ed. *General History of Africa, Volume VI. Africa in the nineteenth century until 1880s* (Berkeley: UNESCO / University of California Press, 1989), 303.

bush or climbing onto rocky hills were common tactics used by individuals trying to flee slaving expeditions and other conflicts. Whenever these communities moved, their borders migrated with them¹⁰⁷³.

The semi-nomadic features of many of the local communities complicates any attempt to identify the exact location of *sobados* and *jagados* in the interior of Benguela (Map 3), as well as their cultural (“ethnolinguistic”) composition, as discussed in Chapter 1. This was already a problem in the eighteenth century, which led Luso-African settlers to develop their own labels to classify and identify the multitude of peoples and languages they found in the interior of Benguela. This led to the creation of some broad “ethnic” labels that actually placed people from different “ethnolinguistic” backgrounds into the same group¹⁰⁷⁴.

These Luso-African “ethnic” labels separated the different peoples in the interior through imaginary geographic boundaries, mostly created by the foreigners and not by local African inhabitants. Such boundaries sometimes corresponded to local natural features of the land, such as the central plateau, but many were delineated by outsiders who, indeed, knew little about those territories and the peoples who occupied them. Luso-African officials frequently use these broad “ethnic” labels to identify African communities in their reports and letters to superiors.

For instance, Africans living within the “district of Quilengues”¹⁰⁷⁵ (a Luso-African fabrication, as argued in Chapter 1) were identified as “Muquilengues”. Similarly, those from the highlands of Nano were called “Munanos”, while those from Dombe Grande were called “Mundombes”. There were also groups of refugees from the far-southern lands of Humbe, dubbed the “Muhumbe” potentates¹⁰⁷⁶. Moreover, there were different nomadic groups, such as “Mucuandos”, “Mucubaes”, “Mocorocas”, etc., who roamed semi-arid and desert portions of the interior and were usually identified in relation to the local rivers and streams they frequented:

¹⁰⁷³ Maria Emília Madeira Santos, “A cartografia dos poderes: da matriz africana à organização colonial do espaço”. *Africana Studia*, No. 9 (2006): 132.

¹⁰⁷⁴ For more about these different “ethnolinguistic” groups of Benguela, see Chapter 1.

¹⁰⁷⁵ In the nineteenth century, the “district of Quilengues” lost a large portion of its territory. The explorer Bernardino José Brochado, who travelled throughout the interior of Benguela in the middle of that century, described the territory of Quilengues as extending between the regions of Dombe Grande to the northwest, Nano to the east and Huila to the south: Bernardino José Brochado, “Notícia de alguns territórios, e dos povos que os habitam, situados na parte meridional da Província de Angola”, *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série I, Dezembro (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1855), 204.

¹⁰⁷⁶ For more about the “Muhumbe” potentates in Quilengues, see Estevam C. Thompson, “Refugees from the south: the Muhumbe potentates in Quilengues, Benguela, 18th and 19th centuries” (forthcoming).

Cuando River, Cubal River, Cororca River, and so on¹⁰⁷⁷. Finally, there was a group of Luso-African settlers, which the documentation refers to as *moradores*, that is dwellers.

Let us now examine more closely the Luso-African labels given to the peoples that inhabited the interior of Benguela, starting with “Muquilengues”. This label encompasses most of the inhabitants of Quilengues, excluding the *moradores* and several communities of “Muhumbe” potentates who took refuge in the region, as we will see below. One of the best reports about the social organization and culture of the “Muquilengues” was produced by the naturalist Joaquim Jose da Silva¹⁰⁷⁸ during the time he sojourned in the *sobado* of Socoval as part of the expedition commanded by Captain Costa that raided several polities in Quilengues in the 1780s (Chapter 3). He described some local customs and rituals of the peoples of Quilengues, including information about their religious beliefs and their martial culture. In his description of the “Muquilengues” in Socoval, the naturalist highlighted their connections to the Mbangala bands that roamed the area in previous centuries. Besides praising their martial abilities, Silva also denounced their supposed “cannibalistic practices” and their use of captives of war to satisfy both their “appetite and superstition”¹⁰⁷⁹.

Another explorer, Bernardino José Brochado, who crossed the lands of Socoval in the mid-nineteenth century gives a complementary version for the history of the “Muquilengues” in Socoval, in which the people of Socoval were descendants of the “Mucubais”, groups of nomadic pastoralists who lived around the Cubal River¹⁰⁸⁰. He explained that the name of the *soba* of Socoval, whom he called Sucuballa, meant “lord of the Cubaes” (*Senhor dos Cobães*), regarded as the most powerful of the *sobas* of Quilengues¹⁰⁸¹.

¹⁰⁷⁷ José Maria de Lacerda, “Observações sobre a viagem da costa d’Angola a costa de Moçambique, 1797”, in *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes, 4ª série, parte não oficial*, (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 198.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Part of this report was published in Brazil in three different volumes of a local literary and news magazine: Joaquim José da Silva, “Extracto da viagem que fez ao sertão de Benguela no anno de 1785: de Luanda para Benguela”, part I, in *O Patriota: Jornal Litterário, Político, Mercantil*, No. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Régia, 1813), 97-100; Joaquim José da Silva, “Extracto da viagem que fez ao sertão de Benguela no anno de 1785: Viagem ao sertão de Benguella”, part II, in *O Patriota: Jornal Litterário, Político, Mercantil*, No. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Régia, 1813), 86-98; Joaquim José da Silva, “Extracto da viagem que fez ao sertão de Benguela no anno de 1785: de Luanda para Benguela”, part III, in *O Patriota: Jornal Litterário, Político, Mercantil*, No. 3 (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Régia, 1813), 49-60.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Silva, “Extracto da viagem que fez ao sertão de Benguela no anno de 1785”, parte 3, 49-60.

¹⁰⁸⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 1, there were more than one Cubal River in the interior of Benguela, according to eighteenth and nineteenth century cartographic sources: Quicombo-Cubal, Cubal da Hanha, and Cubal de Namibe.

¹⁰⁸¹ Brochado, “Notícia de alguns territórios”, 202-204.

The peoples living in Dombe Grande and Dombe Pequeno, on the other hand, were called “Mundombes”. Dombe Grande was the closest “district” to Benguela and was located on the outer basin of the Coporolo River, while Dombe Pequeno represented the lands in the inner Coporolo basin¹⁰⁸². Some of the oldest and most important vassals of the Portuguese were the “Mundombes”, including *sobas* Peringue, Molundo, Capembe, Quizamba, Mama and Quiera. Many of the “Mundombes” provided different services for the Portuguese administration in Benguela. *Soba* Capembe, for instance, was responsible for the brimstone mines and the production of sulphur¹⁰⁸³, as briefly mentioned above. The “Mundombes” also often worked in Luso-African caravans as porters and guides, rendering a very important service for the development of the slave trade. They sometimes were requested as escorts and guards of caravans carrying valuable cargo, such as ivory¹⁰⁸⁴. Both “Mundombes” and “Muquilengues” were regarded as great hunters and excellent ranchers, both being highly skilled in leatherworking as well¹⁰⁸⁵.

The “Munanos”¹⁰⁸⁶, in turn, were the peoples who occupied the highlands of the central plateau, locally known as Nano¹⁰⁸⁷. Today, these peoples identify themselves as “Ovimbundu” (speakers of “Umbundu”): but, in the nineteenth century, this identity had not yet formed¹⁰⁸⁸. Among the main *sobados* of the Nano in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one finds: Caluquembe, Bailundo, Quiaca, Quiepo, Tinde, Quingolo, Huambo, Bihé and Galangue (Map 3).

¹⁰⁸² José Falcão, *A Questão do Zaire* (Coimbra: J. Diogo Pires, 1883), 105. For more about Dombe Grande, see Ralph Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza: Ocupação e aproveitamento do antigo reino de Benguela, 1843-1942*, Vol. 1 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1940) 179-214.

¹⁰⁸³ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v, “Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva”, (12 August to 30 November 1811). According to one Luso-African official, the “Mundombes” indeed hated to work in the sulfur mines and factory: ANA, Códice 445, fls. 103v-104v, “Em data de 17 de outubro de 1811 no sítio de Quilumata”, (17 October 1811).

¹⁰⁸⁴ On 1 December 1812, the *Desembargador Provedor da Real Fazenda*, António de Carvalho Fontes Henriques Pereira asked the governor of Benguela, Joaquim Doutel de Almeida, to send some “Mundombes” to carry and escort a shipment of ivory to be loaded in the Bergatim *Mercúrio*: ANA, Códice 445, fl. 172, “Ofício do Desembargador Provedor da Real Fazenda António de Carvalho Fontes Henriques Pereira”, (1 December 1812). Stephen J. Rockel, *Carriers of Culture: labor on the road in nineteenth-century East Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2006), 19 and 79, argues that professional porters were preferred over slaves for carrying valuable cargo, such as ivory.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Augusto Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, série 26, (1908), 55; 94-96.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda, “Notícia da cidade de São Filipe de Benguella e dos costumes dos gentios habitantes daquelle sertão” (10 November 1797), *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes*, 5ª série (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1845), 490, called them “Munanos or Quimbundos”.

¹⁰⁸⁷ João Francisco Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, *Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes*, 4ª série (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 249-250.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World*, 242-243, argues that “The conviction held by many of those who believe they are Ovimbundu is a result of intense interaction among different groups throughout a long period of time...”

In the eyes of Portuguese and Luso-African officials in Benguela, there was a tendency to see a natural opposition between the peoples from Nano, the highlanders, and Mbuelo, the lowlanders. However, the documentation drawn upon here shows complex political relations between “Muquilengues” and “Munanos”, who despite recurrent conflicts sometimes joined forces to fight endogenous and exogenous enemies¹⁰⁸⁹.

In all the regions mentioned above there were groups of refugees who arrived in migratory movements from the south during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were generically identified as “Muhumbe potentates” and, as their name suggests, fled the distant lands of Humbe to escape local conflicts and persecution from their *soba*. After migrating, all of these refugees broke with their subordination to the *soba* of Humbe, but different groups seem to have chosen different new political associations. The “Muhumbe” refugees in Dombe Grande, for one, became subjects of local “Mundombe” *sobas*¹⁰⁹⁰, while those who moved to Quilengues from at least the second half of the eighteenth century declared themselves subjects of Portugal¹⁰⁹¹. This put the “Muhumbe” potentates in Quilengues at odds with some of the local rulers, such as the *soba* of Socoval¹⁰⁹². References to new migratory movements of refugees from Humbe arriving in Quilengues and Nano persist into the nineteenth century¹⁰⁹³.

Besides these agropastoralist communities settled in Quilengues, Dombe Grande and Nano, there were nomadic groups of pastoralists who roamed the backlands of Benguela. They lived off their cattle, eating meat mostly when their animals died of natural causes, and did not grow any crops: milk was their staple. Hunting and gathering complemented their subsistence. They dug shallow wells (*cassímas*) in the desert from where they acquired brackish water (*água salobra*) for themselves and their animals¹⁰⁹⁴. All of these nomadic groups, including “Mucubaes”,

¹⁰⁸⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 115v-117, “Três ofícios do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza, remetidos a este governo no ano de 1811”, (June-November 1811).

¹⁰⁹⁰ The “Muhumbes” usually fought alongside the “Mundombes” to protect their lands and sometimes worked with them in the production of sulfur: ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v, “Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva”, (12 Augusto to 30 November 1811).

¹⁰⁹¹ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 80v-83, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (13 May 1801).

¹⁰⁹² A long inquiry into the raids commanded by the *soba* of Socoval against the “Muhumbe potentates” of Quilengues (on behalf of the *soba* of Humbe) is found in ANA, Códice 443, fl. 80v-83, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (13 May 1801); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 87v-88v, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (29 May 1801). See also Thompson, “Refugees from the south”.

¹⁰⁹³ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 140.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Brochado, “Notícia de alguns territórios”, 203.

“Mucuandos”, “Mucororcas”, “Mucuambundos”, and “Mocuanhangues”, were excellent ranchers and had large herds of cattle¹⁰⁹⁵, which made them frequent victims of both African and Luso-African raiders.

Lastly, there were the *moradores* of the interior, which included foreign settlers, some Africans who moved closer to the “white” settlements and locally born Luso-Africans (*filhos do país*)¹⁰⁹⁶. Since the creation of “white” settlements in the interior by Governor Sousa Coutinho in 1769, these *moradores* were supposed to live within these settlements or in their surroundings (Chapter 3). Nevertheless, most of the *moradores* in Quilengues and Caconda sought to isolate themselves as much as possible from Portuguese “colonial” officials. According to a nominal census of Caconda, prepared by *capitão-mor* João da Costa Frade in 1798, most of the *moradores* preferred to live away from “white” settlements and did not respect the “colonial authority” of Portugal¹⁰⁹⁷.

As mentioned previously, cattle was the most important form of accumulation of wealth in many of the communities in the interior of Benguela and, until the arrival of Europeans with imported goods, the most important capital for African rulers who wanted to expand their political influence. Cattle were used as currency, as payment for tribute, and in a number of social transactions, such as marriage. Hence, possessing and hoarding these animals created a strong social hierarchy in which “masters controlled clients who herded cattle for them while both groups lorded it over their cattleless servants, whose livelihood lay totally in their hands”¹⁰⁹⁸. Besides, cattle were essential for agropastoralist societies, especially in areas of poor soil, because they provided organic compost or manure for crops¹⁰⁹⁹.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, 242.

¹⁰⁹⁶ According to Brochado, “Notícia de alguns territórios”, 204, the regent of Quilengues had authority only over the “whites” and locally born individuals (*filhos do país*) who did not owe obedience to any *soba*. All other decisions by the regent should be taken in agreement with the African authorities, which in his understanding transform Quilengues in a form of Portuguese-African mixed government.

¹⁰⁹⁷ AIHGB, DL 31, 5. 7, fls. 3v-19, “Relação dos moradores e sobas do Presídio de Caconda”, 4 November 1797); ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 80-80v, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Mello para o capitão regente de Caconda”, (9 May 1798).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 116.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Bastos, “Traços gerais sobre a Ethnographia do Districto de Benguella”, 303.

The high cultural and economic value given to the possession of herds drove communities in the interior of Benguela to ritualize their disputes over cattle and praise those warriors who could prove their raiding abilities¹¹⁰⁰. As Desch-Obi explains:

“The constant reality of potential raids from other areas encouraged the development of militaristic strategies and values, and valorous soldiers were rewarded with cattle, clients, and wives. Thus, the king, chiefs, and other wealthy men would have wanted to attract into their service the most skilled soldiers in the society”¹¹⁰¹.

The constant raids among local rulers in search of political validation and capital engendered cycles of wars and violence into which the slave traders of Benguela tapped in order to acquire captives for the Atlantic trade. The primary sources used in the remainder of this chapter have plenty of references about raids, some of which I have included below. As we will see, there is a complex network of alliances between some *sobas* to raid others, including those based on old “grudges” and previous conflicts.

Beforehand, let us take a closer look at a group of African professionals who were the backbone of transport and communications in the interior of Benguela: the porters.

The importance of portage logistics for trading and military expeditions

The importance of porters as commercial and cultural intermediaries has recently attracted the attention of historians working on both East Central¹¹⁰² and West Central Africa¹¹⁰³. This is

¹¹⁰⁰ For more on ritualistic cattle raids, see Marta Salokoski, “On the dynamics of Pre-Colonial Society in Northern Namibia” (National Archives of Namibia: Windhoek, 1985), 15-18; Marta Salokoski, “Symbolic Power of Kings in Pre-Colonial Ovambo Societies” (Licentiate Thesis in Sociology / Social Anthropology, University of Helsinki, 1992); Marta Salokoski, “How Kings are Made – How Kingship Changes: A Study of Rituals and Ritual Change in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Owamboland, Namibia” (PhD Dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2006), 117-131. See also Joseph C. Miller, “Angola central e sul por volta de 1840”, *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, No. 32, (1997): 20.

¹¹⁰¹ Thomas J. Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 20.

¹¹⁰² Rockel, *Carriers of Culture*.

¹¹⁰³ Maria da Conceição Neto, “In Town and Out of Town: A Social History of Huambo, Angola, 1902-1961” (PhD Dissertation, University of London, 2012); Eliane Ribeiro Santos, “Barganhando sobrevivências: os trabalhadores centro-africanos da expedição de Henrique de Carvalho à Lunda, 1884-1888” (M.A. Thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2010); Eliane Ribeiro Santos, “Sociabilidades em trânsito: os carregadores do comércio de longa distância na Lunda, 1880-1920” (PhD Dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo, 2016); Ivan S. Gonçalves, “Apontamentos Vindos dos Sertões: negociação, comércio e trabalho nas Caravanas de Antonio Francisco Ferreira da Silva Porto (década de 1840)” (M.A. Thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2017).

not, however, a recent topic in the historiography of Angola. Earlier sources repeatedly mention the importance of porters for the slave trade and the management of settlements in the interior, including many complaints about the hardships involved in hiring and controlling them¹¹⁰⁴. Historians of Angola have also previously analysed the importance of porters in the development of commerce¹¹⁰⁵ and waged labor¹¹⁰⁶ in Angola, as well as their role as agents of cultural diffusion throughout the interior¹¹⁰⁷.

This chapter shows how the control of portage and the management of local porters became defensive tactics used by African rulers in Quilengues to hinder the advance of slaving campaigns into their territories. As seen previously, African vassals were supposed to provide porters for the “royal service”, a definition frequently manipulated by slavers in positions of authority to further their personal interests. African rulers also helped itinerant traders to hire

¹¹⁰⁴ Antonio da Silva Porto, *Viagens e Apontamentos de um portuense em África*, Maria Emília Madeira Santos, ed., Volume 1 (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1986); Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, *From Benguella to the Territory of Yacca, 1877-1880*, 2 Vols. (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, [1881]1882); Luciano Cordeiro, *Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos portugueses: escravos e minas de África, segundo diversos. Coleção de documentos, 1516-1619* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1881); Manuel Alves de Castro Francina, “Viagem a Cazengo pelo Quanza, e regresso por terra”, in *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, parte não oficial*, Série I (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 432-464; Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, 240-254; Alexandre Alberto de Serpa Pinto, *How I Crossed Africa: From the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, through Unknown Countries; Discovery of the Great Zambezi and Affluents* (San Francisco: R.W. Bliss and Company, 1881); Augusto Antonio de Oliveira, “Primeiras explorações no sul de Angola, 1784-1791”, *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, 7ª série, (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1887), 417-453; Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua, 1884-1888: Descrição da viagem à Mussumba do Muatiânvua, Vol. 1. De Luanda a Cuango* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1890); Augusto de Andrade, *Viagem de exploração geographica no districto de Benguella e Novo Redondo, 1898-1899* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1902); Beatrix Heintze, *Exploradores alemães em Angola: apropriações etnográficas entre comércio de escravos, colonialismo e Ciência* (Frankfurt am Main: Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, 2011), 31-33.

¹¹⁰⁵ Alfredo Margarido, “Les porteurs: forme de domination et agents de changement en Angola (XVIIe-XIXe siècles)”, *Revue française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, No. 240 (1978): 377-400; Isabel Castro Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola. Dinâmicas Comerciais e Transformações Sociais no Século XIX* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica e Tropical, 1997), 402-419; Maria Emília Madeira Santos, *Nos caminhos de África: serventia e posse, Angola, século XIX* (Lisboa: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1998); Linda M. Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola: 1840s to the Present* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000); Linda M. Heywood, “Porters, trade and power: The politics of labor in the central highlands of Angola, 1850-1914”, in Catherine Coquery Vidrovitch and Paul Lovejoy (eds). *The Workers of African Trade* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985), 243-268.

¹¹⁰⁶ Antonio Carreira, *Angola da Escravidão ao Trabalho Livre* (Lisbon; Arcádia, 1977); Maria da Conceição Neto, “De escravos a ‘serviçais’, de ‘serviçais’ a ‘contratados’: omissões, percepções e equívocos na história do trabalho africano na Angola colonial”, *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, No. 33 (2017): 107-129. Similar to West Central Africa, wage-earning porters in East Central Africa played a key role in economic, social and cultural change: Rockel, *Carriers of Culture*, 4.

¹¹⁰⁷ Margarido, “Les porteurs”, 377-400; Beatrix Heintze, *Pioneiros Africanos: Caravanas de carregadores na África Centro-Occidental entre 1850 e 1890* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2004).

freemen as porters¹¹⁰⁸, who should receive a previously negotiated payment for their services¹¹⁰⁹. As Heywood has argued, the fact that commerce depended on caravans meant that slave traders depended on the “good-will of African rulers who had to be convinced to accept the circulation of caravans and to allow the recruitment of porters”¹¹¹⁰.

Some caravans had hundreds of porters carrying not only merchandise, but also people in *tipóias* or “sedan chairs”¹¹¹¹. The status of these porters varied from slaves to free waged workers. Within this spectrum, some free individuals were forced to work in caravans, although the practice of “forced portage” had been abolished in Benguela since 1796¹¹¹². All of these types of porters could be found working side by side in a single caravan¹¹¹³. Hence, while some of the porters in slaving caravans were captives themselves, others were highly valued professionals working for hire¹¹¹⁴.

Porterage could become a high-skilled occupation and porters were often granted differentiated social status within African communities. Many African men favored the profession of porter because it allowed them mobility and trading opportunities¹¹¹⁵. Thus, besides carrying the merchandise of Luso-African itinerant traders, some porters also acted as private merchants themselves, pursuing their own slaving business. In fact, some of these professionals only accepted to participate in a caravan if they could undertake their own deals. Others, armed with guns,

¹¹⁰⁸ There are reports that porters paid a small amount of what they received as tribute to their *sobas*: Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 404-406.

¹¹⁰⁹ Neto, “In Town and Out of Town”, 63. Porters were often paid in merchandise (*fazendas*): Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 445-475. This payment could vary depending on the type of load the porter carried: Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 406.

¹¹¹⁰ Heywood, “Porters, trade and power”, 75.

¹¹¹¹ Heintze, *Exploradores alemães em Angola*, 62. Porters who carried the *tipóias* were known as “*bambeiros*” or “*mutemos*”: Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 133, note 91.

¹¹¹² Forced portage remained a common practice in the interior of Angola for good part of the nineteenth century: Neto, “In Town and Out of Town”, 63, note 79. In Angola, the practice was only prohibited in 1839, although there were attempts to regulate the activity since 1666: Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 126, 413.

¹¹¹³ Rockel, *Carriers of Culture*, 23-28, compares caravan porters to crews in slave ships. Both were specialist professionals engaged in lengthy journeys who lived and worked in gangs: “Like crews elsewhere, caravan porters developed a peculiar labor culture that drew on local genius and familiar meanings, which then became transformed in the work process”.

¹¹¹⁴ Neto, “De escravos a ‘serviçais’, de ‘serviçais’ a ‘contratados’”, 123; Heintze, *Exploradores alemães em Angola*, 54-57; See also Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 402-430. The same was true for East Central Africa: Rockel, *Carriers of Culture*, 8-23.

¹¹¹⁵ Heintze, *Exploradores alemães em Angola*, 55; Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 419.

doubled as hunters and guards for the caravans. These large caravans drew much attention from local populations, which meant that “bandits” could jump out of the bush at any time¹¹¹⁶.

Sometimes these professional porters asked for payment for their services in advance, and demanded to know the final destination of the caravan¹¹¹⁷. Paying in advance, however, increased chances of desertion during the journey¹¹¹⁸. As we will see below, there were also agreements between porters from different regions determining where each group could operate. Hence, in a caravan from Benguela to Salvaterra dos Magos, “Mundombe” porters hired in Dombe Grande often carried their loads only to the *sobado* of Quilumata, last stop before Quilengues. From there, “Muquilengue” porters replaced them for the rest of the journey.

It is clear that the enlistment of porters was a decisive part of the Luso-African military logistic to engage the *sertões*¹¹¹⁹. There were, however, other strategic uses for porters in times of war. For instance, they also served as courier messengers, carrying letters with information and requests to and from the frontlines. Hence, by co-opting these messengers or forcing them to hand over the messages they carried, local African rulers managed to anticipate the arrival of “punitive expeditions”. This seems to have been the case with the expedition led by Captain Domingos Pereira Diniz to Quilengues.

The work of porters and the rhythm of caravans was also connected to religious traditions, like other aspects of socioeconomic life in the interior of Benguela. Hence, a series of religious rituals preceded the departure of caravans, some concerning porters specifically: failure to fulfill them could hinder the advance of caravans and bring the slave trading to a halt¹¹²⁰.

¹¹¹⁶ Neto, “In Town and Out of Town”, 63-67; Heintze, *Exploradores alemães em Angola*, 57-74; Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 410-411.

¹¹¹⁷ The price of portage depended on the destination of the caravan. Porters usually refused to participate in caravans with no precise destination and without a time limit: Heintze, *Exploradores alemães em Angola*, 60.

¹¹¹⁸ The desertion of porters was one of the great problems faced by caravan leaders. As we will see below, military campaigns could come to a halt because of desertion. Hence, it features among the tactics used by African rulers to stop the advance of their enemies. Desertion was also a problem for itinerant traders and is a recurrent theme in their memoirs. See Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Expedição Portuguesa a Muatiânvua, 1884-1888: Descrição da viagem à Mussumba do Muatiânvua, Vol. 2. De Cuango ao Chipaca* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1892), 186; Richard Burton, *The Lands of Cazembe* (London: John Murray, 1873), 55-67. Heintze, *Exploradores alemães em Angola*. See also Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 413-417; Santos, “Sociabilidades em trânsito”, 142-143.

¹¹¹⁹ Neto, “De escravos a ‘serviçais’, de ‘serviçais’ a ‘contratados’”, 123.

¹¹²⁰ Isabel Castro Henriques, “*O pássaro do mel: Estudos de História Africana* (Lisboa: Colibri, 2006), 39-56, has argued for local African control over commerce in the interior through the manipulation of rituals related to the departure of the caravans. See also Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 404.

Porterage remained the main form of transport of merchandise and people in the interior of Benguela until the end of the nineteenth century. It only began to change with the arrival of Boer migrants with their ox wagons¹¹²¹, a transformation consolidated with the construction of the Benguela railroad in the twentieth century¹¹²².

Slaving campaigns in Quilengues in the early nineteenth century

Since their arrival on the shores of Benguela at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Portuguese and Luso-African slavers tapped into local conflicts to acquire captives for the Atlantic slave trade. As shown in Chapter 3, these foreign traders arrived at a moment of great political and social turmoil in the interior of Benguela related to the rise of the Mbangala bands in the sixteenth century and their swift expansion throughout the interior in the following century. The first governors of Benguela established alliances with some of these “*jagas*” or Mbangala warlords, which proved essential for the consolidation of the slave trade from those shores. Other “*jagas*” became their enemies, demonized as “cannibals” and used as justification for the violent actions of slave traders operating in the region.

As we have seen above, cattle were the most common form of capital accumulation in West Central Africa until the arrival of imported goods. During centuries, local communities fought for control over large herds through ritualized cattle raids. This led to the development of groups of warriors specialized in raiding and on strategies of defence, such as the construction of fortified corrals known as *quipacas*¹¹²³, inspired by Mbangala fortified camps (*kilombos*). With the arrival of foreign slavers with imported goods, the core of the local economy shifted from cattle ranching in the interior to the slave trade in coastal areas. Cattle and slaves remained the two main sources

¹¹²¹ Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola*, 123.

¹¹²² Santos, *Nos caminhos de África*, 59. Despite the construction of the Benguela railroad at the beginning of the twentieth century, porterage remained very important in the interior of Benguela: Andrade, *Viagem de exploração geographica no districto de Benguella e Novo Redondo*.

¹¹²³ According to Antonio de Assis Jr., *Dicionário Kimbundu-Português: linguístico, botânico, histórico e corográfico* (Luanda: Argente, Santos e Cia, n/d [19--]), 136, *kipaka* means (1) corral for cattle; (2) defensive structures such as trenches, barriers and fences. In Nyaneka (*Olunyaneka*) the word *otyimpaka* translates as fortress: see *Diccionario Portuguez-Olunyaneka*, pelos padres missionários da Congregação do Espírito Santo e do Sagrado Coração de Maria (Huilla: Typographia da Missão, 1896), 68.

For more on *quipacas*, see Estevam C. Thompson, “*Kilombos, quipacas and impuris: African fortifications in the wars of Benguela*” (forthcoming). See also, Chapter 1.

of wealth for African rulers and warlords in Benguela until the twentieth century. In both “kingdoms” of Angola and Benguela, slaves and cattle served as currency in commerce and to pay tribute, which according to some historians pushed African rulers to actively participate in raids to acquire the means necessary to pay the tribute¹¹²⁴. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, African politics in the interior of Benguela were thus deeply involved in cycles of violence including cattle raids and slaving operations¹¹²⁵. It is against this backdrop that I now turn my attention to a singular “punitive” expedition: that of 1811-1812 to Quilengues led by a Luso-African, Domingos Pereira Diniz.

Captain Diniz¹¹²⁶ was a literate black slaver, born in Benguela, who began his career as a scribe¹¹²⁷ and a sergeant-major¹¹²⁸ in the 1790s. He was promoted to ensign¹¹²⁹ and scribe of both Benguela and Caconda in January 1800¹¹³⁰. The following year saw him command a series of “punitive expeditions” in Caconda¹¹³¹. Indeed, we have already encountered Captain Diniz in Chapter 4 when, returning from Caconda to Benguela in 1801, he stopped in Salvaterra dos Magos and was there convinced by the regent of Quilengues to attack the *soba* of Socoval¹¹³².

The first decades of the nineteenth century represented a period of personal growth for Domingos Pereira Diniz. In 1806, he became a lieutenant¹¹³³. Three years later he then rose to the

¹¹²⁴ Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa*, 97.

¹¹²⁵ For instance, in 1803 the *soba* of Bailundo asked the colonial administration authorization to wage war against the *sobado* of Huambo, but his request was declined because both *sobas* were “vassals” of Portugal: Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 383.

¹¹²⁶ As mentioned previously, “Captain” was a title commonly used in Angola and Benguela to identify powerful men, despite them being part of the Portuguese military. In some cases, as with Captain Diniz, the title was used even when he rose to higher military ranks, as we will see below.

¹¹²⁷ Captain Diniz was not only literate, but in fact a good writer, when compared with the writing of most of his counterparts. He was considered intelligent, well organized and a good scribe by his superiors, to whom Diniz wrote elaborated fancy-worded letters and reports: ANA, Códice 4094, fl. 135, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos”, (22 January 1800). He also wrote his own defense in different occasions when he was accused of misconducts: AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

¹¹²⁸ *Sargento-mor da Companhia de Infantaria de Benguela*

¹¹²⁹ *Alferes da Companhia de Infantaria de Benguela*

¹¹³⁰ ANA, Códice 4094, fl. 135, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos”, (22 January 1800).

¹¹³¹ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

¹¹³² ANA, Códice 443, fl. 63, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (7 January 1801); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 70v-72, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (11 March 1801).

¹¹³³ *Tenente da Companhia de Infantaria de Benguela*

rank of captain¹¹³⁴. In 1810, the governor of Benguela, Joaquim Doutel de Almeida (October 1809 to September 1810) became very ill and the administration of the town was put briefly on his hands (23 September to 19 October 1810)¹¹³⁵, which helped him rise to the position of major in the following year¹¹³⁶. By 1816, he had climbed one more step in the local social ladder, being decorated with the *Hábito de São Bento de Aviz*. Five years later, Captain Diniz rose to the position of lieutenant colonel¹¹³⁷. Then in 1826, he became captain-major (*capitão-mor*) of Caconda,¹¹³⁸ from where he witnessed a slight reprieve in Benguela's export slave trade until it stumble in 1830. The governor of Angola who selected him as *capitão-mor* of Caconda, Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco (1824-1829), considered Captain Diniz quite adequate to occupy such position because of his intelligence, physical strength, and knowledge of the country, peoples and local traditions¹¹³⁹.

While still an ensign, Diniz led several “punitive expeditions” in Nano against the *soba* of Caluquembe, who was then (1800-1801) at war against the *presídio* of Caconda under the command of *capitão-mor* Francisco Ignácio de Mira e Araújo¹¹⁴⁰. Shortly thereafter, a band of warriors from the highlands of Nano, who had been fighting in Caconda, descended onto Quilengues, raiding *sobados*, “potentates” and *moradores* alike¹¹⁴¹.

While in Caconda, Ensign Diniz managed to capture the *soba* of Caluquembe by luring him into a trap, similar to the one set up by Captain Serrão to arrest the *soba* of Socoval in 1797 (Chapter 4). He invited the *soba* of Caluquembe to come to the *capitão-mor*'s official residence for some tea and quickly arrested him upon arrival. Caluquembe was immediately sent to Benguela, where he remained in the custody of Captain Serrão, who was now serving in the fortress

¹¹³⁴ *Capitão da Companhia de Infantaria de Benguela*

¹¹³⁵ Ralph Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela: Catálogo de governadores, 1779 a 1940* (Lisboa: Edições Cosmos, 1940), 55.

¹¹³⁶ *Major da Companhia de Infantaria de Benguela*

¹¹³⁷ *Tenente-Coronel das Companhias de Infantaria e Artilharia de Benguela*

¹¹³⁸ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v., “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

¹¹³⁹ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v., “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

¹¹⁴⁰ ANA, Códice 442, fl. 123v-128, “Ofício do governador interino de Benguela José Mauricio Rodrigues”, (17 August 1800); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 62, “Ofício para regente de Caconda Francisco Ignácio de Mira e Araújo”, (6 December 1800). Captain Mira e Araújo later occupied the position of governor of Benguela in the 1810s. See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 242.

¹¹⁴¹ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 284; Carlos Estermann, *Ethnography of Southwestern Angola: The Nyaneka-Nkumbi Ethnic Group* - Vol. II (New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, 1979), 17.

of Benguela, until embarking on the Portuguese ship *Medusa* for the dungeons of the Penedo prison in Luanda¹¹⁴².

One cannot help but question the official version given by the military officials involved in the arrest of the rebel *soba* of Caluquembe, as did *Dom* Melo when presented with a similar report about the arrest of Socoval (Chapter 4). If the *soba* was a rebel, why did he travel to the *presídio* of Caconda to have tea with his enemies?

Governors were well aware of the deep involvement of regents and *capitães-mores* under their command in the slave trade. After the conclusion of the expedition against the *soba* of Caluquembe, the governor of Benguela ordered the immediate return of the soldiers involved to the coastal town. He probably suspected that Ensign Diniz was using the military forces at his disposal to capture victims for the Atlantic slave trade. At first, Diniz did not comply with the direct order from the governor and remained in Caconda a little longer. It was on his way back to Benguela that he stopped at Salvaterra dos Magos and was convinced by the regent of Quilengues, Captain Andrade, to “punish” the new *soba* of Socoval for “insubordination” (Chapter 4)¹¹⁴³. When Captain Diniz led the “punitive” expedition to Quilengues in 1811-1812, he was thus no stranger to this kind of belligerence.

Cycles of violence: cattle raids, “punitive expeditions” and the Atlantic slave trade

In 1809, the peoples in the interior of Benguela were faced a long period of drought that led to hunger, sickness and migration. Not only did some local communities put themselves on the move, looking for better pastures and access to water, but desertion became a problem among settlers and soldiers based in Salvaterra dos Magos. The then regent of Quilengues, Captain João da Silva Monteiro, complained to his superiors in Benguela that he could do little to alleviate these hardships. In April 1810, he wrote to the governor informing that the situation was so dire that his

¹¹⁴² ANA, Códice 442, fl. 123v-128, “Ofício do governador interino de Benguela José Mauricio Rodrigues”, (17 Aug 1800); See also Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 242

¹¹⁴³ ANA, Códice 443, fl. 62, “Ofício para regente de Caconda Francisco Ignácio de Mira e Araújo”, (6 December 1800); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 63, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (7 January 1801); ANA, Códice 443, fl. 70v-72, “Ofício dirigido ao regente de Quilengues João Vieira de Andrade”, (11 March 1801).

soldiers had asked him to send them back to the coast because there were no supplies available in Quilengues: they were hungry¹¹⁴⁴.

In November 1810, Captain Monteiro wrote again to the governor of Benguela, Antonio João de Menezes, who assumed the position on an interim basis from September 1810 to January 1811, giving further information about the consequences of the long drought and the conditions of life in Quilengues. He justified a decrease in the collection of tribute by arguing that there was widespread hunger in the region. Yet, Captain Monteiro further explained that the real problem was not the extended drought (a recurrent condition in the region) but the widespread wars among African rulers. The constant state of warfare had forced *moradores* and other “blacks” to flee Quilengues, abandoning their crops and taking their cattle. He complained again that the soldiers were hungry and could not sustain themselves because they had received neither their payment (*soldos*) nor their rations (*farinha*)¹¹⁴⁵.

The regent of Quilengues provided information about the “gentile” wars between “Mucuandos” and “Mundombes”, conflicts that could also be related to access to natural resources during times of drought¹¹⁴⁶. He further offered news of war between the *soba* of Capembe (Dombe Grande) and the *sobetas* of Jhoa and Tinde (Quilengues and Nano), who had raided his *quipacas* in the previous year. After “summoning a war” to avenge the attack, *soba* Capembe was approached by the *sobetas*, who returned all cattle looted and slaves captured¹¹⁴⁷. The *soba* of Socoval too attacked the “Mundombe” of Dombe Grande in 1810¹¹⁴⁸. This strike was followed by another organized by the *soba* of Quilumata, who lived on the border of Quilengues. In both cases, the invaders raided several *quipacas* in Dombe Grande, including those belonging to *soba* Capembe. Because of these attacks, many “Mundombes” who worked at the mines in Dombe Grande dispersed into the *sertões* to escape violence. The administrator of the sulphur plant

¹¹⁴⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 56v.-57, “Carta do Regente Interino de Quilengues João da Silva Monteiro” (16 April 1810).

¹¹⁴⁵ ANA, Códice 445, n.p., “Carta do Regente Interino de Quilengues João da Silva Monteiro”, (12 November 1810).

¹¹⁴⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 61, “Carta do Regente Interino de Quilengues João da Silva Monteiro” (16 June 1810).

¹¹⁴⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 64-64v., “Carta do alferes comandante do Dombe Grande Manuel Duarte de Andrade”, (12 August 1810); ANA, Códice 445, fl. 64v., “Carta do alferes comandante do Dombe Grande Manuel Duarte de Andrade”, (14 August 1810).

¹¹⁴⁸ Delgado, *Ao Sul do Cuanza*, Vol. 1, 184.

complained that few “blacks” remained to work in the mines¹¹⁴⁹. These constant conflicts also blocked the trading routes between Quilengues (Salvaterra dos Magos) and the coast¹¹⁵⁰.

By the beginning of 1811, Quilengues had a new regent, Captain Manoel José de Souza. As soon as he arrived in Salvaterra dos Magos, he was informed by *moradores* that African rulers in Quilengues did not obey the “colonial authority” of Portugal and that they had waged wars against the settlement and attacked the *libatas* of “Muhumbe” potentates who considered themselves vassals of Portugal. The *moradores* also warned the new regent of attacks carried out by the “Mucuandos” against slave caravans on the road to Quilengues. Captain Souza decided to request help from the *soba* of Socoval to hunt down the “Mucuando bandits” that terrorized the road to Salvaterra dos Magos and its surrounding *libatas*¹¹⁵¹. He planned to use Socoval’s forces to attack the nearby rocky hills where the “Mucuandos” were hiding¹¹⁵².

Around the same time, the *soba* of Lumbimbe (Quilengues) attacked the *sobados* of Dombe Grande, raiding four *quipacas* and stealing many cattle. He also killed four “Mundombes” and enslaved five other individuals. *Soba* Capembe immediately summoned his people for a counter-attack, ordering all men old enough to carry a weapon to join him in war. *Soba* Capembe then marched to Quilengues to reclaim his cattle and free his subjects who had been captured by Lumbimbe. Since the “sons” of Capembe were the main people responsible for work in the sulphur plant, this meant that production would suffer again from the lack of workers¹¹⁵³.

The governor of Benguela tried to intervene in the conflicts between *sobas* Lumbimbe (“Muquilengue”) and Capembe (“Mundombe”). He dispatched a soldier with a message to the *soba* of Lumbimbe, ordering him to stop his aggressions against the “Mundombes”. In case he had a dispute with *soba* Capembe, he should come to Benguela to request an audience with the

¹¹⁴⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 63-63v., “Carta do alferes comandante do Dombe Grande Manuel Zuarte de Andrade”, (1 August 1810); ANA, Códice 445, fl. 63v. “Carta do Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva”, (1 August 1810).

¹¹⁵⁰ Miller, *Way of Death*, 227.

¹¹⁵¹ In 1808, the regent of Quilengues, Captain Manoel Barbosa de Melo, reported that Salvaterra dos Magos was surrounded by at least thirteen *libatas*, and that some of these had more than one hundred and fifty houses. He promised the governor of Benguela that he would attempt to travel around to learn more about the large territory that was mostly unknown to colonial authorities: ANA, Códice 445, n.p., “Carta do Regente de Quilengues Manoel Barbosa de Mello”, (24 April 1808); Garcia, “Explorações no sul de Benguela”, 241.

¹¹⁵² ANA, Códice 445, fl. 77, “Carta do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza”, (6 February 1811).

¹¹⁵³ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v., “Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva”, (12 August to 30 November 1811).

governor and make a representation. Lumbimbe ordered his warriors to beat up the soldier who brought the message before sending him back to Salvaterra dos Magos as a reply of refusal. Moreover, the *soba* of Lumbimbe sent emissaries to the Nano to summon allied “Munano” warlords to help him destroy his “Mundombe” enemies¹¹⁵⁴.

The regent of Quilengues tried to explain the reason for the war between *sobas* Lumbimbe and Capembe. In his view, “Mundombe” warriors raided the *sobado* of Lumbimbe sometime in 1811, burning the main *libata* of the *soba* and capturing one hundred and thirty head of cattle. Capembe also enslaved fifty subjects of Lumbimbe. The “Muquilengues” managed to kill two “Mundombe” invaders and capture another seven. At this point, the *soba* of Lumbimbe decided to travel to the highlands to summon “Munano” warlords to march against Dombe Grande. Meanwhile, the regent of Quilengues urged the *soba* of Lumbimbe to abandon his plan of revenge, promising that he would seek support from the governor of Benguela to deal with the “Mundombe” invaders, which he was not able to do¹¹⁵⁵.

In September 1811, the regent of Quilengues reported the movement of “Muquilengue” warriors on the road to Dombe Grande¹¹⁵⁶. One month later, the governor of Benguela received news of two attacks against the *sobados* of Dombe Grande perpetrated by the “gentiles of the centre”, that is the lowlands of Quilengues. *Soba* Capembe was away from Dombe Grande at the time. He had gathered his warriors and marched to Quilengues to attack Lumbimbe, leaving a *macota* named Ganja in command, under the orders of the *nana*. During his absence, the “Mundombe” suffered the two attacks mentioned above. Warlords of Quiaca, in association with those of Sapa, led the first wave. They raided five *quipacas* with cattle that belonged to *sobas* Capembe, Molundo, Peringue and their respective *macotas*, enslaving numerous “Mundombe” subjects in the process¹¹⁵⁷. Socoval’s brother, Buriangombe, led the second wave of attacks. He raided four *quipacas* that belonged to *soba* Capembe and his *macotas*. Buriangombe knew that *soba* Capembe was away and accompanied by most of his warriors, hence he also raided the main

¹¹⁵⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v., “Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva”, (12 August to 30 November 1811).

¹¹⁵⁵ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 115v-117, “Três ofícios do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza, remetidos a este governo no ano de 1811”, (June to November 1811).

¹¹⁵⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 115v-117, “Três ofícios do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza, remetidos a este governo no ano de 1811”, (June to November 1811).

¹¹⁵⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v., “Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva”, (12 August to 30 November 1811).

libata and captured several of Capembe's "sons". Some managed to escape and fled south to ask for help from "Mucuando" ("Muquando") warriors with whom Capembe had an alliance (*da confederação do seu souva*)¹¹⁵⁸.

With the support of their "Mucuando" allies, the "Mundombes" who had escaped returned to their *sobado* in time to find Buriangombe and his men amidst raiding another of Capembe's *quipacas*. The army composed of "Mundombes" and "Mucandos" surprised the "Muquilengues" with a quick strike against their rear. At least ten "Muquilengue" warriors were killed in this surprise attack, while the rest dispersed into the bush. The "Mundombes" managed to recover part of the stolen cattle from their *quipaca*. According to *macota* Ganja, Buriangombe also intended to invade the trading post (*feitoria*) of Dombe Grande to steal its supply of alcohol (*aguardente*) and tobacco¹¹⁵⁹.

In order to suppress the wars and raids perpetrated by the *sobas* of Quilengues against Portuguese vassals in Dombe Grande, the governor of Benguela launched in 1811 a major "punitive expedition" to punish all "rebels" in Quilengues and restore peace in the *sertões*, replacing antagonist African rulers if necessary. Captain Domingos Pereira Diniz was the man chosen to command the expedition. His main target was the *soba* of Lumbimbe, but he was also to punish anyone involved in the conflict, including the *soba* of Socoval.

The "punitive expedition" of 1811-1812 against the *sobas* of Quilengues

By September 1811, the punitive expedition to Quilengues commanded by Captain Diniz was ready to leave Benguela. He had orders to investigate the cattle raids led by "Muquilengue" *sobas* against the *quipacas* of vassals in Dombe Grande. The most affected was *soba* Capembe, who had had several of his stockyards (*quipacas*) raided by the *soba* of Lumbimbe with the help of warlords from Quilengues and Nano. In order to fight the "Muquilengue forces", Captain Diniz relied on the support of four powerful "Mundombe" rulers: *sobas* Peringue and Molundo from Dombe Pequeno and *sobas* Capembe and Quizamba from Dombe Grande. He also had supporting

¹¹⁵⁸ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v., "Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva", (12 August to 30 November 1811).

¹¹⁵⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v., "Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva", (12 August to 30 November 1811).

“black troops” (*guerra preta*) led by the corporal of Dombe Grande, Joannes José Gaspar. Captain Diniz’s troops also planned to incorporate deserters and prisoners captured along the way¹¹⁶⁰.

From the point of view of Portuguese and Luso-African “colonial” officials, the “punitive expedition” led by Captain Diniz failed miserably. As we will see below, after six months in the *sertões*, he returned to Benguela with starving troops and not having solved the dispute between *soba* Capembe and the *soba* of Lumbimbe. In fact, his presence in Quilengues only furthered tension and warfare. It also exposed the limitations of the so-called “colonial power” in the *sertões* of Benguela. From the point of view of the slave trade, however, the expedition was a resounding success. Captain Diniz enslaved people in all of the regions in which the expedition camped (Quiculo, Quilumata and Quilengues), leaving a trail of destruction in his wake. This slaver always found a “reason” to “punish” *sobas* in his path and to enslave their people. Indeed, he enslaved so many people that the expedition ran out of shackles.

The expedition was not able to “punish” *soba* Lumbimbe and others involved in the attacks against Dombe Grande because of a lack of porters to carry artillery pieces, ammunitions and necessary provisions. After being stuck in the *sertões* for weeks, Captain Diniz learned that the *soba* of Socoval had given verbal orders prohibiting all *sobados* and potentates in Quilengues from helping the expedition with either porters or provisions. This completely sabotaged the “colonial” intention to “punish the rebels” and to show its strength. African rulers had been able to defeat the “mighty colonial army” simply by refusing to collaborate and avoiding direct conflict. In March 1812, without enough porters and provisions to advance against the “Muquilengues”, the expedition retreated to the coast leaving the “rebels” unpunished¹¹⁶¹.

A close analysis of the logistical problems and operational limitations of the Luso-African soldiers in the *sertões* shows that their supposed military superiority was not enough to impose real control over Quilengues, at least not until they had overcome their dependency on African porters. Captain Diniz’s had two companies of military personnel at his disposal for the expedition to Quilengues. One was the Infantry Company composed of one ensign (*alferes*), one sergeant (*sargento*), one quartermaster (*furriel*), one adjutant (*ajudante*), three corporals (*cabos*), two fife

¹¹⁶⁰ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 96v., “Em data de 10 de setembro de 1811, entrando no Dombe Grande, (10 September 1811)

¹¹⁶¹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812).

players (*pifanos*), one military drummer (*tambor*) and thirty soldiers. The other was the Artillery Company with also thirty soldiers, one sergeant and one military drummer, but only one corporal. Another infantry ensign occupied the corresponding position in the artillery company for lack of personnel¹¹⁶². The *guerra preta* commanded by Corporal Joannes José Gaspar added twenty-two armed soldiers to the expedition¹¹⁶³. Corporal Gaspar later complained, however, that many of his soldiers' guns were broken or in terrible shape, and that some *guerra preta* soldiers fought armed with spears and arrows¹¹⁶⁴. Nevertheless, the lack of porters was the expedition's greatest handicap.

The expedition left Benguela on 7 September 1811, making camp that night in the *sobado* of Quipupa, near the Marimbombo River. This was also close to Quizamba, the main *sobado* of Dombe Grande (Map 4). The following morning, the expedition arrived at the trading post (*feitoria*) of Dombe Grande, where it was to be reinforced by local "Mundombe" *sobas* and their warriors. As mentioned above, Capembe was the local *soba* of the *feitoria* and his people carried out most of the work in the mines and in the sulphur plant. Since he was also one of the main victims of the "Muquilengue" raid, *soba* Capembe was committed to accompanying the "punitive" expedition to Quilengues: this worried the *feitor* of Dombe Grande, for he knew it would be difficult to control the "Mundombes" working in the sulphur plant and mines in the absence of their *soba*¹¹⁶⁵.

When *sobas* Molundo and Peringue (from Dombe Pequeno) presented themselves to the commander of the expedition, they were accompanied by only a fraction of the forces they ought to have brought. *Soba* Molundo was expected to present fifty warriors but only brought ten. *Soba* Peringue, on the other hand, only brought six out of the eighty warriors the commander expected him to bring. Captain Diniz complained that their contribution was not enough and demanded that they summon more warriors from their *sobados*. The *sobas* refused. This infuriated Captain Diniz,

¹¹⁶² ANA, Códice 445, fl. 113v., "Mapa do estado atual da Tropa de Linha das duas Companhias de Infantaria e Artilharia da Guarnição de Benguela em Diligência do Real Serviço na Povoação de Quilengues da mesma Capitania", (1 December 1811). See also Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 59.

¹¹⁶³ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 113v., "Lista da Guerra Preta armada e carregadores que existem até 1 de dezembro de 1811", (1 December 1811).

¹¹⁶⁴ "Lista da guerra preta armada e carregadores que ficam existindo até 9 de março de 1812", in AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, "Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz", (9 March 1812).

¹¹⁶⁵ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 96v., "Em data de 10 de setembro de 1811, entrando no Dombe Grande, (10 September 1811)

who ordered their arrest for insubordination. The *sobas* protested saying that they would gather more people along the way, but the captain was resolute in his decision. After some days under arrest, both *sobas* agreed to send orders to assemble warriors and porters from local *libatas*. Diniz needed many porters to carry the heavy pieces of artillery. The number of porters that was actually assembled, however, barely met the necessities of the expedition¹¹⁶⁶.

The expedition remained almost two weeks, from 10 to 23 September 1811, stationed in Dombe Grande da Quizamba. During this period, Captain Diniz tried to obtain reinforcements from local *sobados*, which proved a frustrating task. One of the reasons that he presented for the lack of collaboration from the local *sobados* of Dombe Grande was their distance from the *feitoria*. It took him almost one week just to assemble the *sobas* and persuade them to participate in the expedition. Even then, the *sobas* of Dombe Grande only provided enough porters to carry part of the provisions. No one wanted to be responsible for carrying the heavy artillery pieces, the captain noticed. During his stay in Dombe Grande, Captain Diniz wrote several times to the governor of Benguela complaining about the lack of porters and the uncompromising way in which the *sobas* behaved, even those most interested in the success of the “punitive expedition”¹¹⁶⁷.

Soba Capembe, for instance, also seemed reluctant to provide porters, despite his personal interest in revenge against the “Muquilengues”. Captain Diniz complained to the governor that *soba* Capembe had brought only seventy men, which he suggested was much below this *sobado*’s capacity. The commander also protested that *soba* Capembe and his *macotas* neither showed respect for him nor fully obeyed his orders. Captain Diniz concluded that the only reason that Portuguese and Luso-African officials in Benguela endured this insubordination was the *soba*’s role in the sulphur plant in Dombe Grande¹¹⁶⁸.

Two other local *sobas* presented themselves to the commander of the expedition with few warriors. *Soba* Janjala (a *sobado* very close to Quilumata) presented seven men, while *Soba*

¹¹⁶⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 113v., “Lista da Guerra Preta armada e carregadores que existem até 1 de dezembro de 1811”, (1 December 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 97-97v., “Em data de 19 de setembro do dito ano, achando-se no mesmo lugar acima”, (19 September 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 98-99, “Em 30 de setembro de 1811 Arraial do Sítio de Quiculo”, (30 September 1811).

¹¹⁶⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 97-97v., “Em data de 19 de setembro do dito ano, achando-se no mesmo lugar acima”, (19 September 1811).

¹¹⁶⁸ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 97v.-98, “Em data de 23 de setembro de 1811, estando no mesmo Arraial do Dombe Grande”, (23 September 1811).

Ndaiaya brought ten¹¹⁶⁹. Captain Diniz still managed to assemble some more people from other local vassals, but not as many as he expected. A list of members of the *guerra preta* from October 1811 recorded how many subjects the *sobas* were expected to present and how many they actually brought. *Soba* Capembe, for instance, should have presented one-hundred and twenty men but the actual number never exceeded seventy. *Soba* Mama should have presented one-hundred men, but only twenty warriors showed up. While *soba* Quizamba brought seven of the fifteen he should have brought, *Soba* Quiera showed up followed by twenty warriors out of sixty expected and *Soba* Calunga with only six warriors out of the twenty he was supposed to bring. *Soba* Peringue should have presented eighty warriors but only twenty eight appeared; *soba* Molundo should have brought fifty men but had only twenty-seven presented themselves; *soba* Janjala brought ten warriors out of twenty-four expected and *soba* Quilumata sixteen out of thirty warriors he was supposed to bring¹¹⁷⁰.

In the meantime, the *soba* of Molundo received news that a slaver from Benguela had bought one of his “sons”, Sungo, from the *soba* of Lumbimbe. Sungo had been captured during one of Lumbimbe’s raids upon the *quipacas* of Dombe Grande and was now in the shackles (*no libambo*) of Captain João Batista Benites. Captain Diniz arranged a ransom for Sungo: the “son” of Molundo was to be exchanged for an adult male slave. Although the *soba* of Molundo agreed to the ransom, Captain Diniz did not authorized him to return to his *libata* to get one of his slaves. Unable to rescue Sungo at once, the *soba* then petitioned that his “son” remain under the custody of the expedition until he was able to send one slave to Captain Benites as ransom. After this episode, the governor of Benguela ordered that all “Mundombes” who had recently been sold as slaves by the *soba* of Lumbimbe should be freed¹¹⁷¹.

After waiting for almost two weeks, Captain Diniz managed to resume his march on 23 September. He camped in the *sítio* of Gorombo, in Quiculo. After only a half-day’s march, the expedition was forced to wait for another two days for the arrival of *soba* Capembe and his people,

¹¹⁶⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 113v - “Lista da Guerra Preta armada e carregadores que existem até 1 de dezembro de 1811”, (1 December 1811).

¹¹⁷⁰ “Relação da Guerra Preta e Povos auxiliares que marcharam do Dombe da Quizamba acompanhando a expedição meu comando, Quilumata 17 de outubro de 1811”, Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 60.

¹¹⁷¹ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 97, “Em data de 16 de setembro de 1811, estando na Real Feitoria do Dombe Grande”, (16 September 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fl. 97v-98, “Em data de 23 de setembro de 1811, estando no mesmo Arraial do Dombe Grande”, (23 September 1811).

who were responsible for carrying provisions for the troops (*petrechos de boca*). Upon arriving, the *soba* informed that he was trying to acquire additional porters, but had not been successful. They marched together to Benhuma on 26 September. The next day, *soba* Capembe delayed once again the departure of the expedition, although it is not clear what was the reason for such postponement. Captain Diniz thus decided to move the troops to Quiculo without the *soba*, transporting only part of the provisions. Capembe's delays and allegations of lack of porters led to suspicions that he was deterring the expedition on purpose¹¹⁷².

After three days in Quiculo, Captain Diniz had not yet been visited by the *soba* of the land, Canacanzamba. As the commander of the expedition explained to the governor of Benguela, although *soba* Canacanzamba belonged to the "State of Quilumata", he was very close to the *sobas* of Dombe Grande, especially *sobas* Capembe and Mama, whose cattle were partially kept in the corrals of Quiculo. After a few days of waiting in vain, Captain Diniz dispatched a group of *guerra preta* to summon *soba* Canacanzamba. He then learned that this *soba* had fled to nearby rocky hills with his people and cattle. Moreover, Captain Diniz's soldiers had found a group of Africans spying on the expedition. Two men were captured, while the others escaped. They turned out to be "sons" of *sobas* Capembe and Mama who were tipping off the *macotas* of Quiculo about the advance of the expedition¹¹⁷³.

As soon as Captain Diniz found out that the *soba* of Quiculo (Canacanzamba) had escaped with his people, he dispatched a detachment after them composed of nine of his own soldiers backed by warriors from *sobas* Peringue e Molundo. The scouts did not find the *soba* of Quiculo, but were able to apprehend three of his "sons" who were moving part of his cattle to the hills. Some of the animals apprehended were used for sustenance of the troops, while others were given to the *sobas* whose warriors had been part of the detachment. Still, eighty head of cattle, as well as seven captives from Quiculo, were sent to Benguela as earnings of the royal treasury¹¹⁷⁴.

Since the first weeks of the expedition, *soba* Capembe proved to be a liability. Captain Diniz complained about his insubordination and the lack of support displayed from the beginning of the expedition. This included recurrent delays in the transportation of provisions, followed by

¹¹⁷² ANA, Códice 445, fls. 98-99, "Em 30 de setembro de 1811 Arraial do Sítio de Quiculo", (30 September 1811).

¹¹⁷³ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 98-99, "Em 30 de setembro de 1811 Arraial do Sítio de Quiculo", (30 September 1811).

¹¹⁷⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 98-99, "Em 30 de setembro de 1811 Arraial do Sítio de Quiculo", (30 September 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fl. 102v., "Em data de 11 de outubro de 1811 no Sítio de Quiculo", (11 October 1811).

the realisation that the *soba* was purposely delaying the caravan's movement in order to allow his allies to run away. Moreover, there now emerged news that he had sent threats to the *sobas* of Quilengues saying that he was coming to get his revenge against the "Muquilengues" with the support of Luso-African soldiers¹¹⁷⁵.

There were also requests from the overseer (*feitor*) of Dombe Grande to send *soba* Capembe and his men back to resume their work at the sulphur plant. Production had been greatly harmed since his absence. The "Mundombe" hated their work at the sulphur plant, Captain Diniz pointed out to the governor of Benguela: so they would do anything to absent themselves. Although *soba* Capembe had left one of his *macota* in charge of the sulphur production, he had taken most young men who worked at the plant to war, leaving all the heavy work to old men and some women who replaced them. Other workers used their *soba's* absence to justify their own retreat to hideouts in nearby hills¹¹⁷⁶.

The problems of the expedition piled up: all the time wasted in Quiculo, the lack of porters to carry artillery pieces, the desertion of members of the expedition (mainly porters), the lack of provisions and soldiers, especially *guerra preta*. On top of all that, Captain Diniz became sick while stationed in Quiculo. Despite all of this, he decided to march to Quilumata with whatever the remaining porters could carry. Since he could not trust *soba* Capembe, he ordered the "sons" of Peringue and Molundo to carry the provisions, which had decreased considerably following weeks in Quiculo¹¹⁷⁷.

Delays and Desertions

On 5 October 1811, the expedition was camped close to the *libata* of Quilumata, which constituted the border between the district of Dombe Grande and Quilengues. According to the "Mundombe" porters, tradition and old agreements authorized them to carry loads only until Quilumata. From there, "Muquilengue" porters were responsible to carry the expedition's

¹¹⁷⁵ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 97v.-98, "Em data de 23 de setembro de 1811, estando no mesmo Arraial do Dombe Grande", (23 September 1811).

¹¹⁷⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 103v.-104v., "Em data de 17 de outubro de 1811 no sítio de Quilumata", (17 October 1811).

¹¹⁷⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 103v.-104v., "Em data de 17 de outubro de 1811 no sítio de Quilumata", (17 October 1811).

provisions and armaments to Salvaterra dos Magos¹¹⁷⁸. Captain Diniz sent word to the regent of Quilengues, Captain Manoel José de Souza, requesting one-hundred and fifty porters to continue his journey. These new porters were to be enough to replace Capembe's men, who had been carrying the provisions, and take care of the artillery pieces and ammunitions as well¹¹⁷⁹.

The fact was that the load of provisions was getting lighter: the expedition was taking much longer than previously expected to reach its destiny and the soldiers had eaten great part of what they brought from Benguela. The situation was worsened by the fact that the production of food in Quilengues had been very low in the preceding years, a consequence of both droughts and wars. No provisions could be found in Quilumata. Hence, both soldiers and porters began suffering from the lack of food. Some began to flee¹¹⁸⁰. One of these deserters confessed when captured that hunger was the reason that had made him run away¹¹⁸¹. In Salvaterra dos Magos, the situation was not much different. The regent of Quilengues reported that his soldiers suffered great deprivations, such as lack of food and basic medical supplies, and that they had not been paid their salaries in nine months¹¹⁸².

Captain Diniz tried to acquire more porters with the *soba* of Quilumata. He also sent a message to the *soba* of Socoval questioning his absence and his lack of support for the expedition. By then, Captain Diniz had already heard rumors that Socoval was opposed to the expedition because of the presence of *soba* Capembe, who had threatened him. The commander of the expedition also sent messages to other *sobas* of Quilengues asking for help, but they too did not reply. Rumors had it that the *soba* of Socoval had threatened to punish anyone helping the expedition¹¹⁸³. Despite all of these problems, Captain Diniz explained to the governor of Benguela

¹¹⁷⁸ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 121-123v., “Cinco cartas de ofício dirigidos em ano próximo passado de 1811, pelo Capitão Administrador da Mineração de Enxofre Hipólito Ferreira da Silva”, (12 Augusto to 30 November 1811).

¹¹⁷⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

¹¹⁸⁰ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

¹¹⁸¹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 106v-107, “Em 28 de outubro de 1811, estando no Sítio de Quilumata”, (28 October 1811).

¹¹⁸² ANA, Códice 445, fl. 77, “Carta do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza”, (6 February 1811).

¹¹⁸³ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

that he could only dismiss *soba* Capembe and his people once the *soba* of Quilumata or the regent of Quilengues had answered his calls for help¹¹⁸⁴.

After two weeks of waiting in vain for help from either Quilumata or Quilengues, Captain Diniz wrote a long letter to the governor of Benguela with a summary of complaints. One of these reveals the level of distrust that had developed between the captain and the *sobas* accompanying him. He first asserted that they had presented fewer warriors and porters than they were capable of. According to Captain Diniz, the latter did not amount to one fifth of the *sobas*' subjects ready for war. He also had doubts about the circumstances surrounding a great number of desertions that the expedition had recently experienced and conjectured that the *sobas* endorsed many of them¹¹⁸⁵.

On October 21, Captain Diniz still expected to get porters from Quilengues, Sapa and Janjala in order to move to the *sobado* of Lumbimbe, where he planned to question the *soba* about his raids against the "Mundombes". Once again, however, he did not receive a reply from the local *sobas*. So he decided to march to Lumbimbe only with the ammunition, leaving all provisions behind in Quilumata. On the eve of their departure, twenty-five of Capembe's subjects deserted, after the corporal of the *guerra preta* gave them the signal, by shaking a "rattle" (*chocalho*), that they would march the following morning¹¹⁸⁶. The expedition thus became once again paralyzed in Quilumata.

When Capembe and his *macotas* informed Captain Diniz about the desertions, the latter at first decided not to punish them. After all, this could harm the advance of the expedition even further. However, he soon demanded that they provide the names of those who had deserted, so that they could be punished later, once the expedition had returned to Dombe Grande. Captain Diniz claimed that this was the procedure adopted when the same happened with the "sons" of Peringue and Molundo. However, *soba* Capembe and his *macotas* refused to provide their names, arguing this was not the tradition. Besides, *soba* Capembe tried to justify their desertion by saying that hunger had forced them to flee. Captain Diniz considered their reply an "act of intolerable

¹¹⁸⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 102-102v., "Em data de 7 de outubro de 1811", (7 October 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 103v-104v., "Em data de 17 de outubro de 1811 no sítio de Quilumata", (17 October 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 106v-107, "Em 28 de outubro de 1811, estando no Sítio de Quilumata", (28 October 1811).

¹¹⁸⁵ "Souva Capembe que não deixa com dissimulação de estar contra seus filhos que o tem desamparado com as cargas", in ANA, Códice 445, fls. 103v-104v., "Em data de 17 de outubro de 1811 no sítio de Quilumata", (17 October 1811).

¹¹⁸⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 106v.-107, "Em 28 de outubro de 1811, estando no Sítio de Quilumata", (28 October 1811).

audacity” and quickly arrested *soba* Capembe and eleven of his *macotas* for eight days to set an example¹¹⁸⁷.

The attack on Quilumata

At the beginning of November 1811, the expedition remained stuck close to the *libata* of Quilumata. Captain Diniz then wrote to the governor of Benguela complaining yet again about the delays caused by the lack of porters. He also reported that the soldiers were going through harsh times because of the lack of provisions. The captain further informed that since leaving Dombe Grande the expedition had not found one place with agricultural produce available: “not even one root of manioc, not a corn cob, and not even beans”¹¹⁸⁸. Sick soldiers were given small amounts of dry fish and rice to sustain themselves. If it was not for the manioc flour brought from Benguela and the cattle seized from *soba* Canacanzamba, Captain Diniz confessed, there would be no soldiers or porters left under his control¹¹⁸⁹.

During this second, forced stay in Quilumata, Captain Diniz learned of a new attack against *quipacas* that belonged to *sobas* Peringue and Molundo in Dombe Grande. The nephew of a *macota* of Quilumata, Chandumbo, had led a raid on five *quipacas* that contained cattle belonging to both *sobas*. According to informants, *soba* Canacanzamba of Quiculo, who had his cattle seized by the expedition with the help of Peringue and Molundo, was involved in the attacks. Quilumata was accused of sheltering the “bandits”. To the captain’s surprise, the *soba* of Quilumata did not deny his involvement with the “bandits”, but justified that he did not convoke the attack. He disclosed that the real person behind the attack was Candomba, nephew of *soba* Capembe¹¹⁹⁰.

This was another story of betrayal and secret alliances among African rulers. Candomba of Capembe and Chandunbo of Quilumata had summoned the “sons” of Canacanzamba of Quiculo to attack the *quipacas* of the *sobas* Peringue and Molundo in Dombe Grande. The *soba* of Quilumata seems not to have participated directly in the attack, but he held part of the cattle looted.

¹¹⁸⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 106v-107, “Em 28 de outubro de 1811, estando no Sítio de Quilumata”, (28 October 1811).

¹¹⁸⁸ “...se não tem encontrado uma só raiz de mandioca, nenhuma só espiga de milho, e menos feijão”, in ANA, Códice 445, fls. 107-108, “No sítio de Quilumata em data de 4 de novembro de 1811”, (4 November 1811).

¹¹⁸⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 107-108, “No sítio de Quilumata em data de 4 de novembro de 1811”, (4 November 1811).

¹¹⁹⁰ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 110-110v, “Outro officio em data de 6 de novembro de 1811, estando no mesmo sítio de Quilumata”, (6 November 1811).

Sobas Peringue and Molundo wanted to solve their problem with Quilumata through their own traditions (*mucanos*), what Captain Diniz called “gentile laws”. First, they reminded Quilumata that he also had part of his cattle in *quipacas* of Dombe Grande. Then, the *sobas* sent him their “ritual canes” (*bastões*), which traditionally symbolized, according to Captain Diniz’s understanding, the desire to reach a friendly agreement¹¹⁹¹.

The accusers of the *soba* of Quilumata alleged that he had already received his part of the loot from the warlords who had raided the *quipacas* of the *sobas* of Dombe Pequeno. Quilumata said he could return the cattle and promised that he would try to bring those responsible for the raid to repay *sobas* Peringue and Molundo as well. But, fearing he would run to the hills, Captain Diniz decided to arrest the *soba* of Quilumata until he had paid his debts. The arrest of the *soba* of the land outraged the *macotas* of Quilumata. They visited their *soba*, who was being held at the military camp, and deliberated with him about the situation¹¹⁹².

The elders of Quilumata, together with their *soba*, decided to resist and not to pay ransom for their ruler. After leaving for their *libatas*, the *macotas* later returned with a group of warriors who invaded the military camp in an attempt to free their *soba*. Along the way, they attacked “black servants” of the expedition who were in the bush gathering wood. They also kidnapped a “son” of Molundo and an enslaved woman owned by a member of the expedition¹¹⁹³. The rampage created a great tumult in the camp, and led to an immediate response from Captain Diniz. He dispatched fifteen soldiers, led by two junior officers, backed by their entire *guerra preta*. The Luso-African troops overran the *libata* of the *soba* of Quilumata and burned everything. The captain bragged to the governor of Benguela that the loot from that *libata* generated enough provisions to feed the troops and all other “blacks”. Captain Diniz further mentioned that some “old black women”, who happened to be relatives of the *soba*, had been captured during the assault and that they remained under arrest in the company of their ruler¹¹⁹⁴.

¹¹⁹¹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 110-110v., “Outro ofício em data de 6 de novembro de 1811, estando no mesmo sítio de Quilumata”, (6 November 1811).

¹¹⁹² ANA, Códice 445, fls. 110-110v., “Outro ofício em data de 6 de novembro de 1811, estando no mesmo sítio de Quilumata”, (6 November 1811).

¹¹⁹³ *Ajudante de Cirurgia* of Quilengues.

¹¹⁹⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 110-110v., “Outro ofício em data de 6 de novembro de 1811, estando no mesmo sítio de Quilumata”, (6 November 1811).

Interestingly, there is no mention of any other captives made during the assault, which does not mean that there were none. Indeed, that the attack on Quilumata generated a great number of captives for the slave trade is confirmed in a requisition by Captain Diniz for forty to fifty additional “iron shackles” (*malungas de ferro*) for the *libambo* of the corporal of the *guerra preta*. The request was made on 7 November, the day after the leader of the expedition informed the governor of Benguela about the success of the attack against Quilumata that left them without shackles¹¹⁹⁵.

On the road to Quilengues

Captain Diniz expected to get help from Salvaterra dos Magos in order to move out of Quilumata after the end of the raid. However, it took more than two weeks for the regent of Quilengues, Captain Souza, to receive the letter from Diniz requesting help. Despite his best intentions, the regent could not gather all of the porters requested by Captain Diniz at once. He sent orders to several *moradores* in Quilengues to gather as many men as they could, among subjects of the *sobas* and their own slaves, and march to Quilumata to rescue the expedition. The regent sent soldier João Bento to Calunga with orders for *morador* Francisco Carvalho Velho. Soldier Joaquim de Santa Anna was dispatched to Bongo with a letter for *morador* Joaquim João de Boaventura. Soldier João left for Mussango with orders for *morador* Antonio Pacheco de Paiva. Corporal Manoel João Mathias was dispatched to the big *libata* of Socoval, and from there Lieutenant Thomas Nicolau and soldier João Manoel were sent to Embambas with similar orders for *morador* Pedro Vicente Durão¹¹⁹⁶.

In a letter from 28 October 1811, the then regent of Quilengues, Captain Souza, explained that the “gentiles” were “restless”, that they had abandoned the “royal service”, and that most of them no longer obeyed his orders. They were especially resistant to providing porters for the expedition camped in Quilumata. Moreover, many had begun fleeing from their *libatas* because of the threat of war. Captain Souza argued that it was useless to arrest one or two *macotas* to force

¹¹⁹⁵ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 110v.-111, “Em data de 7 de novembro de 1811 achando-se no dito sitio de Quilumata”, (7 November 1811).

¹¹⁹⁶ “... cada um destes moradores é assistente nestes mesmos lugares”, in ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

them to provide the necessary help, because the others would simply run away. Although he could threaten *moradores* and African rulers to follow his orders, the regent of Quilengues pondered that these threats could lead to rebellions and deaths, especially if they involved violence against *macotas*¹¹⁹⁷.

On 1 November 1811, Captain Souza informed the governor of Benguela about the situation of the expedition commanded by Captain Diniz. He informed that the “Mundombes” had abandoned the artillery pieces and ammunition in Quilumata and that Captain Diniz had requested one hundred and fifty porters to continue his march. The regent of Quilengues explained how difficult it was to obtain porters in Quilengues, but asserted that he had sent word to the most important *moradores* of Quilengues ordering them to summon all vassal *sobas* in the surrounding region. These *sobas* should provide the necessary porters¹¹⁹⁸.

However, to Captain Souza’s surprise, the *sobas* replied they would not send porters because they knew that the expedition led by Captain Diniz was helping their enemies, including *soba* Capembe. They understood that the goal of the expedition was to destroy the *sobados* of Quilengues and enslave their people. After their refusal to collaborate, the regent sent new orders to all *moradores* who owned *libatas* in Quilengues instructing them to gather their slaves and march to Quilumata on 5 November. Not all of the *moradores* replied to the new orders, especially those who lived far from Salvaterra dos Magos: and those who did were full of excuses, as we will see below¹¹⁹⁹.

Pedro Vicente Durão, *morador* in Embambas, replied to Captain Souza saying that he could not comply with the request to send forty men to the expedition because he did not have access to such a large number of porters. The *morador* tried to get help in the *libata* of his *agregado* Catebe, but the latter’s “sons” had been dispatched to Quissungu and Bumbo with the *fazendas* of the *sertanejo* Luiz Gonzaga. Pedro Vicente Durão then sent his own slaves, but the number was still not sufficient. In his reply, the *morador* in Embambas confirmed the rumors that there was a verbal

¹¹⁹⁷ “Alvorçado”, in ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

¹¹⁹⁸ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 115v-117, “Três ofícios do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza, remetidos a este governo no ano de 1811”, (June to November 1811).

¹¹⁹⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 115v-117, “Três ofícios do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza, remetidos a este governo no ano de 1811”, (June to November 1811).

order from the *soba* of Socoval prohibiting everyone from sending porters to assist the expedition¹²⁰⁰.

Lieutenant Thomas Nicolao was sent to Socoval and Embambas. He too failed in his mission to acquire porters for the expedition. Lieutenant Nicolao explained himself thus: after days of hearing from local African rulers that they were gathering people and provisions for the trip, he realized that he was being fooled. None of them appeared as promised. Lieutenant Nicolao then sent a soldier under his command to question the “gentiles” as to what happened, only to hear their defiant reply that if Captain Diniz wanted the artillery he should carry it himself¹²⁰¹.

Morador Francisco Carvalho Velho also forwarded an excuse for not presenting the requested porters. He said that after days spent gathering twenty porters from Calunga, they refused to do the job by themselves. According to this *morador*, as soon as they realized that no one else was sending help, they started to shake their heads. According to these Calunga porters, the artillery and ammunition were too heavy for them to carry alone. It was a job for eighty to one hundred men. They informed that they would march to meet the expedition only when the *morador* Carvalho Velho had gathered the remaining porters¹²⁰².

Even *morador* Carvalho Velho did not present himself, although he asserted that everything on his part was ready: “only” the porters were missing. He justified his absence because he “did not want to show up empty handed” (*não ir assim com as mãos abanando*). Without porters, this *morador* argued, he would be a mere adornment (*porque eu lá sem carregadores vou fazer figura de pau*). When the regent of Quilengues informed Captain Diniz about Carvalho Velho’s decision not to integrate the expedition, he complained that “everyone in the *sertões* is an absolute ruler, and they only obey colonial orders when it pleases them”¹²⁰³.

The regent of Quilengues, Captain Souza, further warned the governor of Benguela that the expedition was under great threat because *sobas* Tinde, Quibonga, and Bongo had summoned their warriors to invade the roads of Quilengues and attack the expedition. They were to be later joined by *soba* Quingolo. The regent further warned Captain Diniz that the road from Benguela to

¹²⁰⁰ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

¹²⁰¹ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

¹²⁰² ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

¹²⁰³ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).

Quilengues was unsecure and that local warriors were unbeatable in this environment. If they ambushed the expedition, they could very well destroy it. Captain Souza justified, in turn, his delay in rescuing the expedition by pointing out that it took a lot of effort to gather the necessary armed men to march to Quilumata¹²⁰⁴.

On 11 November 1811, Captain Diniz decided to resume his march to Salvaterra dos Magos, where he would set a base camp. Despite news that some *moradores* from Quilengues were on their way with porters to help the expedition, he decided to leave before their arrival. Since there were not enough porters to carry all of the disassembled parts of the artillery, Captain Diniz ordered his men to assemble and carry it whole. On the road, the caravan met the *moradores* from Quilengues with forty-six slave porters. The commander ordered his men to disassemble the artillery and use the new porters to carry it. As the Calunga porters had warned, this was work for a hundred men. A greater number of porters meant that they could constantly alternate the heavy load among themselves. The few porters brought by the *moradores* of Quilengues suffered a lot to complete their task, because they could not take turns carrying the military equipment. This also meant a slow march with many stops along the way. The heavy loads provoked serious injuries on the porters' shoulders and at least five of them ran away. Captain Diniz confessed that he thought that they would not make it to Salvaterra dos Magos. Five days of marching and another to rest were required before reaching their destination¹²⁰⁵.

The road to Quilengues was full of danger. Local warlords expected the expedition, as the regent of Quilengues had previously warned¹²⁰⁶, because it could not travel through the *sertões* unnoticed. The main caravan alone totaled more than two-hundred and fifty men, including one hundred and thirty six porters, sixty soldiers in both companies, ten superior and lower level officers, and fifty-five *guerra preta* soldiers¹²⁰⁷. Then there were the *sobas* and their warriors, and behind them lines of slaves in shackles (*libambos*). The caravan moved slow and drew much

¹²⁰⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fl. 115v.-117, "Três ofícios do Capitão-mor de Quilengues Manoel José de Souza, remetidos a este governo no ano de 1811", (June to November 1811).

¹²⁰⁵ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111-111v., "Em data de 11 de novembro de 1811, achando-se arraialado no sítio de Quilumata, (11 November 1811).

¹²⁰⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v.-113v., "Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues", (1 December 1811).

¹²⁰⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 113v., "Mapa do estado atual da Tropa de Linha das duas Companhias de Infantaria e Artilharia da Guarnição de Benguela em Diligência do Real Serviço na Povoação de Quilengues da mesma Capitania", (5 December 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 113v., "Lista da Guerra Preta armada e carregadores que existem até 1 de dezembro de 1811", (5 December 1811).

attention, being closely observed wherever it passed. Captain Diniz pondered about the danger of ambush by “black warriors” that used guerilla tactics to assault parts of the main caravan, breaking their line and creating havoc. The attackers would then grab whatever they could and disappear into the bush¹²⁰⁸.

Captain Diniz marched straight to Salvaterra dos Magos, from where he planned to dispatch military personnel to Lumbimbe, probably under the advice of the regent of Quilengues. He placed the soldiers brought by the regent at the rear of the main caravan and warned his men to remain vigilant. The rest of the march to Salvaterra dos Magos was harsh, but safe. The only losses were the five injured porters who ran away. Nevertheless, Captain Diniz reported “traces of hordes of black bandits” (*rastros de multidão de negros ladrões*), with some heading east, deep into the *sertões*, where they would attack the caravans of *pumbeiros* who traded in slave markets (*pumbos*) in the far interior of the continent. Others marched west, aiming at the “Mundombes” in Dombe Grande. Both *sobas* Peringue and Molundo also brought him news of recent raids upon their own *quipacas*¹²⁰⁹.

Military camp in Salvaterra dos Magos

Once in Salvaterra dos Magos, the expedition was met with apathy by local *sobas* and *moradores* alike. Captain Diniz accused everyone of disobedience, including the “Muhumbe” potentates, who used to be considered among the most loyal and servile vassals in Quilengues. After fifteen days camped close to the settlement of Salvaterra dos Magos, he complained that no “Muhumbe” leader had come to pay him homage. Even, the *soba* of Socoval did not show up and did not respond to several attempts at contact on his part¹²¹⁰.

On the same day that the expedition arrived in Salvaterra dos Magos, Captain Diniz received reports of an attack on a local *libata* owned by *morador* Thomas Rodrigues da Conceição. He heard the screams coming from the *libata* and dispatched all of his soldiers and *guerra preta*

¹²⁰⁸ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v-113v., “Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues”, (1 December 1811).

¹²⁰⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v-113v., “Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues”, (1 December 1811).

¹²¹⁰ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v.-113v., “Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues”, (1 December 1811).

to intervene. When the troops arrived, however, the attackers had swiftly retreated into the bush, so that no one was caught. According to witnesses, the attack was carried out by a combined force of “Mundombe” and “Mucuando” warriors. They stole cattle that belonged to the *morador* and killed one of his *quimbares* who was grazing them¹²¹¹.

The expedition had brought the *soba* of Quilumata in shackles to Salvaterra dos Magos. After almost one month under arrest, Quilumata negotiated his freedom with *sobas* Peringue and Molundo. They reached a friendly agreement that the *soba* of Quilumata would pay three-hundred head of cattle and ten sheep. Quilumata had already returned eighty-two head of cattle when he was captured, and he agreed to pay the remaining two hundred and eighteen head of cattle and ten sheep if Captain Diniz allowed him to return to his *libata* to gather the animals¹²¹². When the *soba* of Quilumata was about to leave the military camp to return to his *libata*, *sobas* Peringue and Molundo stopped him and demanded more guarantees that he would return with their cattle. They demanded that Quilumata hand over two of his favorite women, in addition to the pawns he had already given. Since these women were daughters of close allies of Quilumata, Peringue and Molundo expected him to hurry to rescue them. According to Captain Diniz’s understanding of what he called “gentile law”, these pawns were a very important part of African political and commercial agreements¹²¹³. Thus, the *soba* of Quilumata “knew the dangers” in not rescuing a pawn. The two females were handed over to Captain Diniz and were to stay under his protection until the fulfilment of the agreement: but they were later sent to the fortress in Benguela. Captain Diniz charged the royal treasury of Benguela for his expenses with the maintenance of these pawns from 5 December 1811 to 26 March 1812¹²¹⁴.

In response to the agreement reached by the *sobas*, Captain Diniz ordered the release of the subjects of Quilumata who had been arrested during the attack on his *libata*. There were probably some *macotas* in the group as well, because he mentioned that they were always debating cases related to their “sons” while under captivity. These discussions were so heated that

¹²¹¹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v.-113v., “Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues”, (1 December 1811).

¹²¹² ANA, Códice 445, fls. 112v.-113v., “Em data de 5 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (5 December 1811).

¹²¹³ For more on the institution of pawnship in West Central Africa, see Chapter 4.

¹²¹⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 112v.-113v., “Em data de 5 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (5 December 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

sometimes the captain was forced to intervene to avoid greater turmoil. In fact, Captain Diniz revealed that he was happy to free the *soba* and his *macotas*, and thereby get rid of that problem¹²¹⁵.

Before he left for his lands, the *soba* of Quilumata shared one last piece of information he had gathered from his subjects about the cattle raided from the *quipacas* of *sobas* Peringue and Molundo. He told Captain Diniz that Chandumbo (Quilumata) and Camdomba (Capembe) had in fact brought the stolen cattle to Quilumata, but in order to move them to another site, they associated themselves with a local “black” man called Soma. The cattle were moved back to Dombe Grande where they remained in the *quipacas* of Soma’s uncles Chacatua, Chaquipera, and Chamungongo. Part of the cattle, he revealed, was later taken to the *libata* of *soba* Capembe. The *soba* of Quilumata said he feared the “bandits” would vanish if they saw his men arriving in Dombe Grande to collect the cattle, so he petitioned Captain Diniz to order the corporal of Dombe Grande to arrest the said thieves and Soma’s uncles who were hiding them. Quilumata also expressed the desire to present himself to the governor of Benguela, together with the other two disputing *sobas* to have a final decision about their *mucano*, thus using the governor as mediator for their conflict¹²¹⁶.

After the revelations that *soba* Capembe was involved in the attack on the *quipacas* of *sobas* of Peringue and Molundo his presence in the expedition became unsustainable. Captain Diniz ordered *soba* Capembe to return to Dombe Grande and resume his work in the sulphur plant. He advised the *soba* to leave one of his *macota* behind to represent him at the audience with the *soba* of Lumbimbe about the attacks on his *quipacas*. *Soba* Capembe, however, refused to leave. He argued that his presence in the audience with the *soba* of Lumbimbe was indispensable and that he could not simply leave a *macota* representing him in a *mucano*. A *macota* could not speak against a *soba*, thus only he could respond to any lies or offenses the *soba* of Lumbimbe might present during his testimony. Captain Diniz understood the point made by *soba* Capembe and did not press the matter for a couple of days, allowing the latter and his people to remain in Salvaterra dos Magos. However, he soon received a letter from the governor of Benguela, Antonio Rebelo

¹²¹⁵ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 112v.-113v., “Em data de 5 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (5 December 1811).

¹²¹⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 112v.-113v., “Em data de 5 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (5 December 1811).

de Andrade Vasconcelos e Sousa (January 1811 to July 1812), ordering the immediate return of *soba* Capembe to Benguela to answer for what the governor classified as “crimes”¹²¹⁷.

The governor of Benguela accused *soba* Capembe of disobedience and treason. Capembe was blamed for disrupting the march by refusing to provide porters for the expedition and warriors for the *guerra preta*. Because of communication problems between Quilengues and Benguela, which Captain Diniz suspected were intentionally created by Capembe and his men, the governor still did not know about the more serious accusations of how the *soba* and his men had supported the escape of Canacanzamba and were behind the recent raids on the *quipacas* of *sobas* Peringue and Molundo¹²¹⁸.

The escape of Lumbimbe

On 26 December 1811, the governor of Benguela informed the governor of Angola, José de Oliveira Barbosa (1810-1815), about the “rebellious acts” promoted by the *sobas* of Socoval and Lumbimbe and by the “Muhumbe” potentates of Quilengues. Captain Diniz accused the *sobas* of Quilengues of denying assistance to the expedition, which they were obliged to provide as “vassals of Portugal”. They were also behind several cattle raids against the “Mundombes”, even during the expedition launched to punish these same “crimes”. The governor of Benguela confirmed Captain Diniz’s report by citing similar news from the regent of Quilengues about recent acts of “disobedience” from the “gentile”: they had completely refrained from the “royal service” and made constant assaults on *moradores* and other “gentiles”¹²¹⁹.

After receiving the governor’s orders, Captain Diniz tried to convince *soba* Capembe to travel to Benguela in the company of the regent of Quilengues, but the *soba* still refused to leave. The captain was concerned that if he further pressured *soba* Capembe he could simply flee and disappear into the *sertões*. He tried to convince the *soba* to collaborate by freeing one of his *macota*

¹²¹⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v., “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

¹²¹⁸ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v., “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

¹²¹⁹ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 18, “Ofícios números 101 a 120 do governador de Benguela para o governador de Angola”, (18 December 1812), No. 116.

and two other subjects who had been captured by a local patrol while trying to flee, with their guns, back to Dombe Grande¹²²⁰.

Since Captain Diniz could not convince *soba* Capembe to leave Quilengues before the meeting with the *soba* of Lumbimbe, he tried to have it take place as soon as possible. He sent orders to the *soba* of Lumbimbe to come to Salvaterra dos Magos immediately, but his emissaries found no one at his *libata*: everyone had left to some hideout on the hills of Quilengues. The captain also tried to summon the *soba* of Socoval to be part of the meeting, but was equally unsuccessful. In fact, according to informants, the *soba* of Socoval had left his *libata* with his entire people even before the arrival of the expedition to Quilumata. The “Muhumbe” potentates could not be found in their lands either¹²²¹.

Captain Diniz blamed the “Mundombes” for disseminating news about the expedition and attacks on the *sobados* of Quilengues, which scared the *sobas* into hiding. In addition, the death of a wife (*nana*) of the *soba* of Lumbimbe, who had been kept as a pawn, had caused outrage among the local populations. Since most “gentiles” in the interior had some kind of family tie (many of them being relatives of *macotas* and *sobas*), the news about the death of the *nana* of Lumbimbe spread fast. The news passed on from mouth to ear, Captain Diniz explained, until it reached the *soba* of Lumbimbe, who decided to abandon his *libata* with all his people to avoid a new encounter with the expedition¹²²². *Soba* Capembe, in his turn, concluded that the *sobas* of Quilengues wanted to remain at war with him, since they all fled the meeting, spoiling their chance to make peace. Capembe informed the captain that he had a great number of “sons” that he could bring from Dombe Grande to rescue his cattle from the *quipacas* of Lumbimbe. They were probably the same “sons” he had refused to present to the expedition earlier and that Captain Diniz always complained about¹²²³.

Captain Diniz refused Capembe’s proposition and told him to return home and resume his work at the sulphur plant, while he remained in Quilengues and waited for an opportunity to

¹²²⁰ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v., “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

¹²²¹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v., “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

¹²²² ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v., “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

¹²²³ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v., “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

apprehend the *soba* of Lumbimbe. Some *moradores* told Captain Diniz that Lumbimbe never really intended to make a peace agreement and that his plan had always been to run to the hills. It was common knowledge among African rulers that the Luso-Africans forces were unable to chase them once they had taken refuge in the rocky hills of Quilengues, especially without porters to carry their military equipment. Cutting their supply of porters and retreating to the bush or nearby hills proved efficient tactics of resistance. The *sobas* in the *sertões* of Benguela knew, according to those *moradores*, that the “war of the king [of Portugal] could only punish those who waited for it”¹²²⁴.

Rebellion and resistance in Quilengues

On 10 January 1812, Captain Diniz wrote to the new regent of Quilengues, Captain Manoel José da Silva Pereira, requesting help to summon all *moradores* under his jurisdiction with their slaves and *agregados* to help the expedition in the name of the “royal service”. They should present themselves at the military camp in Salvaterra dos Magos in 8 days. Otherwise, he threatened, they would be punished accordingly. He also made a summary of the 54 days he spent stuck in Quilengues because of lack of porters. Captain Diniz confessed that he felt hopeless and frustrated because despite being “gentle” and “friendly” to *moradores* and other inhabitants of Quilengues, he had received no support from them. He blamed this rebellious behaviour on the *soba* of Socoval, whose verbal orders prohibiting any kind of help for the expedition scared lesser *sobas*, potentates and *moradores* alike. In the case of *moradores*, the majority owed respect to African authorities because most had some kind of family tie with local *sobas* and *macotas*¹²²⁵.

In his 3 February, 1812, letter to the new regent of Quilengues (later forwarded to the governor of Benguela), Captain Diniz revealed that the *soba* of Socoval had now the support of the *soba* of Caluquembe (Nano). They intended to besiege his troops and starve them to death, according to the captain. He reported that some *moradores* of Salvaterra dos Magos knew where the *soba* of Socoval was hiding and were helping his so-called “rebellion”. They visited Socoval in his hideout in the bush and brought him gifts. Captain Diniz decided then to turn the *soba* of

¹²²⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v., “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

¹²²⁵ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, “Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (3 February 1812).

Socoval into his main target. Everyone helping him should be punished as well, together with all of those who did not provide porters and *guerra preta* within the period stipulated¹²²⁶.

Captain Diniz was also aware that Socoval's warriors spied on the expedition before his arrival in Quilumata. They followed the caravan closely and kept their *soba* informed about its movements, or lack thereof. On one occasion, Luso-African scouts managed to capture four subjects of Caluquembe spying on the caravan from a certain distance. They also spotted about eight "sons" of Caluquembe carrying loads of ammunition to the *libata* of Socoval. Although the *libata* was abandoned by its inhabitants, who took refuge in the fortified hills with their *soba*, there were reports of great movement of people at the main *libata* of Socoval gathering for war¹²²⁷.

According to Captain Diniz, the *soba* of Socoval was in collusion with the *sobas* of Bonga, Lumbimbe and Caluquembe to destroy the expedition. The "Mundombe" members of the caravan feared leaving their military camp because "Muquilengues", "Muhumbe" potentates and "other blacks" were hidden in the bush waiting for an opportunity to attack. The unification of all peoples of Quilengues against him seemed to be Diniz's main but unintended accomplishment, besides the great number of slaves that he captured along the way¹²²⁸.

The caravan had recently received more shackles (*malungas*), but the lack of porters did not allow Captain Diniz to put them to use. The slaver repeatedly requested help from the regent of Quilengues and the *capitão-mor* of Caconda, reminding them that if he did not punish the rebels and pacify the *sertões* the few vassals that the Portuguese still had in Quilengues would suffer the consequences as soon as his troops left for the coast¹²²⁹. Indeed, Captain Diniz had to act fast if he wanted to "punish" any "rebel" and put some more captives in his *libambo* because the rainy season had long begun and the roads were getting difficult to cross for the bush was tall and dense, which helped the enemy guerrilla tactics and increased the danger of attacks by wild beasts. Moreover, the rivers had overflowed due to the rains and were crowded with crocodiles¹²³⁰.

¹²²⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, "Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz", (3 February 1812).

¹²²⁷ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, "Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz", (3 February 1812).

¹²²⁸ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, "Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz", (3 February 1812).

¹²²⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, "Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz", (3 February 1812).

¹²³⁰ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, "Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz", (9 March 1812).

Nonetheless, the main problem that jeopardized the presence of the expedition in Quilengues was the lack of provisions. Hunger became the main tactic used by Socoval to defeat Captain Diniz and his soldiers. The *soba* of Socoval prohibited the local population (“Muquilengues” and *moradores*) to sell provisions, creating an environment of malnutrition, sickness and despair that pushed soldiers and porters into desertion. Captain Diniz complained that the *moradores* stopped accepting goods commonly used for trade in the *sertões* of Benguela, tobacco in this case, and that African rulers began attacking whoever insisted in buying provisions from them¹²³¹. He further reported that some of his men had been attacked when trying to buy provisions from a former *macota* of Caluquembe, who was now a subject of Socoval. He had sent two emissaries to the *libata* of Bumba-ia-Lombe to buy some chickens to feed a few sick soldiers. When the *macota* saw the emissaries entering his *libata*, he rushed to the gates armed with javelins (*azagaias*) and shot at them without ever asking what they wanted. A “Mundombe” warrior tried to intervene, but Bumba-ia-Lombe shouted for help. A “crowd of black warriors” quickly responded and scared the emissaries away. Bumba-ia-Lombe ordered his men to warn the fleeing emissaries that he was a *macota* of Socoval now, and that he did not recognize the authority of the captain of the Luso-African expedition. He did not want spies in his *libata*: hence, he was not going to sell provisions to any soldiers¹²³².

After the emissaries reported back to their military camp in Salvaterra dos Magos, Captain Diniz ordered the arrest of the *macota* for disobedience. On the following day, three soldiers accompanied by *guerra preta* warriors commanded by Corporal Joanes José Gaspar marched on the *libata* of Bumba-ia-Lombe. Once again, as soon as they were seen entering the *libata*, the Luso-African soldiers were overrun by a crowd of warriors armed with guns, composed of people from that *libata* and neighbouring ones. The sounds of the battle and the screams of the warriors could be heard back at the military camp, which prompted Captain Diniz to dispatch reinforcements¹²³³.

At the end of the skirmish, the Luso-African troops counted three wounded men (one soldier, one *guerra preta* and another “black man”), while the forces of *macota* Bumba-ia-Lombe lost at least one man before retreating to the hills. The soldiers looted the *libata*, seizing three

¹²³¹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, “Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (3 February 1812).

¹²³² ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, “Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (3 February 1812).

¹²³³ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, “Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (3 February 1812).

women with their children and sixty-six head of cattle. The cattle were shared among those involved in the skirmish: forty cows for the colonial soldiers, ten for the corporal of the *guerra preta* and his men, and sixteen for the other “Mundombe” *sobas* and their subjects. The captives remained in the captain’s possession. At the end of his report, Captain Diniz praised the skills of the “Mundombe” warriors who had joined in the skirmish, suggesting that they had developed a special distaste for the “rebellious Muquilengues” that they had been fighting against¹²³⁴.

The “punitive expedition” faced another deliberate act of resistance in a region called Tinde. While trying to gather porters, Captain Diniz attempted to get hold of another corporal who was serving as regent of Tinde. He ordered two *moradores* from Salvaterra dos Magos to deliver his request to the corporal, who was stationed in Pacuto. The *moradores* had to pay a visit to the *soba* of Tinde to ask for authorization to cross his lands to Pacuto, but when they arrived on the margins of the Coporolo River, they could not find the rope bridge used to cross this large river full of crocodiles. They saw a “black man” grazing cattle on the opposite margin and shouted for help, asking him to inform the *soba* of Tinde they had an embassy for him from the expedition camped in Quilengues, as well as orders for the regent of Tinde¹²³⁵.

The *moradores* ordered their *quimbares* to set up a rope bridge while they waited for the reply from the *soba*. Suddenly, they started hearing shouts coming from the *libata* across the river. A few moments later, about “a thousand armed black warriors” swarmed the opposite margin, aggressively shouting at them. The warriors threatened the *moradores*, ordering them to leave immediately if they did not want to lose their lives. They also said that their *soba* did not want either friendship or embassies from Captain Diniz, because they knew that the expedition had come to make war on their *libatas* due to their disputes with the “Mundombes”. The local warriors allegedly had acquired this information from “white” traders who had recently crossed their land, on their way down from Caconda¹²³⁶.

The *moradores* were then fired upon and had to flee under enemy bullets, which was only possible, according to them, because the rope bridge was still down and the Coporolo River was

¹²³⁴ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, “Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (3 February 1812).

¹²³⁵ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812).

¹²³⁶ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812).

too full to be crossed otherwise¹²³⁷. Some time later, Captain Diniz was informed that the “rebel” *sobas* of Tinde, Bongo and Pacuto and the *sobetas* of Nioa, Mireca, Quipasseu and Sapa had gathered in the territory of Tinde to resist against any attempt at an incursion by the expedition. He also received reports that a war party led by the “Mucuandos” who had just crossed Lumbimbe to the Nimbo River¹²³⁸.

Return to the coast

After four months in the field, including two stationed in Salvaterra dos Magos, the Luso-African soldiers had consumed all manioc flour brought from Benguela and had become completely dependent on local supplies. Captain Diniz complained that the “Mundombes” could not stand being hungry (*não toleram fomes*) and that hunger was the main reason behind desertion. Therefore, he resorted to raids to acquire provisions, since local *sobas* and potentates refused to sell them supplies because of Socoval’s prohibition¹²³⁹. Captain Diniz’s new attacks against local populations destroyed the little support that he still had from some *moradores* in Quilengues who had rescued him in Quilumata and kept supporting his soldiers in Salvaterra dos Magos by providing them some cattle and cornstarch. He admitted that, if not for these provisions, he would have lost all of his soldiers: but even *moradores* began to refuse helping the expedition. Captain Diniz explained that perhaps only one or two *moradores* had not been born locally (*filhos da terra*) and did not have family ties to *sobas* and *macotas* in Quilengues¹²⁴⁰. Now, without their support, the expedition was stuck and hungry, as had been planned by the *soba* of Socoval. Captain Diniz began considering retreating to Benguela, but he also lacked the porters to return to the coast, turning the ordeal into a circular problem¹²⁴¹.

¹²³⁷ There are reports that during the dry season the Africans crossed dragged by their cattle, while holding their tails, but in the raining season the rivers overflowed and became full with rapids that made the crossing very complicated, see: AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

¹²³⁸ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812).

¹²³⁹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v-113v, “Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues”, (1 Dec 1811).

¹²⁴⁰ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 124-128, “Carta do Capitão Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (3 February 1812).

¹²⁴¹ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v-113v., “Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues”, (1 December 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 113v., “Mapa do estado atual da Tropa de Linha das duas Companhias de

In a desperate act of self-preservation, Captain Diniz tried once again to get help from the *soba* of Socoval. Ignoring his own condemnations against Socoval as a “rebel”, he sent three soldiers to his *libata* with a final request. The captain told the *soba* that since he did not want to help the expedition carry out the “royal service”, in this case by punishing the “rebel” *soba* of Lumbimbe, he could at least send “twenty or ten porters” to Salvaterra dos Magos to carry the military equipment back to Benguela. He hoped that once the other *sobas*, *macotas* and potentates of Quilengues saw that Socoval had sent his own “sons” to help the expedition, they would also provide some porters. However, Captain Diniz added, in case Socoval still did not want to send his “sons” to do the job, the *soba* could send his *quissongos* to the *libatas* of his subjects to request the necessary porters¹²⁴².

Captain Diniz’s emissaries left Salvaterra dos Magos on a Saturday, 7 March 1812, and marched to the big *libata* of Socoval (*a libata grande do soba do Socoval*), but found no one there. The *soba* was still hidden in the nearby hills (*furnas*). After waiting for some time, the emissaries saw the arrival of the *macotas* of Socoval, who were “sent by him to speak in his name”. The soldiers carefully followed all formalities to deliver the message in a polite and “soft manner”, as they were instructed by their captain¹²⁴³. Despite the soldiers’ best behaviour, the response given by the *macotas* was rather harsh. They said that the *soba* of Socoval was not going to execute any of the orders coming from Captain Diniz because they knew that he had come to arrest the *soba* of Lumbimbe. The *macotas* added that they knew this was indeed a slaving campaign (*cangue*) promoted by slavers in Benguela. They further revealed that they knew that no soldiers had arrived from Luanda nor from Brazil to assist the expedition, which meant that it had not been launched by high positioned officials in Angola, but by local slavers in Benguela. Besides, the expedition brought along their enemy, *soba* Capembe, who had sent word to *sobados* in Quilengues that he

Infantaria e Artilharia da Guarnição de Benguela em Diligência do Real Serviço na Povoação de Quilengues da mesma Capitania”, (5 December 1811); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 113v. “Lista da Guerra Preta armada e carregadores que existem até 1 de dezembro de 1811”, (5 December 1811); AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

¹²⁴² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

¹²⁴³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

was coming to take revenge for previous attacks with Luso-African forces on his side. The *macotas* concluded by saying that, although their *soba* had no personal problems against either the regent of Quilengues or the captain, he was not going to comply. If Captain Diniz wanted to return to Benguela, he should call the porters who had brought him from Quilumata to Quilengues to take him back¹²⁴⁴.

After gathering but few “Mundombe” porters, the expedition finally returned to Benguela on 26 March 1812, more than six months after its departure. Despite the successful slave raids it promoted, both the governors of Benguela and Angola considered the venture a failure, because neither Lumbimbe nor Socoval had been punished. Colonial historians subsequently also used it as evidence of the limitations of “colonial power” in the *sertões* of Benguela and the incompetence of its subordinates¹²⁴⁵. Yet, I maintain that Captain Diniz was quite “competent” in reaching his real “slaving” goals.

After the return of the expedition to the coast, the new regent of Quilengues, Captain Mathias José da Costa, wrote to the governor of Benguela complaining about its results. He suggested that Quilengues was left in disarray, with a great number of *libatas* deprived of labour to carry out the “royal service”. The arrest of African rulers by Captain Diniz and the treatment given out to their peoples stirred up the “gentiles” and triggered many of them to run to the hills or join the fight against Luso-African forces¹²⁴⁶.

Following his return, Captain Diniz wrote several reports justifying his actions in Quilengues. He discoursed extensively on the absence of soldiers and *guerra preta*, the low quality of their weapons, the insubordination of “vassals” accompanying the expedition, the high level of desertion along the way to Quilengues, the lack of provisions, the disease environment that had made him and his men ill, and above all, the lack of porters¹²⁴⁷. He also complained that the commander of his *guerra preta*, Corporal Joanes José Gaspar, did not know how to read and was not even able to deliver a message properly. He went on to describe him as very humble, but too

¹²⁴⁴ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

¹²⁴⁵ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 59.

¹²⁴⁶ ANA, Códice 445, fls. 158-159v., “Carta do regente da Província de Quilengues Mathias José da Costa”, (15 July 1812).

¹²⁴⁷ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812).

lazy to occupy such a position. Besides, Gaspar knew little about the *sertões* of Quilengues, since he was from Dombe Grande da Quizamba. Hence, the expedition was forced to rely on some veteran soldiers and local informants with whom Diniz could communicate because he understood a little of the local language¹²⁴⁸.

Captain Diniz further argued that the interference of enemy spies had contributed to the rebels' escape. Not only did they follow the movements of his caravan in the *sertões*, they also interfered in his communication with Benguela, since several of his letters never reached their destination. He affirmed that his enemies knew details of "secret orders" and were aware of "all the points" indicated in the orders given by the governor of Benguela on 6 September 1811¹²⁴⁹. Diniz assured his immediate superior officer that he had not shared any of its content with anyone, not even his subordinates, and confessed that he was baffled by their knowledge of his orders¹²⁵⁰.

Captain Diniz had his own theories about why the "gentiles" had "rebelled" and offered his explanation. According to what he had learned, some of the locally born *moradores* were responsible for exciting the "gentiles" into conflicts. These *moradores* used their *quimbares* and slaves as itinerant traders (*pumbeiros*) to sell imported goods, mainly textiles, firearms and spirits that they acquired from their partners in the coastal markets Benguela and Novo Redondo. All of this merchandise was acquired on credit from businessmen (*negociantes*) based at the coast who had their own creditors in Brazilian ports, especially Rio de Janeiro. A long line of creditors thus connected the interior of Benguela to ports on the other side of the Atlantic¹²⁵¹.

The *moradores* (also identified as *sertanejos*) inhabiting and trading in regions such as Quilengues, Diniz argued, lived under constant fear that they could not repay the credit they

¹²⁴⁸ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, "Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz", (9 March 1812).

¹²⁴⁹ "...cientificados de todos os pontos indicados nas ordens instrutivas de VSa que baixou em seis de setembro do ano findo de mil oitocentos e onze..." in AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, "Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz", (9 March 1812).

¹²⁵⁰ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, "Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz", (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., "Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz", (9 and 26 March 1812).

¹²⁵¹ For more on commercial networks connecting Rio de Janeiro and Benguela in the second half of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, including the social relations between the members of the main slave trading family enterprises in both Atlantic markets, see Estevam C. Thompson, "Negreiros in South Atlantic: The Community of 'Brazilian' Slave Traders in Late Eighteenth Century Benguela," *African Economic History* 39 (2011): 73-128. See also Estevam C. Thompson, "Negreiros nos Mares do Sul: Famílias traficantes nas rotas entre Angola e Brasil em fins do século XVIII" (M.A. Thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 2006).

acquired to engage in the slave trade. When they could not repay their creditors for some reason, the *sertanejos* found ways to pass on the blame, usually by accusing *sobas* of attacking them along the roads and robbing their merchandise. In order to validate their stories, these *sertanejos* would provoke local African rulers into conflict with the help of “white” deserters and other bandits who roamed the *sertões* of Benguela¹²⁵².

Although he recognized that *sobas* were often tricked into these conflicts, Captain Diniz still considered them “insubordinates” who deserved “punishment”. He asserted that the colonial administration should not try to negotiate or “to grace the gentiles with politics” (*não se pode adornar com políticas ao gentio*)¹²⁵³, but had to use force to prevent any disobedience and rebellion. Thus, after justifying his failure to punish the “rebel” *sobas* of Lumbimbe and Socoval, Captain Diniz laid out a new plan for a bigger expedition against the *sobas* of Quilengues: a major military campaign composed of 200 veteran infantrymen, backed by four pieces of artillery and an obus (*morteiro*). This large expedition would need a skilled artillery official (who could mix the gunpowder and prepare enough ammunition for such a big enterprise) and a mighty *guerra preta*. Warriors could be summoned in Nano through local vassals in Caconda, although Captain Diniz preferred that they came from the *sertões* of Angola, with no connection to other local African rulers. More importantly, the commander chosen for such a mighty expedition should have knowledge of the local “gentiles” (like himself), which clearly excluded officers coming from Angola. Therefore, Captain Diniz concluded, only an “impartial” military leader with a mighty army at his disposal could punish the heads of the rebellions (*sobas*, *macotas* and *quissongos*) and “reduce” the peoples of Quilengues to their “old and legitimate vassalage”¹²⁵⁴.

¹²⁵² AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812).

¹²⁵³ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

¹²⁵⁴ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 124, Doc. 73, “Vários documentos sobre a rebelião do gentio no sertão de Benguela e da expedição comandada por Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 March 1812); ANA, Códice 445, fls. 144-149v., “Duas cartas do Capitão Comandante da Expedição Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (9 and 26 March 1812).

The dominance of the “Brazilian party” in Benguela

The mighty expedition proposed by Captain Diniz never became a reality, but he remained in control of “colonial” military forces for decades, strengthening his commercial and political positions in Benguela in association to some of the most important members of that merchant community. Together, these slavers defied the authority of governors and judges who tried to control the slave trade and to curb their actions of insubordination. In 1816, for instance, Captain Diniz and other important local slavers¹²⁵⁵ were accused of attempted murder against the judge of Benguela, José Antonio Cantargalo. They invaded the judge’s house, who previously had a quarrel with some members of the local trading community (including the local priest) in search of Cantargalo, but the mob was detained by the recently-arrived governor of Benguela, Manuel de Abreu de Melo e Alvim (1816-1819), before they could do the judge any harm¹²⁵⁶. Some days before, the new governor was forced to reprimand the same group of slavers for staging the burial of the former governor, José Joaquim Marques da Graça (January to September 1816) through the streets of Benguela¹²⁵⁷. Captain Diniz was later absolved by the Military Courts (*Conselho de Guerra*) for all accusations of misconducts, which led to a reprimand from the governor of Angola, Luis da Mota Feo (from 11 March 1819) against the actions taken by the governor of Benguela to control the slaver traders in town¹²⁵⁸.

These increasingly bold actions promoted by the most important *moradores* of Benguela (which included merchants, military officers, judges and the clergy) boosted by an increasing sense of granted impunity for their actions, culminated in the attempted secession of Benguela from Portugal after the independence of Brazil in 1822. In fact, the rise of the Brazilian Empire and the prospect of dismantlement of the commercial networks that connected West Central Africa to the ports of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Pernambuco led to the crystallization of old internal disputes and also the hardening of political relations between outsiders occupying administrative positions

¹²⁵⁵ The group consisted of Major Domingos Pereira Diniz, Ensign Antonio Ezequiel de Carvalho, Captain José Leonardo Severo da Gama and Lieutenant Manoel Garcia Mendes.

¹²⁵⁶ The judge died a couple of months later of a mysterious health condition (defined just as apoplexy) who left him lethargic and subsequently gave him strong convulsions. His death solved many of the political conflicts in Benguela: Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 69.

¹²⁵⁷ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 66-68.

¹²⁵⁸ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827). See also Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 71

in Benguela and important members of the local merchant community, such as Antonio Lopes Anjo, Franciscos Ferreira Gomes and Domingos Pereira Diniz. The latter presided over a provisional junta that governed Benguela¹²⁵⁹ from January 1822 until the arrival of a new governor, João Antonio Pussich, in the following year¹²⁶⁰. Captain Diniz led celebrations on the streets of Benguela that ended with a public declaration of independence of the province and the rising of the Brazilian flag¹²⁶¹.

João Antonio Pussich (July to November 1823) arrived in Benguela under literal armed opposition and immediately engaged in open confrontation with the local group of separatist slavers. Governor Pussich alerted his superiors that Benguela was controlled by a “large Brazilian party” that attempted to hinder him from disembarking in São Filipe de Benguela and that planned on arresting and even killing him. These insurgents (*inconfidentes*) also planned to sail to Rio de Janeiro to ask for the support of the Brazilian emperor for their plans of secession. Governor Pussich proceeded to arrest great part of his local rivals, including Captain Diniz, who was sent to prison in Luanda. In an attempt to control the situation, Governor Pussich placed a ban on the slave trade with the Brazilian ports and ordered the confiscation of the assets of the slave traders involved in the attempted secession, but he was latter accused of accepting bribes to let the slave trade flow and destitute from his post and sent to Luanda to answer for his alleged “crimes”, while Antonio Lopes Anjo became the new interim governor¹²⁶².

With the arrival of a new governor from Portugal, Joaquim Bento da Fonseca (June 1824 to November 1824), there as a new attempt to confront the “Brazilian party” and their plans of secession. The new governor formally accused Captain Diniz of “treason” and “insurrection” and arrested his accomplices in Benguela, which included a considerable part of the commercial elite in town: Justiniano José dos Reis, Francisco Ferreira Gomes, Antonio Lopes Anjo and the priest of Benguela, João Mendes de Oliveira. He also had quarrels with Vicar Tomé Afonso Fernandes

¹²⁵⁹ The junta was composed by: Domingos Pereria Diniz as president, Justiniano José dos Reis representing justice and commerce, Father João Mendes de Oliveira representing the clergy, João da Costa Lemos representing the military, and Francisco José Vieira Nunes representing agricultural interests.

¹²⁶⁰ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 76; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 225-241.

¹²⁶¹ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827). See also Ribeiro, Maria Cristina Portella. “A ideia de independência nos jornais republicanos em finais do século XIX”, *Anais do XXIX Simpósio Nacional de História. Contra os preconceitos: História e Democracia*, (São Paulo: ANPUH Brasil, 2017), 2-15.

¹²⁶² Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 87; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 236-237.

da Penha. They were accused of rising the Brazilian flag, trying to steal the royal treasury, and planning to kill members of the “European” opposition in town. According to Bento da Fonseca, the insurgents had even an “escape plan” that would take them to Rio de Janeiro on board of bergatim “*Desengano Feliz*”¹²⁶³.

While in Luanda, Captain Diniz wrote to *Dom* Miguel Antonio de Melo, former governor of Angola (Chapter 4) and then occupying the position of Portugal’s Secretary of State¹²⁶⁴, who the captain treated with some intimacy¹²⁶⁵. He complained about both the governor of Angola, Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco, and the governor of Benguela, Joaquim Bento da Fonseca, and requested authorization to return home, while complaining his wife was left in Benguela without support from him and that one of his daughters had recreantly died¹²⁶⁶. He accused several former governors and other officials of trying to defame his name and his almost three decades of military career, probably because he was locally born and a “non-white” (*não ser de côr branca*)¹²⁶⁷.

Captain Diniz also used his influence with *Dom* Melo to harm his rival in Benguela. He accused Governor Bento da Fonseca of using his position to enrich himself as fast as possible, and that he just cared about getting enough money to buy some land (*a quinta*) when he returned to Lisbon. After failing to convince the local slave traders to pay him bribes in exchange for authorization to trade without problems, the new governor of Benguela would have started accusing the most important members of the local trading community, including the priest, of “crimes”, such as “treason” and “insurrection”, while bashing them as “thieves”, “blacks” and

¹²⁶³ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827). See also Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 92-93; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, 225-241.

¹²⁶⁴ *Ministro e Secretário de Estado da Marinha e do Ultramar*.

¹²⁶⁵ Captain Diniz claimed he felt like “an orphan” after *Dom* Melo’s departure from Angola: AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

¹²⁶⁶ Captain Domingos Pereira Diniz was married to a locally-born woman, Joana Rodrigues da Costa, who died in 1849. She left a will declaring she did not have any living heirs and that her two children had died. However, the local judge found out she had, for undisclosed reasons, deliberately omitted the existence of four grand-daughters: Mariana Pereira Diniz and Maria Pereira Diniz, who lived in São Filipe de Benguela, as well as Laura Pereira Diniz and Ignácia Pereira Diniz, who lived in the *presídio* of Caconda: Tribunal da Província de Benguela, Inventários, maço 12, número 28, “Inventário de Joana Rodrigues da Costa” (13 May 1850); See also Mariana P. Candido, “Understanding African Women access to landed property in nineteenth-century Benguela”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, August (2020): 11-12. See also Estevam C. Thompson, “Um indigno deste paiz: a trajetória de um militar luso-africano no do comércio de escravos em Benguela”, 1800-1830” (forthcoming).

¹²⁶⁷ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

“goats”. Still according to Diniz, this was yet another strategy on the part of the governor to enrich himself, since he agreed to release those who paid him considerable bribes. Those who could not pay up were put in shackles and sent to Rio de Janeiro¹²⁶⁸. The power of the community of slave traders was again evidenced with the removal of Bento da Fonseca from government and his return to Portugal for alleged “health reasons”¹²⁶⁹.

In January 1826, the governor of Benguela, João Victor Jorge (November 1825 to December 1826), wrote a letter of recommendation to the governor of Angola, Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco, in favor of Captain Diniz and requesting his return to Benguela, where his services were required, but also mentioning concerns about his family. Governor Victor Jorge considered that Captain Diniz’s removal from Benguela by the former governor of Benguela, João Antonio Pussich, was an untimely decision. In November of that same year, the governor of Angola chose Lieutenant-Colonel Domingos Pereira Diniz to be the new *capitão-mor* of Caconda. According to Governor Castelo Branco, Captain Diniz possessed the physical (*muito robusto*), intellectual (*hé inteligente*) and cultural (*conhecedor dos uzos do paiz*) features necessary to occupied such position in times of “turmoil” in the interior. One the orders of the new captain-major of Caconda was to give military support to the regent of Quilengues and other “colonial officials” sent to Quitata and Quingolo¹²⁷⁰. As *capitão-mor* of Caconda, Captain Diniz was soon involved in the Nano wars between the *sobas* of Quitata, Hanya, Caluquembe and Sambos, on one side, and the *sobas* Lubando, Ganda, Luceque and Quipungo, on the opposite side¹²⁷¹.

New cycles of violence at the end of the “legal” slave trade in Benguela

The independence of Brazil from Portugal (1822) had, for obvious reasons, profound consequences in the commercial, social and political networks that connected Benguela to the major Brazilian ports. As mentioned previously, the slave trading community of Benguela was greatly depended on credits acquired with their partners in Brazil, especially Rio de Janeiro. The

¹²⁶⁸ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

¹²⁶⁹ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 92-93.

¹²⁷⁰ AIHGB, DL 125, 11 (Doc. 309), fls. 5-36v, “Ofício do tenente coronel das duas companhias de artilharia e infantaria de Benguela, Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (1 February 1827).

¹²⁷¹ ANA, Códice 508, fl. 125, “Ofício do regente de Caconda Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (18 April 1828).

capital of the Brazilian Empire not only provided these slavers with most of the merchandise they needed to buy captives from the backlands of Benguela, but also many of the slavers had their children living in Rio de Janeiro, at the house of relatives and *compadres*¹²⁷². The independence of Brazil threatened the Atlantic networks that connected Benguela to Rio de Janeiro through the exchange of goods and people.

As Leslie Bethell explains, the British Foreign Secretary George Canning fairly argued that:

“... the entire Portuguese transatlantic slave trade had become *de facto* illegal from the moment Brazil and Portugal were separated: transporting slaves to territories outside the Portuguese empire had been prohibited as long ago as 1761; under article 4 of the treaty of 1815, Dom João had specifically engaged not to permit the Portuguese flag to be used in the slave trade except for the purpose of supplying with labor ‘the transatlantic possessions belonging to the Crown of Portugal’; and article I of the Additional Convention of 1817 had defined as illicit that trade carried on by Portuguese vessels to ports outside the dominions of the Portuguese Crown”¹²⁷³.

It took, however, decades for the complete dismantlement of the slaving networks connecting Angola and Brazil. Despite much pressure from the British Empire and the signing of several laws, only in 1850 the Brazilian Empire took effective measures to end the slave trade, with the signing of the bill dubbed *Lei Eusébio de Queirós*¹²⁷⁴. Nevertheless, despite the continuation of trade from Benguela to Brazil even after independence, in 1826 there was a new attempt to end the slave trade that created much anxiety in Benguela and its *sertões*. An Anglo-Brazilian anti-slave trade treaty was signed on 23 November 1826 and ratified by the emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro I, on board of a warship anchored at his capital¹²⁷⁵. On 3 May 1830, Dom Pedro I announced that under the terms of the 1836 treaty, the slave trade was illegal¹²⁷⁶. In Brazil, members of the Chamber of Deputies denounced the 1826 anti-slave trade treaty as “derogatory

¹²⁷² For more on commercial and social networks connecting Benguela and Rio de Janeiro, see Thompson, “*Negreiros* in South Atlantic, 73-128; Estevam C. Thompson, “Sociedades negreiras: a comunidade de comerciantes “brasileiros” em Benguela em fins do século XVIII”, in *África: histórias conectadas*, Alexandre Ribeiro, Alexandre Gebara, Marina Berthet, eds. (Niterói: PPGH-UFF, 2014), 99-116.

¹²⁷³ Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807-1869* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 28

¹²⁷⁴ Eusébio de Queirós was the name of the Brazilian politician and magistrate who wrote the law that finally ended the Brazilian slave trade. Ironically, his father, Eusébio de Queirós Coutinho da Silva, worked as judge (*ouvidor-geral*) in Angola and was involved in the slave trade in that region.

¹²⁷⁵ Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, 27-61.

¹²⁷⁶ Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, 67.

to the honour, interest, dignity, independence and sovereignty of the Brazilian nation”¹²⁷⁷. News of the end of the slave trade with Brazil was not well received in Benguela and its backlands, as expected, and as the 1830 deadline approached, tension boiled in the *sertões*.

In a letter from December 1829, the governor of Benguela, Joaquim Aurélio de Oliveira (1827-1830), warned his counterpart in Luanda that the “colonial” administration should be careful when announcing the end of the slave trade in the backlands of Benguela, because such news was bound to create turmoil and unrest. Governor Oliveira foresaw great danger to all “white” settlers and traders living in the interior, since African rulers would not take the end of the slave trade lightly. In fact, the governor of Benguela informed that some *sobas* attempted to hinder the *sertanejos* operating in their lands from leaving, and that those who managed to return to São Filipe de Benguela had to flee in the middle of the night and were resolute not to return to the *sertões*. There were also rumors that the *sobas* threatened to march with their warriors onto the town of Benguela to question the governor about the reasons behind the Portuguese decision to stop buying slaves from them¹²⁷⁸.

According to news brought by returning *sertanejos*, the *sobas* in the backlands of Benguela declared that if the Portuguese did not want to trade in slaves anymore, they should leave the coast and let others buy from them, because they knew there were other “nations” interested in doing business with them. The governor of Benguela finished his letter reminding those in Luanda that the “blacks” from the interior of Benguela were “resolute and brave people”, used to constant warfare, and could easily invade the unfortified town if they so desired. Hence, the “colonial” administration should take measures to reinforce the local military by providing Benguela and its backlands with soldiers and new artillery pieces.

Once again, the slave trade was the true reason behind much of this concern about the “protection” of “white” settlements and its *moradores* in Benguela. Local slavers and their Atlantic partners, in fact, were simply trying to extract as many captives as possible during the last months of what many believed to be the end of the slave trade in Luanda and Benguela. Similar requests for reinforcements were made by the regent of Quilengues, Joaquim Ferreira Nunes dos Santos,

¹²⁷⁷ Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, 63.

¹²⁷⁸ “Carta do governador de Benguela para o de Angola de 1 de dezembro de 1829”, in Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 481-482.

and the new *capitão-mor* of Caconda, Domingos Pereira Diniz. Governor Oliveira was also forced to intervene in a series of cases of “illegal” enslavement of Africans from the interior who had been kidnapped by itinerant traders leaving the *sertões* for good and who tried to justify their actions attesting the captives were payment for old transactions they had with local *sobas* who had never repaid their debts¹²⁷⁹.

The regent of Quilengues requested the construction of a small fortification in Salvaterra dos Magos, since even the building that served them as headquarters was “rotten” and “falling apart”. He also requested 4 of 5 pieces of artillery to “protect” the settlement and 16 additional soldiers, who could come from nearby Caconda. The captain-major of Caconda, on his turn, complained about the lack of military personnel and ammunition, and about the condition of the old artillery pieces at his disposal, while resonating rumors about the negative reaction on the part of African rulers in Nano when they heard news of the end of the slave trade. Captain Diniz claimed that only by reinforcing the *presídio* of Caconda could they safeguard their “white” settlements¹²⁸⁰.

In order to protect Portuguese colonial interests in Benguela and its interior, the governor of Benguela proposed the construction of a military fort in Calundo, reinforced by 6 to 8 pieces of artillery and with a permanent detachment of 24 soldiers sent from Luanda, since those roaming the *sertões* of Benguela could not be trusted. Some of the most important slave traders of Benguela, Justiniano José dos Reis and Francisco Ferreira Gomes, promised to finance the construction of the Calundo fort, and Lieutenant-Colonel Domingos Pereira Diniz was chosen to direct its construction¹²⁸¹.

Captain Diniz had been recently involved in a war convoked by the *sobas* of Caluquembe and Quitata. This time the African rulers had united against the *sobados* in Dombe Grande and raided several *quipacas* of the “Mundombes”, allegedly in retaliation for raids carried out against Quitata during the previous year. Captain Diniz warned his superiors that the roads were overtaken by “bandits” and that *sertanejos* should travel together with the Luso-African soldiers that transported official letters between the *presídio* of Caconda and Benguela¹²⁸².

¹²⁷⁹ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 99-101.

¹²⁸⁰ Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 99-101.

¹²⁸¹ “Carta do governador de Benguela para o de Angola de 1 de dezembro de 1829”, in Delgado, *A Famosa e Histórica Benguela*, 481-482.

¹²⁸² ANA, Códice 508, fl. 128, “Ofício do regente de Caconda Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (24 May 1828).

On the other side, the *soba* of Socoval also remained a powerful and largely independent political authority in Quilengues, at least until 1830. In August of that year, the regent of Quilengues, Diogo Vieira Lima, bought thirteen “daughters” of Luconde at “very good price” from the *soba* of Socoval, suggesting that commercial relations between the *soba* and Luso-African traders had normalized. Nonetheless, the regent complained that this *soba* refused to work for the “royal service” and provide porters without payment. Socoval tried to control the terms of the trade with Salvaterra dos Magos, at times refusing to sell captives to certain particular *sertanejos*, thus acting as an autonomous power in Quilengues¹²⁸³. Ironically, the prospect of end to the slave trade reignited the cycles of violence in the backlands of Benguela for decades to come. In fact, the slave trade not only did not end in 1830, but would reach its peak between 1836 and 1850¹²⁸⁴.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the great complexity of the political and diplomatic relations between the many African polities of the interior of Benguela, which included the existence of secret alliances and old vendettas behind an appearance of friendship. Ritualized raids of cattle and people triggered wars between neighboring potentates throughout the *sertões*. The political landscape in the interior of Benguela was much richer than the generic labels created by Luso-Africans could encompass. Thus, it was not a simple rivalry between “Muquilengues” and “Mundombes” or “Munanos” and “Mucuandos”, but an environment of overlapping political disputes and rivalries arranged around temporary alliances.

The governors of Benguela responded to the recurrent and mutual attacks between African vassals by launching investigations and military expeditions to “punish” and “pacify” the “rebels”, while ensuring the continuation of the collection of tribute and of the slave trade. Military officers deeply involved in the slave trade, however, often commanded these incursions and used the power in their hands to advance their own private businesses, transforming these “punitive expeditions” in full-fledged slaving campaigns.

¹²⁸³ ANA, Códice 508, fl. 131v, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues Diogo Vieira Lima”, (8 August 1828).

¹²⁸⁴ Silva, “The Transatlantic Slave Trade from Angola”, 121-122, Appendix A.

African rulers in places like Quilengues had been victims of slavers in positions of authority for decades and had developed strategies to avoid becoming captives. The most common tactic was simply evacuating their lands and taking refuge in hideouts in nearby rocky hills, where they knew Luso-African forces could not pursue them. Hence, the refusal in providing porters for the “royal service” became another important tactic to avoid the advance of slaving caravans. Finally, the lack of supplies led to hunger, sickness and desertion, completing the picture of chaos and desperation of those Luso-African forces stuck in the *sertões* and surrounded by enemies. African rulers also used espionage as one of the tactics to defeat their enemies. Their scouts followed expeditions’ movements and intercepted messages exchanged between military officers and their superiors. African rulers in Quilengues even gained access to secret orders and knew precise details about the campaigns launched against them, including the composition of the military forces that marched against them and the slaving ambitions of their commanders.

Chapter 5 also brings an interesting perspective on the recurrent attacks of “bandits” upon the caravans that crossed regions like Quilengues and Caconda that so often appear in the sources. In fact, Captain Diniz gave a reasonable explanation for the constant complaints about attacks perpetrated by African warriors against the *sertanejos* and *pumbeiros* that roamed the interior of Benguela, suggesting that many of these supposed attacks were actually actions of deception from indebted traders who could not pay their creditors. Hence, in order to legitimize their versions of attacks on their caravans, indebted itinerant traders used the service of Luso-African deserters roaming the interior of Benguela to raid local African rulers so as to push them into “rebellion”.

Finally, this chapter shows the power of the community of slavers operating from Benguela (especially those in positions of authority), the way they disregarded orders from their superiors to advance their own slaving businesses, and how they threatened African rulers from the interior and governors arriving from Lisbon. These slavers organized themselves around a “Brazilian party” after the independence of Brazil to guarantee the preservation of the commercial and social networks that bonded Benguela to the Brazilian Empire. With the prospect of end to the slave trade, these slavers used, once again, their positions of authority to reinforce their businesses, while African rulers from the interior organized themselves to avoid the new wave of slaving expeditions, while safeguarding their autonomy and their own slaving connections with the Atlantic.

Conclusion

Violence, enslavement and resistance

Between the early seventeenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries, the history of the interior of Benguela is one of violence, enslavement and resistance. Violence already plagued the political and social relations of the peoples living in this landscape before the arrival of Portuguese and Luso-African slave traders in the early seventeenth century, especially due to the rise of Mbangala bands in the previous century. The appearance of these bands represented a “social revolution” against “violent” traditional practices of lineage-based communities, in which elders and rulers accumulated all means of wealth and social status (including control over women, enslaved persons and cattle), generating masses of deprived young warriors. The Mbangala attacked these traditional communities bonded by lineage and kinship ties and denied their own ancestry through initialization rites and martial cults related to the institution of the *kilombo* and the laws of *yijila*.

Mbangala bands destroyed crops and fields of palm trees, seized cattle and adolescents from the local communities they raided, sold the remaining captives as slaves, and prompted the survivors of their attacks to flee and take refuge elsewhere. Ritualized practices of cattle raiding also sponsored acts of violence among African polities that triggered fierce responses from those victimized by them, thus engendering cycles of violence that often developed into full-fledged warfare. Local communities oppressed by these cycles of violence developed their own ways to deal with them, which included taking refuge in natural defensive positions offered by rocky hills (*impuris*) and the construction of fortified corrals (*quipacas*), inspired by Mbangala fortifications (*kilombos*). This ritualized violence also promoted the rise of strongmen and warlords to power, the valorization of good warriors and bands of raiders, as well as the consolidation of a martial culture with specific religious practices associated to violence.

Even the landscapes and the environment in the interior of Benguela could perform “violently” against the peoples who inhabited them, a “violence” that took the form of drought, hunger and sickness. Combined with the general state of warfare and constant raids, the impositions of the weather had much more profound consequences, displacing entire communities from their lands, who abandoned their crops and move away with their herds. Defenceless and on the run, these refugees became ideal victims for slavers “hunting” in the *sertões* of Benguela from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards.

Over time, these Mbangala bands of nomadic warriors settled down and diluted themselves into local communities, soon creating their own lineages and kinship ties. Their actions and practices, however, did not completely vanish from local memory and oral traditions after their integration. The Mbangala remained an important reference for their descendants, constituting indeed an identity shared by different peoples in the interior of Benguela and Angola until the twentieth century, although explorers and ethnographers misunderstood these references and ended up creating new identities for some of them, as in the case of the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi.

The arrival of Portuguese and Luso-African traders on the coast of Benguela amplified this state of violence. The foreigners tapped into local conflicts to acquire captives for the Atlantic slave trade and sponsored new conflicts by hiring local Mbangala warlords (“*jagas*”) to fight on their side during their slaving campaigns in the interior. The imported goods they brought changed the core of trade and wealth from cattle in the backlands to slaves on the coast. Hence, participation in the slave trade gave some local rulers the political capital to expand their power and influence, while it weakened those who did not take part in it since they had no luxury goods to maintain control over their subjects and to attract new ones.

Nevertheless, as this thesis has shown, the participation of African rulers in the slave trade could prove to be a dangerous path for them to take, since those capturing people today could become the victims of the Atlantic trade tomorrow. Besides, itinerant traders who visited these African rulers in the interior overloaded them with merchandise on credit knowing that most could not repay. By indebting African rulers and forcing them to default upon their payments, slavers thus forged a justification for raiding and enslaving their debtors and their peoples. Moreover, as revealed by one experienced Luso-African military officer, many of the attacks supposedly suffered by itinerant traders in the backlands of Benguela were in fact attempts by indebted traders to get rid of their obligations, thus passing blame to African rulers (who they accused of being “bandits”) while, with the help of “white” deserters, provoking the same potentates into “rebellion”.

Slavery was a central institution in the history of the interior of Benguela from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. From a marginal institution in local traditional societies, slavery became a central feature of their economic and political lives after the development of the slave trade and the local, productive use of these enslaved individuals. The demand for captives

created by the Atlantic trade corrupted the political and cultural practices of some local African communities, altering their “customary laws” in cases involving “slavery” and “freedom”. At the same time, this increasing demand for slaves sponsored the rise of Luso-African networks of slavers in the interior with connections to traders on the coast that engendered long distance trading routes linking the backlands of Benguela to Brazil and other parts of the Atlantic, while incentivizing the increase in local kidnappings, raids and wars. Luso-African itinerant traders (*sertanejos*) and their agents (*pumbeiros*) also brought new weapons and introduced imported products that would later become essential elements of social and religious rituals (like *aguardente*) that these local rulers could only acquire in exchange for captives.

The rise of the slave trade in Benguela, as this thesis has shown, was a collective project that involved local and foreign slavers, in which internal and external factors helped create the necessary conditions for its success. The first governors of Benguela used the services of Mbangala warriors to develop the trade while pretending to look for copper mines in the interior. Many Luso-African slavers later occupied positions of authority in the “colonial” military and administration and used these positions to enhance their private slaving businesses. Since the slave trade was the main economic activity of Benguela and the main reason for its existence, the bulk of Luso-African settlers was involved in the trade, as were many Portuguese officials, including governors, judges and priests.

The deep involvement of the majority of settlers in Benguela in the slave trade led the small town to become one of the major exporters of enslaved individuals into the Atlantic world. The last decade of the eighteenth century experienced a surge in slave exports, during which Benguela surpassed Angola for a brief moment. This increase in slave exports was associated to a momentary decrease in the contraband trade and the launching of a series of military expeditions in Quilengues and Caconda. The slavers in command of these expeditions attacked enemies and vassals alike, painting them all with a broad brush of “rebelliousness”. Traditional allies of the Portuguese, such as the *soba* of Socoval, became victims of these slaving campaigns disguised as “punitive” expeditions.

The *soba* of Socoval represents a good example of African ally who became a “rebel” due to conflicts with slavers in positions of authority. After decades working in partnership with Luso-African traders in Quilengues, the *soba* of Socoval was arrested in 1797 for “insubordination” and

died in the dungeons of the Penedo prison in Luanda before his innocence was proven, while his people were raided by “punitive” campaigns commanded by the regents of Quilengues. As a consequence, subjects of Socoval, freeborn and enslaved alike, were sold to Brazil. Despite attempts by a Portuguese career bureaucrat who served as governor of Angola (*Dom Melo*) to punish the regents of Quilengues for their actions against Socoval and return those “illegally” sold to Brazil, the slavers were protected by their isolation and their influence in Benguela. Besides, corrupted local judges working for the community of slave traders justified those attacks as “legal” and protected the slavers involved.

The data presented here about violent enslavement in Quilengues and other areas in the *sertões* of Benguela furthers recent critiques on the classic thesis of the “slaving frontier” and the development of peaceful relations between Luso-African slavers and African rulers who accepted vassalage from Portugal. It also challenges the idea that captives sold in Benguela in the nineteenth century came from the borders of the “slaving frontier” far from the coast. Indeed, the recent historiography of Benguela (and Angola) has shown that many of the slaves exported to Brazil in the late eighteenth and early the nineteenth centuries came from regions like Quilengues, as this thesis corroborates.

The administration of Luso-African commercial outposts in the interior of Benguela, like Caconda and Quilengues, relied on the services of local slavers, most of them also serving as military officers. They lived distant from the centres of “colonial power”, far away from the control of their superiors, and were usually members of local slaving networks. Hence, they used the power invested in them to enslave people for their personal gain, sometimes by presiding over local cases of *mucanos*, others by organizing slaving campaigns against local authorities accused of “insubordination”. These slavers also controlled personal militias made up of their own slaves and their “aggregates” (*quimbares*), who roamed the *sertões* attacking local hamlets (*libatas*) and working as bounty hunters.

Slavers in positions of authority, such as regents and *capitães-mores*, often ignored the orders of their superiors to maintain peace with local African rulers. They overreached their jurisdiction in favor of their slaving interests and provoked complaints to the governors of Benguela from African rulers and Luso-African settlers alike. They also led raids and enslaved people that, according to “colonial” regulations, should have been protected from slavery. This

thesis shows that there was no real protection for “African vassals” of Portugal: anyone could (and did) become a victim of the Atlantic slave trade, even when complying with the orders given to them.

The Portuguese strategy to occupy the interior of Benguela relied on treaties of vassalage, medieval instruments of political alliance and submission that were adapted to the African reality. Vassalage in Africa was usually a Portuguese imposition onto local polities who had been defeated in combat, but there were also several cases of “voluntary vassalage”, which complicates the definition of “vassalage” from an African perspective. Moreover, defeated African rulers often “accepted vassalage” as an act of resistance since upon becoming vassals of Portugal they received their lands back from their conquerors and maintained authority over their peoples. In other cases, African vassals saw clear advantages in allying themselves to outsiders with guns against their local enemies. Indeed, by becoming vassals of the Portuguese, these African polities became autonomous and independent in relation to other local African rulers.

Violent enslavement and the slave trade were the backbones of the “conquest” of Benguela, a process that lasted centuries for its completion and was only consolidated with the wars of “pacification” of the twentieth century. The Atlantic slave trade remained the main economic activity in the region until the mid-nineteenth century. Up to then, African rulers in the interior of Benguela resisted the occupation of their land, even when subjected as vassals of Portugal. They developed different strategies to protect themselves from Luso-African raiders. Enslavement triggered resistance.

Resistance, in turn, could take different forms. The phenomenon varied from direct conflict to the complete avoidance of conflict. Hence, besides ambushing slaving caravans and using guerilla warfare tactics against “colonial” soldiers crossing their lands, African rulers invested in “intel” to know the movement of enemy troops and plan their retreat to fortified hills with their people and cattle. African scouts and spies followed the caravans and intercepted letters between traders and military officers, while informants from “white” settlements and within caravans gave details of an expedition’s composition and goals.

The very act of accepting vassalage, as mentioned above, was in some cases also an act of resistance. Once a “vassal” of Portugal, African rulers tried to manipulate Luso-African military forces against their local enemies, as demonstrated several times in this thesis. Some African rulers

also made formal complaints to the governor of Benguela, which in some cases triggered official inquiries (*devassas*) into the actions of *capitães-mores* and regents deeply involved in slaving networks. Other African rulers, such as post-1797 *soba* of Socoval, learned to distrust Luso-African expeditions within their lands. The *soba* of Socoval used his control over portage to block his enemy's advances and his political influence to choke his enemy's lines of supply, thus forcing a retreat.

Finally, this thesis shows that resistance, in its varied forms, was a fundamental factor that slowed down Portuguese "colonial ambitions" in the interior of Benguela. As evidenced here, Portuguese "explorers" arrived in West Central Africa with a clear project of conquest and colonization. However, logistic limitations and local resistance delayed such a process until the early twentieth century, when the Portuguese overcame most of these limitations (such as transportation and communications), and found themselves in a better position to effectively expand and occupy the territory under their colonial domain.

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2. Published Primary Sources
3. Cartographic Sources (Primary and Secondary)
4. Published Secondary Sources
5. Unpublished Secondary Sources

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6. ANA, Códice 445, fl. 72, “Carta do regente do Dombe Grande Joannes Jose Gaspar”, (18 November 1810).
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9. ANA, Códice 445, fl. 169-169v, “Carta do cabo regente do Dombe Grande Joannes Jose Gaspar”, (10 November 1812).

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3. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 34-34v, “Ofício do capitão mor de Caconda Alexandre Jose Coelho de Souza Menezes”, (27 January 1809).

4. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 41-41v, “Ofício do capitão mor de Caconda Alexandre Jose Coelho de Souza Menezes”, (6 September 1809).
5. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 42v-43, “Carta do capitão mor de Caconda Alexandre Jose Coelho de Souza Menezes”, (5 October 1809).
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2. ANA, Códice 445, fl. 96v, “Em data de 10 de setembro de 1811, entrando no Dombe Grande, (10 September 1811)
3. ANA, Códice 445, fl. 97, “Em data de 16 de setembro de 1811, estando na Real Feitoria do Dombe Grande”, (16 September 1811).
4. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 97-97v, “Em data de 19 de setembro do dito ano, achando-se no mesmo lugar acima”, (19 September 1811).
5. ANA, Códice 445, fl. 97v-98, “Em data de 23 de setembro de 1811, estando no mesmo Arraial do Dombe Grande”, (23 September 1811).
6. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 98-99, “Em 30 de setembro de 1811 Arraial do Sítio de Quiculo”, (30 September 1811).
7. ANA, Códice 445, fl. 99, “Em 5 de outubro de 1811, estando em Quilumata”, (5 October 1811).
8. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 102-102v, “Em data de 7 de outubro de 1811”, (7 October 1811).
9. ANA, Códice 445, fl. 102v, “Em data de 11 de outubro de 1811 no Sítio de Quiculo”, (11 October 1811).
10. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 103v-104v, “Em data de 17 de outubro de 1811 no sítio de Quilumata”, (17 October 1811).
11. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 106v-107, “Em 28 de outubro de 1811, estando no Sítio de Quilumata”, (28 October 1811).

12. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 107-108, “No sítio de Quilumata em data de 4 de novembro de 1811”, (4 November 1811).
13. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 108-108v, “Em data de 5 de novembro de 1811, estando no sítio de Quilumata”, (5 November 1811).
14. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 110-110v, “Outro ofício em data de 6 de novembro de 1811, estando no mesmo sítio de Quilumata”, (6 November 1811).
15. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 110v, 111, “Em data de 7 de novembro de 1811 achando-se no dito sitio de Quilumata”, (7 November 1811).
16. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111-111v, “Em data de 11 de novembro de 1811, achando-se arraialado no sítio de Quilumata, (11 November 1811).
17. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 111v-113v, “Em data de 1 de dezembro de 1811, escrita na Povoação de Quilengues”, (1 December 1811).
18. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 112v-113v, “Em data de 5 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (5 December 1811).
19. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 113v, “Mapa do estado atual da Tropa de Linha das duas Companhias de Infantaria e Artilharia da Guarnição de Benguela em Diligência do Real Serviço na Povoação de Quilengues da mesma Capitania”, (5 December 1811).
20. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 113v, “Lista da Guerra Preta armada e carregadores que existem até 1 de dezembro de 1811, (5 December 1811)”.
21. ANA, Códice 445, fls. 114-115v, “Em data de 11 de Dezembro de 1811 estando em Quilengues”, (11 December 1811).

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2. ANA, Códice 508, fl. 128, “Ofício do regente de Caconda Domingos Pereira Diniz”, (24 May 1828).
3. ANA, Códice 508, fls. 129-129v, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues Diogo Vieira Lima”, (25 May 1828).
4. ANA, Códice 508, fl. 131v, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues Diogo Vieira Lima”, (8 August 1828).
5. ANA, Códice 508, fls. 145-147, “Ofício do regente da Huila Felício Matos da Conceição”, (24 August 1828).
6. ANA, Códice 508, fls. 146v-147, “Ofício do regente da Huila Felício Matos da Conceição”, (11 October 1828).
7. ANA, Códice 508, fls. 148-149, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues Diogo Vieira Lima”, (5 January 1829).
8. ANA, Códice 508, fl. 149, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues Diogo Vieira Lima”, (19 January 1829).

9. ANA, Códice 508, fls. 164-165, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues Diogo Vieira Lima”, (6 April 1829).
10. ANA, Códice 508, fls. 165, “Ofício do regente da Huila Felício Matos da Conceição”, (7 April 1829).
11. ANA, Códice 508, fls. 175-176, “Ofício do regente de Quilengues Diogo Vieira Lima”, (27 May 1829).

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1. ANA, Códice 516, fls. 51-51v, “Relação de escravos e gado trazidos de Quilengues pelo capitão Miguel António Serrão, (26 November 1797).

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2. ANA, Códice 518, fls. 70-71v, “Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos”, (23 August 1798).
3. ANA, Códice 518, fls. 71v, “Ofício do governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcelos”, (24 August 1798).

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4. ANA, Códice 519, fl. 154v, “Ofício do governador de Benguela No. 299”, (3 November 1814).
5. ANA, Códice 519, fl. 222, “Ofício do governador de Benguela No. 63”, (26 February 1817).
6. ANA, Códice 519, fl. 222v, “Ofício do governador de Benguela No. 64”, (26 February 1817).
7. ANA, Códice 519, fl. 230, “Ofício do governador de Benguela No. 84”, (19 April 1817).
8. ANA, Códice 519, fl. 233-233v, “Ofício do governador de Benguela No. 92”, (22 May 1817).
9. ANA, Códice 519, fl. 231v, “Ofício do governador de Benguela No. 90”, (10 May 1817).
10. ANA, Códice 519, fls. 234-234v, “Ofício do governador de Benguela No. 97”, (23 June 1817).

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1. ANA, Códice 525, 14v-15v, “Carta para o governador de Benguela Justiniano Jose dos Reis”, (31 October 1837).

2. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 18v-19, “Carta para o governador de Benguela Justiniano Jose dos Reis”, (2 February 1837).
3. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 33-33v, “Instruções para o governador interino de Benguela Antonio Manuel Nogueira”, (28 June 1838).
4. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 35-38v, “Portaria de criação das companhias móveis de Caconda e Quilengues”, (2 June, 31 July 1838).
5. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 40, “Ofício do governador de Angola Manoel Bernardo Vidal”, (9 July 1838).
6. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 41, “Ofício do Chefe do Estado Maior Jose Herculano Ferreira de Horta”, (9 July 1838).
7. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 54v-55, “Carta para o governador de Angola Antonio Manoel de Noronha”, (17 January 1839).
8. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 55-55v “Carta para o governador de Angola Antonio Manoel de Noronha”, (17 January 1839)
9. ANA, Códice 525, fls. 57-57v, “Ofício do govenador de Angola Angola Antonio Manoel de Noronha”, (12 April 1839).

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2. ANA Códice 4094, fls. 23-25, “Ofício do Exmo. Snr. Genal. para o governador de Benguela com duas cartas, uma para o capitão mor de Quilengues e outra para o oficial que o deve render”, (27 October 1796).
3. ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 25-25v, “Autos de inquirição do soba do Socoval”, (27 October 1796).
4. ANA Códice 4094, fls. 72v, “Edital sobre o soba do Socoval, publicado a toque de caixas”, (28 March 1798).
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6. ANA Códice 4094, fls. 78v-79, “Ofício do governador de Angola Dom Miguel Antonio de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos”, (28 April 1798).
7. ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 80-80v, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Mello para o capitão regente de Caconda”, (9 May 1798).
8. ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 84v-85, “Carta do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos”, (26 September 1798).

9. ANA, Códice 4094, fls. 85-85v, “Ofício do governador de Angola Dom Miguel António de Melo para o governador de Benguela Alexandre Botelho de Vasconcellos”, (7 November 1798).
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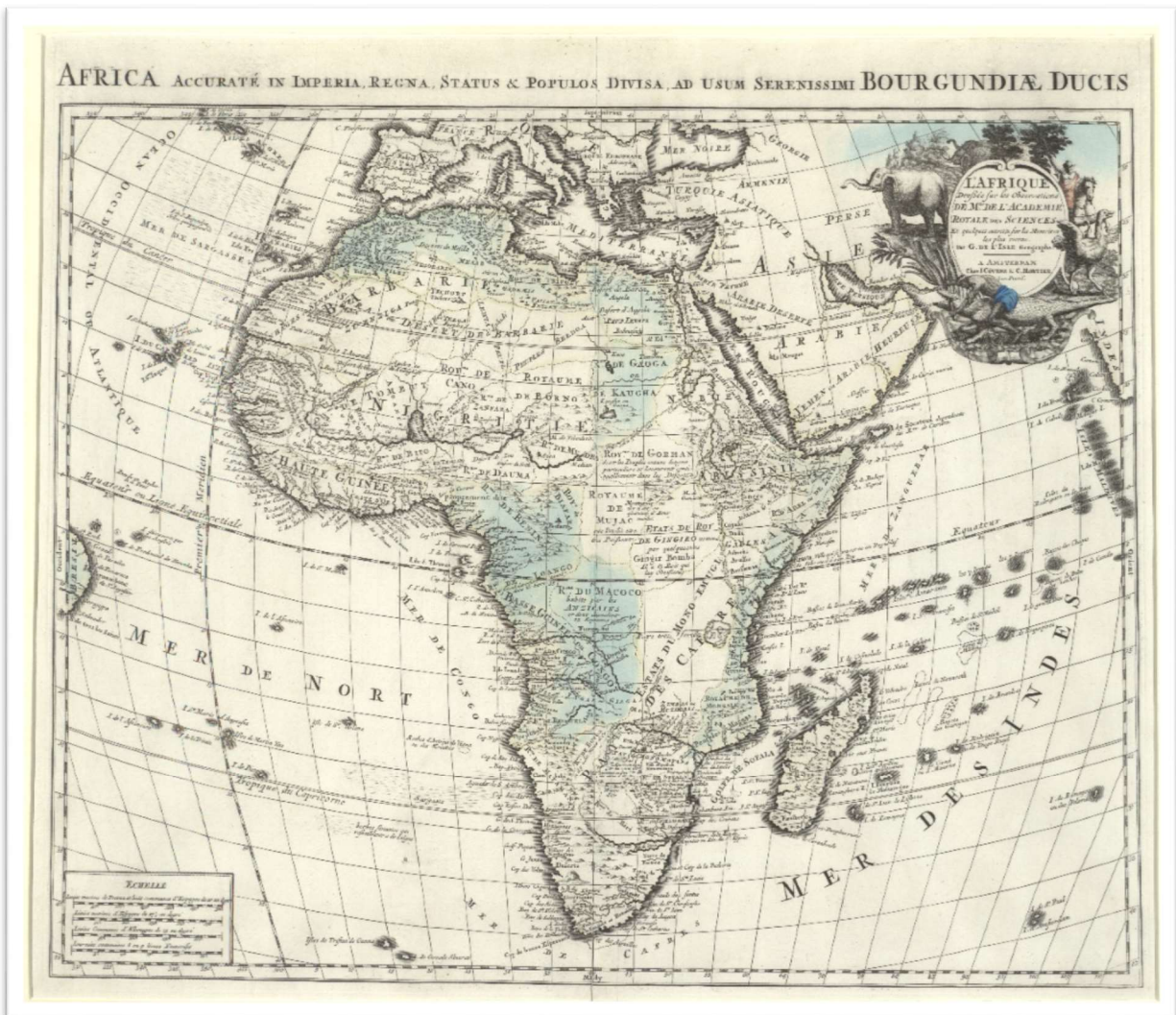
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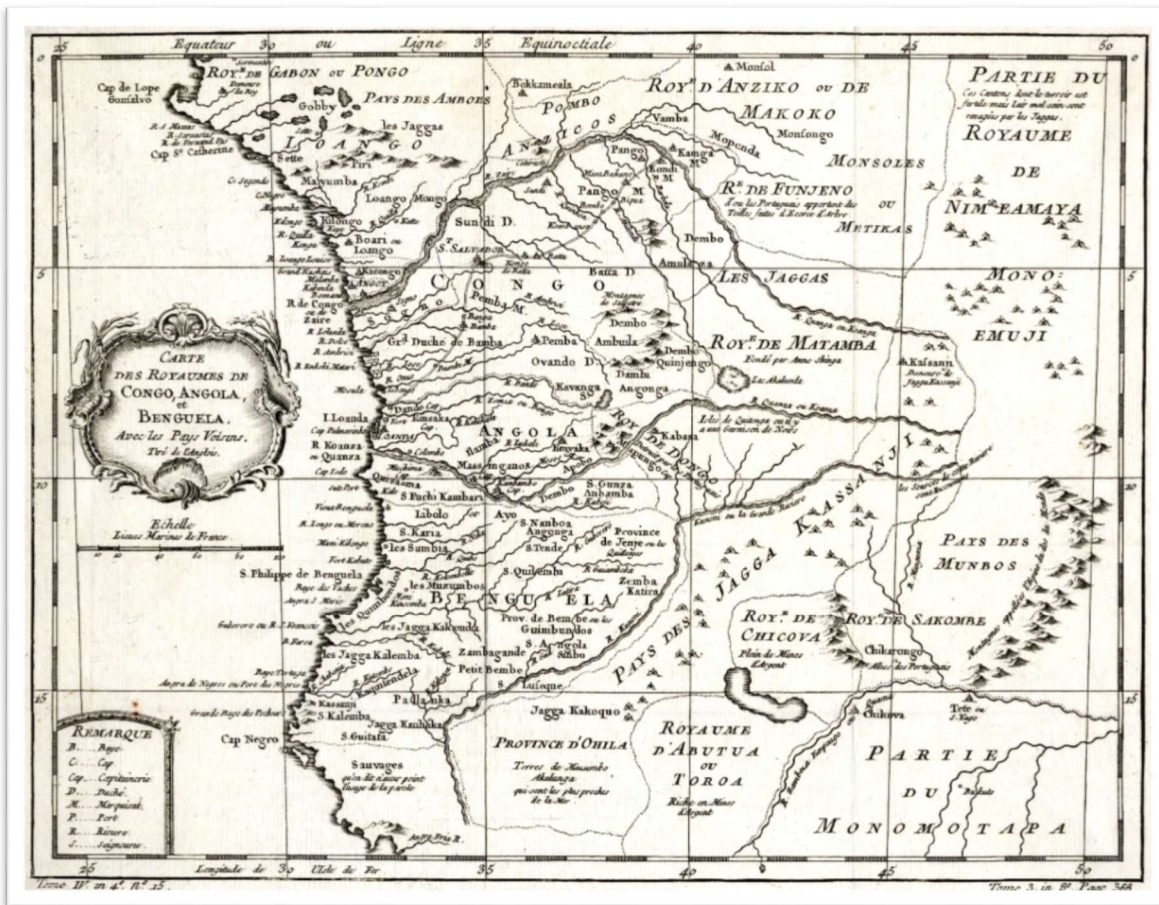
Appendix 1 – Africa, 1708: “L’Afrique: Dressée sur les observations de Mrs. de l’Academie Royale des Sciences, et quelques autres. & sur les memoires les plus recens” (1708), by Guillaume de L’Isle. *Digital Collection of African Maps at the Stanford University Library.*



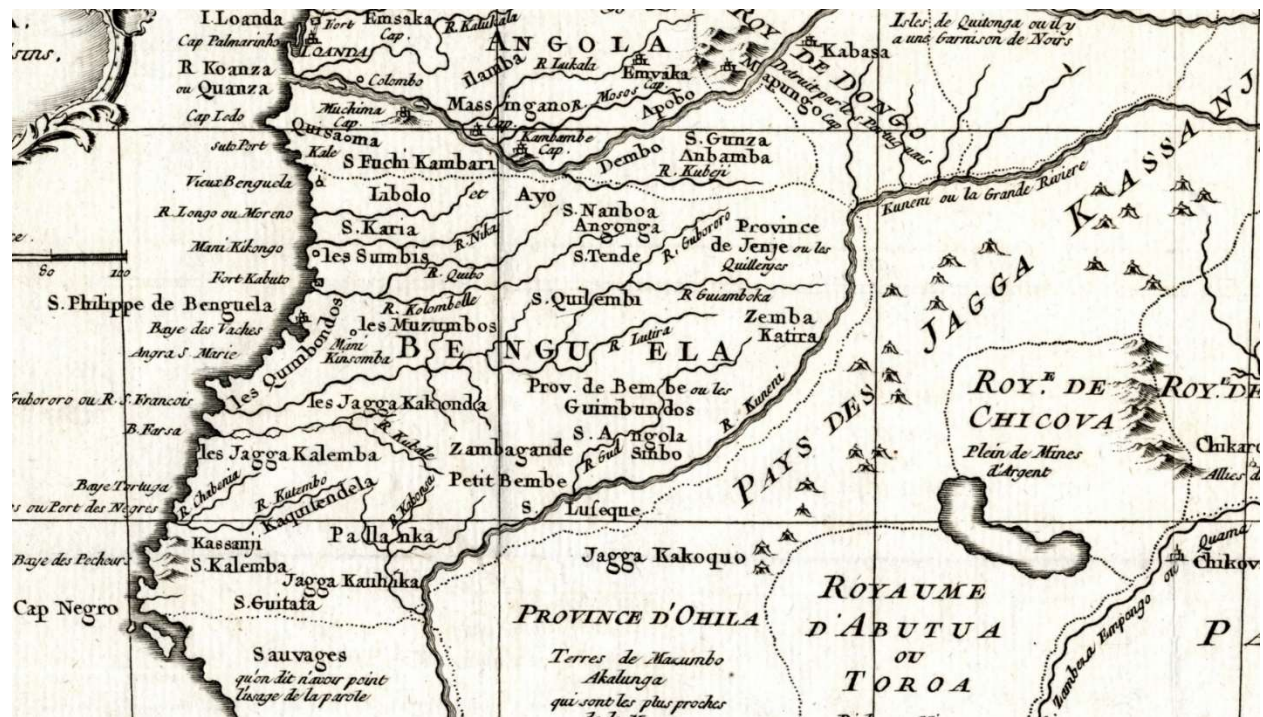
Appendix 1.1 – Africa, 1708: Congo, Angola and Benguela.



Appendix 2 – Kongo, Angola and Benguela, 1754: “Carte des royaumes de Congo, Angola et Benguela avec les pays voisins tiré de l'Anglois” (1754), by Jacques Nicolas Bellin. *Digital Collection of African Maps at the Stanford University Library.*



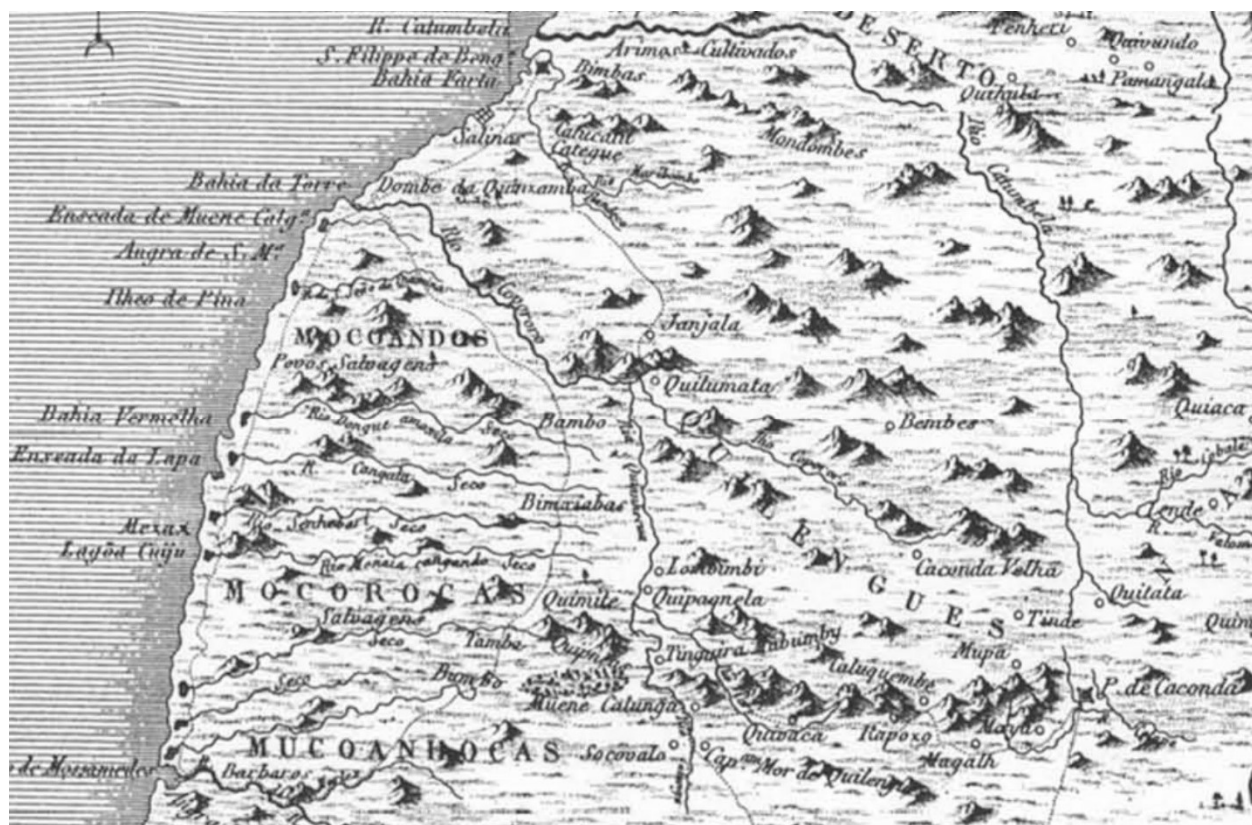
Appendix 2.1 – Benguela and the Jagas



Appendix 3 – Kongo, Angola and Benguela, 1790: “Carta geographica da costa occidental da África” (1790), by Luis Pinheiro Furtado, in: Torres, J. C. Feo Cardozo de Castellobranco. *Memórias contendo a biographia do vice-almirante Luiz da Mota Feo Torres: A história dos governadores e capitães generaes de Angola, desde 1575 até 1825* (Paris: Fantin, 1825).



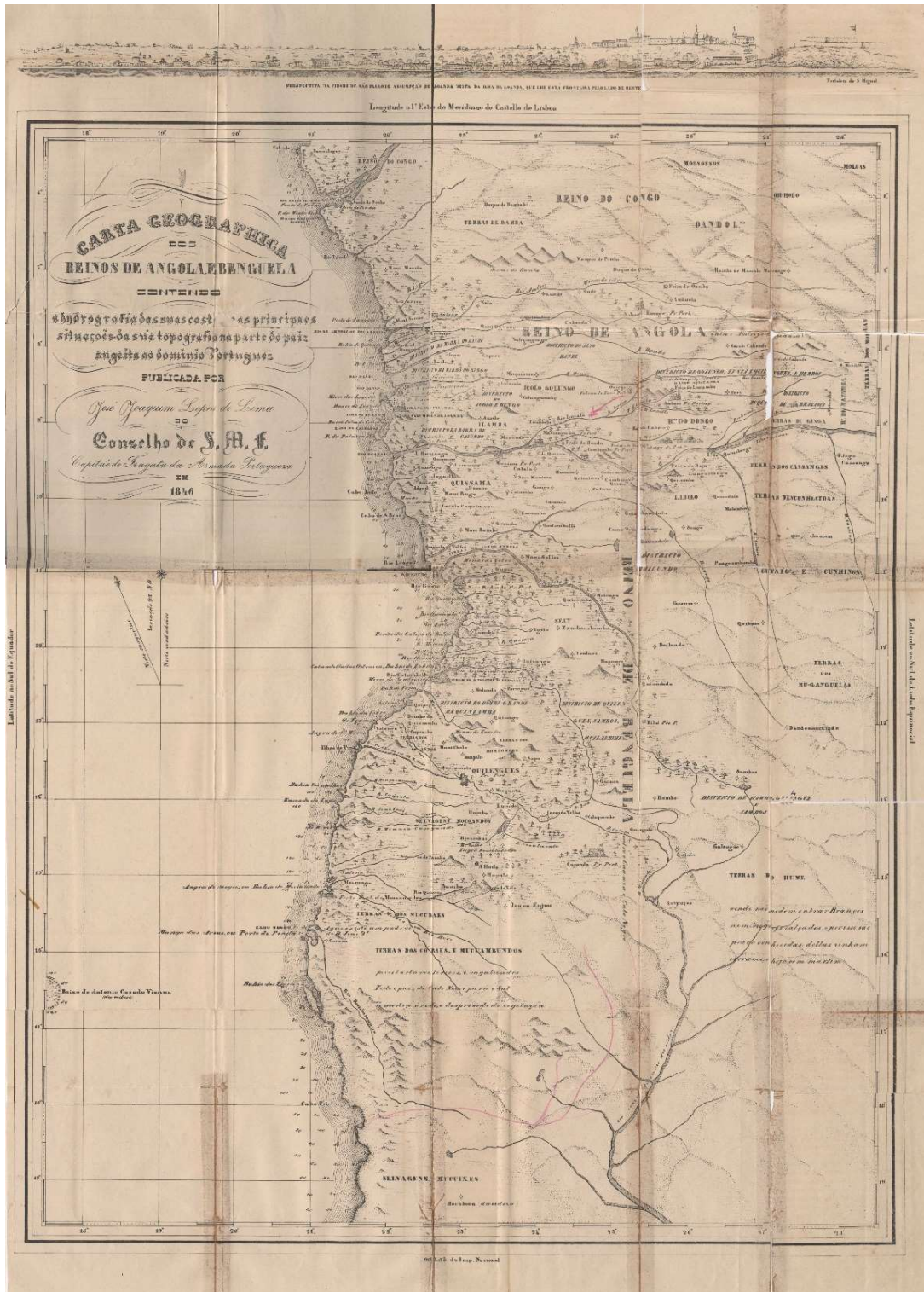
Appendix 3.1 – Benguela to Moçamedes and Quilengues in the interior



Appendix 3.2 – Moçamedes to Cabo Negro and Humbe in the interior



Appendix 4 – Angola and Benguela, 1846: “Carta geographica dos reinos de Angola e Benguella” (1846), by José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, in: Lima, J.J. Lopes de. *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas na África Occidental e Oriental; Ásia Occidental; China, e na Oceania* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844).



Appendix 4.1 – Benguela and Quilengues



DISTRITO DE HAMBO, G. 2.ª

SAMBO

Caconda Velha

Caconda Pr. Port.

Quingolo

Quiaio

Quipuças

TERRAS DO HUME

aonde não podem entrar Brancos
nem Negros calçados, e por isso são
prado cercadas dellas vinham
os cravos, e hoje vem marfim

Appendix 5 – Angola, 1860: “Mappa dos reinos de Angola e Benguela” (1860), by Manuel Antonio de Castro. BNL, Cartografia, C.C. 21V. BND, purl/1498



Appendix 5.1 – Benguela, Mossamedes, Quilengues and Humbe



[illegible]

Appendix 6.1 – Benguela, Moçamedes, Quilengues and interior



Appendix 7 – Southern Africa, 1886: Oliveira, Antonio Augusto de. “Carta da Africa Meridional portuguesa” (1886), *Comissão de Cartographia de Portugal*. (Paris: Erhard Frères Rue Denfert-Rochereau, 1886).



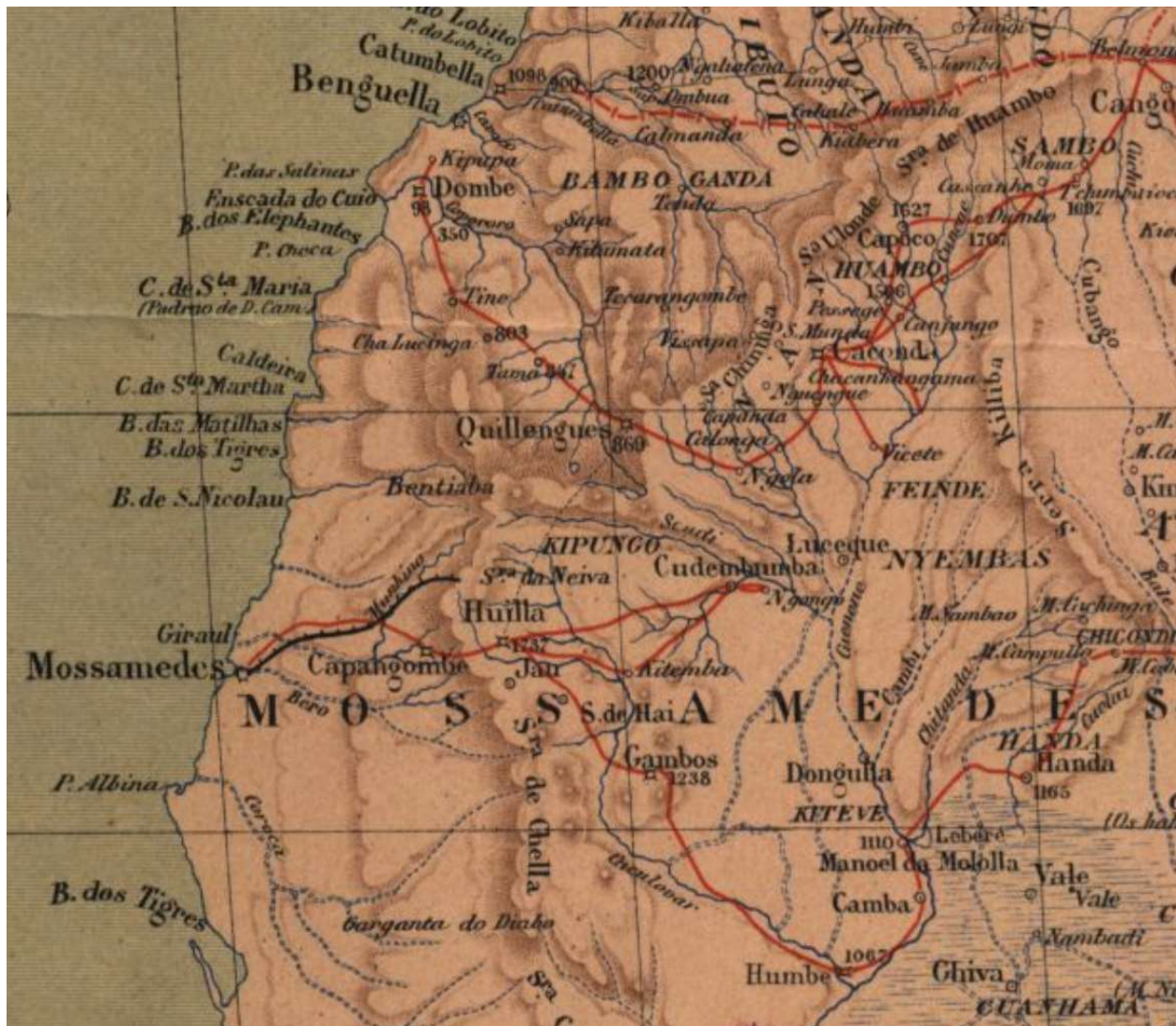
Appendix 7.1 – Benguela, Moçamedes, Quilengues and interior



Appendix 8 – Southern Africa, 1891: Oliveira, Antonio Augusto de. “Carta das possessões portuguesas da Africa meridional segundo as convenções celebradas em 1891”, *Comissão de Cartographia de Portugal*. (Paris: Erhard Frères Rue Denfert-Rochereau, 1891).



Appendix 8.1 – Benguela, Moçamedes, Quilengues and interior



Appendix 9 – Different spellings for geographic and cultural references of “Quilengues”

Geographic references	
1.	Quilengues (Pinheiro Furtado, 1790)
2.	Quillengues (Bastos, 1908)
3.	Quillangues (Bastos, 1908)
4.	Quillengas (Cadornega, 1680)
5.	Quilongas (Cadornega, 1680)
6.	Quilengas (Cadornega, 1680)
7.	Quilingue (Mcqueen, 1860)
8.	Quilenges (Guedes, 2012)
9.	Quillenjes (Bellin, 1754)
10.	Quilengues e Sambos & Quilengues e Huila (Motta Feo, 1825)
11.	Kilengues (Desch-Obi, 2008)
12.	Kwillengues (Arnot, 1889)
13.	Kilengues-Muso & Kilengues-Humbe (Desch-Obi, 2008)
14.	Kilenge-Muso & Kilenge-Nkhumbi (Vansina, 2004)
15.	Tyilengue-Muso & Tyilengue-Humbi (Estermann, 1979)
16.	Cilenge (Melo, 2005)
17.	Gemge (Cadornega, 1680)
18.	Genge (Delgado, 1945)
19.	Elende (Hambly, 1934)
Cultural references	
1.	Muquilengues (Joaquim Jose da Silva, 1785)
2.	Moquilengues (Paulo Lacerda, 1797)
3.	Mutxilengues (Milheiros, s/d)
4.	Quilengue Muso & Quilengue Humbe [Ethnographic Map] (José Redinha, s/d)
5.	Otyilenge (Vansina, 2004)
6.	Tyilengue (Redinha, 1955 / Childs 1960)
7.	Txilengue (Milheiros, 1967)
8.	Cilengi (Childs, 1969)
9.	Cilenge (Melo, 2005)
10.	Chilengue (Duparquet, 1953)
11.	Chilengues (Childs 1960)
12.	Kilengi [Bantu word] (Haenlein 1997)
13.	Vatxilengue [Song] (Milheiros n/d)
14.	Vacilenge (Melo, 2005)
15.	Olucilenge (Melo, 2005)
16.	Xilengue (Nogueira, 1881)

Appendix 10 – Three lists de <i>Sobas</i> and <i>Sobetas</i> of Quilengues (1798-1799)			
#	List of <i>sobas</i> of Quilengues by Governor Botelho de Vasconcelos (1 August 1799) published in <i>Annaes Marítimos e Coloneaes</i> , 1844 ¹²⁸⁵ .	List of <i>sobas</i> of Quilengues (1798), AIHGB, Rio de Janeiro ¹²⁸⁶ .	List of <i>sobas</i> of Quilengues (2 January 1798), Arquivo Nacional de Angola, Luanda ¹²⁸⁷ .
1	Sova de Socoval com seus Povos	Socoval	Souva do Socoval com seus Povos
2	Soveta Tunda	Soveta da Tunda	Soveta da Tunda
3	Dito Bonga	Dito da Bonga	Seus souvetas da Bonga
4	Dito Quicuco	Dito do Quicuco	Dito do Quicuco
5	Dito Ecore		
6	Dito Lucondo	Soveta do Lucondo	Soveta do Lucondo
7	Dito Calunga	Soveta de Calunga	Soveta de Calunga
8	Dito Camburo	Soveta de Comburo	Soveta de Comburo
9	Dito Canhama maio	Soveta de Canhama maio	Soveta de Canhama maio
10	Dito do Hambo	Soveta de Hambo	Soveta de Hambo
11	Dito de Quipussas	Soveta de Quipussas	Soveta de Quipussas
12	Dito Malengue	Souva do Malengue	Soveta do Malengue
13	Dito Quitomo		Soveta Quitomo
14	Dito dos Bembes	Souvas do Bembe	Soveta dos Bembes
15	Dito das Numpacas	Souveta dos Numpacos	Soveta dos Numpacos
16	Dito da Huenja		Soveta da Huenja
17	Dito da Massanzalacata	Souva do Musanzallacata	Soveta da Massanzalacata
18	Souva da Huila	Souva da Huila	Souva da Huila
19	Sova do Injao	Souva dito do Injas	Souva do Injao
20	Sova de Quipungo	Souva do Quipungo	Souva de Quipungo
21	Sova de Gambos	Souva do Gambos	Souva dos Gambos
22	Sova Hinha	Souveta de Hinha	Souva da Hinha
23	Sova dos Moimbas	Souva dos Moinbas	Souva dos Moimbas
24	Dito Bolenga	Souveta de Bulenga	Souveta Bolenga
25	Sova de Quiaungu o maior Sova do Grande terreno do Humbe grande, à margem do Rio Cunene	Souva Quiango, que he o mais poderozo dos Sovas do Humbe a margem do Rio Conene e dois dias adiante dos Gambos	Souva de Quiaungo, que hé o maior souva do grande terreno do Humbe, a margem do Rio Conene, 2 dias adiante dos Gambos
26	Sova da Camba	Souva de Camba	Souva da Camba
27	Sova do Molondo	Souva de Malondo	Souva de Molondo
28	Sova do Handa	Souva da Handa	Souva da Handa
29	Sova de Cafima	Souva de Cafima	Souva de Cafima

¹²⁸⁵ Alexandre Jose Botelho de Vasconcelos, “Descrição da Capitania de Benguella... 1º d’Agosto em 1799”, in *Annaes Marítimos e Coloniaes*, 4ª. Série, Parte Não Oficial (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), 147-161.

¹²⁸⁶ AIHGB, DL, 32, 2. 1 (Doc.. 131), fls. 1-6v, “Relação dos sobas, sovetas, seus vassallos, e sobas agregados da capitania de Benguela” (1798).

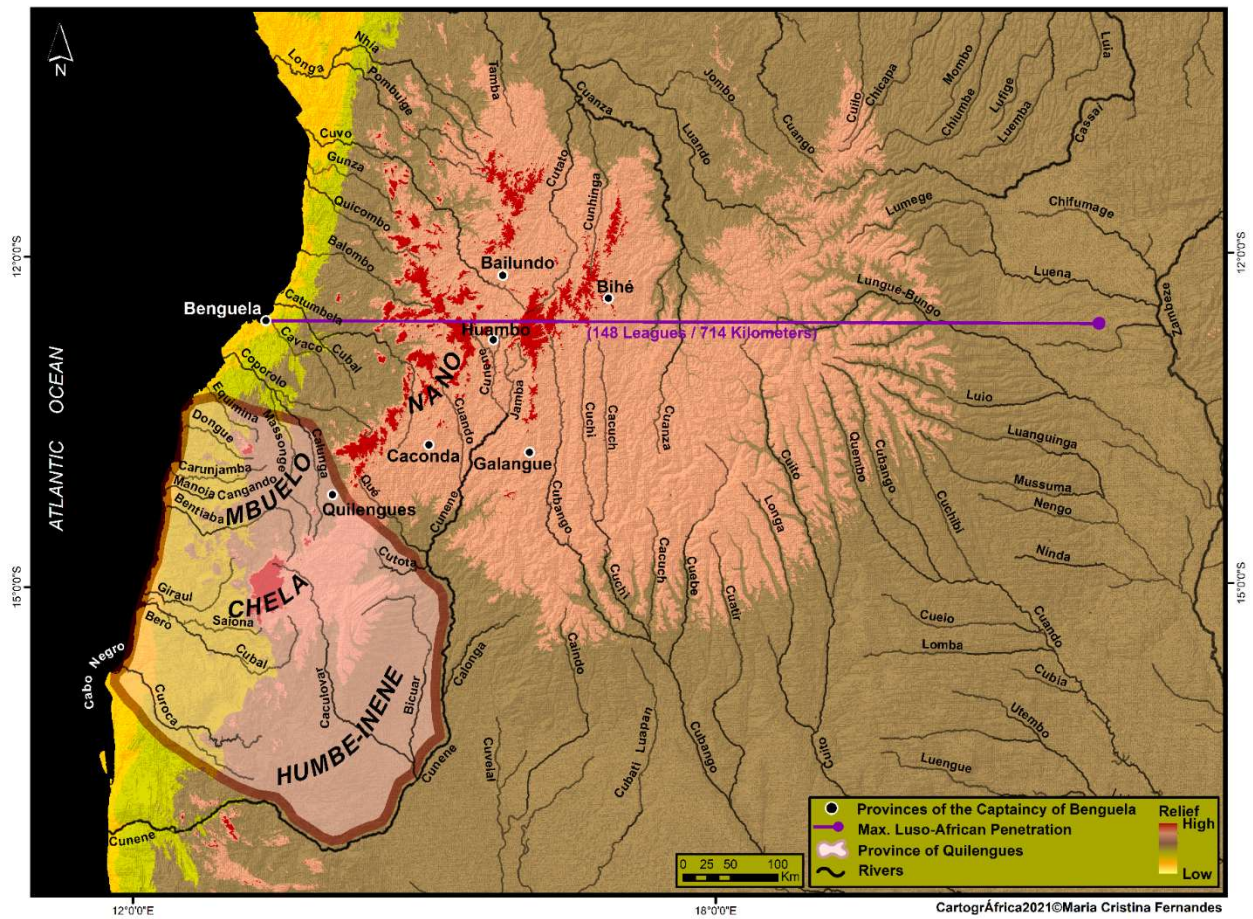
¹²⁸⁷ AHU, Angola, 1a Secção, Cx. 87, Doc. 5 - “Relação dos sobas potentados, souvetas seus vassallos e sobas agregados pelos nomes das suas terras, que tem na capitania de Benguela”, (2 Jan 1798).

30	Sova do Balle	Souva do Balle	Souva do Balle
31	Os Mucanhamas que são vários Povos com seus sovetas	Souva dos Mucanhamas com muitos Povos	Souva dos Mucanhamas com muitos Povos
32	Sova de Cabetto	Souva Cabeto	Mais para terra dentro: Souva de Cabeto
33	Sova da Cabona	Souva da Caboma	Dito de Cabona
34	Sova de Quiabiqua	Souva de Quia bigua	Dito Quiabiqua
35	Dito Tolala naquenda	Souva de Talala naquenda	Dito de Tallala naquenda
36	Dito Dongona	Souva Dongona	Dito Dongona
37	Dito Quianda	Souva de Quiande	Dito Quianda
	Mais chegado à Costa do Mar:		Pela beira mar:
38	Sova Quitoco Dangalasanda	Souva Quitoco Danga Sanda	Dito de Quitoco Dangalasanda
39	Dito Colanja	Souva de Colanja	Dito de Colanja
40	Sova Quitidy	Souva de Quitindy	Dito de Quitidy
41	Dito Bittiaba	Souva de Bitiaba	Dito Bitiaba
42	Dito Guenda Longo	Souva de Quendelongo	Dito Quendelongo
43	Dito Biballa	Souva de Biballa	Dito Biballa
44	Dito Munene oculo		
45	Dito Punda Hinene		
46	Dito Anda Eulo		
47	Dito Quipangulula muquangindi		
48	Sova Hunguã, na Barra do Rio Bombeiro		
49	Dito Muagary		
50	Dito do Bumbo	Souva do Bumbo	Dito do Bumbo
51	Dito Tumpa	Souva Tumba	Dito Tumba
52	Dito Balla Cuballe	Souva Ballacuballe	Dito Ballacubata
53	Dito Himba	Souva Himba	Dito Himba
54	Dito Cubal	Souva de Cuball	Dito Cubal
55	Dito Taspá	Souva da Farpa	Dito da Tarpa
56	Os Mocarocas	Souva dos Mocarocas	Dito dos Mocarocas
57	Dito Buaquempe	Souva do Bucuaquenpe	Dito Bucuaquempe
58	Dito de Cabolle, dizem que isto fica ao Pé da Barra do Rio Cunene; e que este antes da sua Barra lança três braços, em que forma três ilhas as quaes tem os Povos seguintes:	Souva de Cabolle, dizem fica ao pé da Barra do Conene, e que este Rio antes da barra lança 3 braços formando 3 ilhas que tem Povos na 1ª os seguintes	Dito do Cabolle; dizem este fica ao pé da Barra do Rio Cunene e que este antes da sua Barra, lança 3 braços, e forma 3 ilhas, suas quais tem seus povos seguinte:
59	Na 1ª ilha está o Sova Bahingy com seus Povos	Na 1ª Bahynay com seus povos	Na 1ª Bahingy com seus povos
60	Na 2ª Badombodolla com seus Povos	Na 2ª Badombodola com ditos	Na 2ª Badombadola com ditos
61	Na 3ª Bacoaquanqua com seus Povos	Na 3ª Bacoaquanqua com ditos	Na 3ª Bacoaquanqua, com ditos

	Mais por terra dentro,		
62	Sova Bacoanamalui	Souva de Bocoanamalui	Souva de Bacoanamalui
63	Dito Bacoanhama	Souva de Bacoanhama	Souva de Bacoanhama
64	Dito Ocuangay	Souva de Ocuangari	Souva de Occuangari
65	Dito Bubunja	Souva de Babunga	Souva de Babunja
66	Dito Marima	Souva de Marima	Souva de Marima
67	Dito dos Mondongas	Souva dos Mondongos	Souva dos Mondongas
68	Dito Inamatui	Souva do Inamatuy	Souva de Inamatui
69	Dito Bacua quitteles (são Ganjallas)	Souva de Bacuaquitele	Souva de Bacuaquitele (são Ganjallas)
70	Dito Bacuambuy	Souva de Bacuambuy, são ganjallas	Souva de Bacuambuy
71	Dito Bacualubudy	Souva de Bacualubudy	Souva de Bacualubudy
72	Dito Himba	Souva da Ximba	Souva Ximba
73	Dito dos Ganjallas, dizem que estão ao pé de humas grandes Salinas de Sal	Souva dos Gangellas, dizem que estão ao pé de hua salinas grandes	Dos ditos Ganjallas, dizem estão ao pé de umas salinas grandes
74	Dita de Badu, dizem que nesta terra Gados muito grande fora do natural	Souva do Badu, que dizem tem todos muito grandes fora do Cumum	Souva de Badu, dizem há nesta terra gados muito grande, fora do comum
75	Dito de Demautumo, dizem há nesta terra vários Anoens muito feios	Souva de Banautuno, honed dizem ha anoens feyos	Souva de Banauluno, onde dizem há anões feios
76	Dito dos Mucuanallas, dizem que estes falam por estallos, e são de cores um tanto avermelhadas, e que he terra muito remotta, e muito pouco conhecidos	Souva dos Mucuanallas, dizem que estes fallão por estallos e que as gentes são de Cores avermelhadas, são terras muito remotas e pouco conhecidas	Souva do Mucuanallas, dizem que estes falam por estalo, e que a gente são de cores avermelhadas, e que são terras muito remotas e pouco conhecidas
77			Além dos souvas, souvetas e mais povos acima referidos, há no centro desta província 118 negros potentados, de nação dos Muhumbes, que governam de 10 até 270 pessoas, e muitos gados
78			Souva Janiabala
79		Souva dos Hingas	
80		Souva Tandaballa	

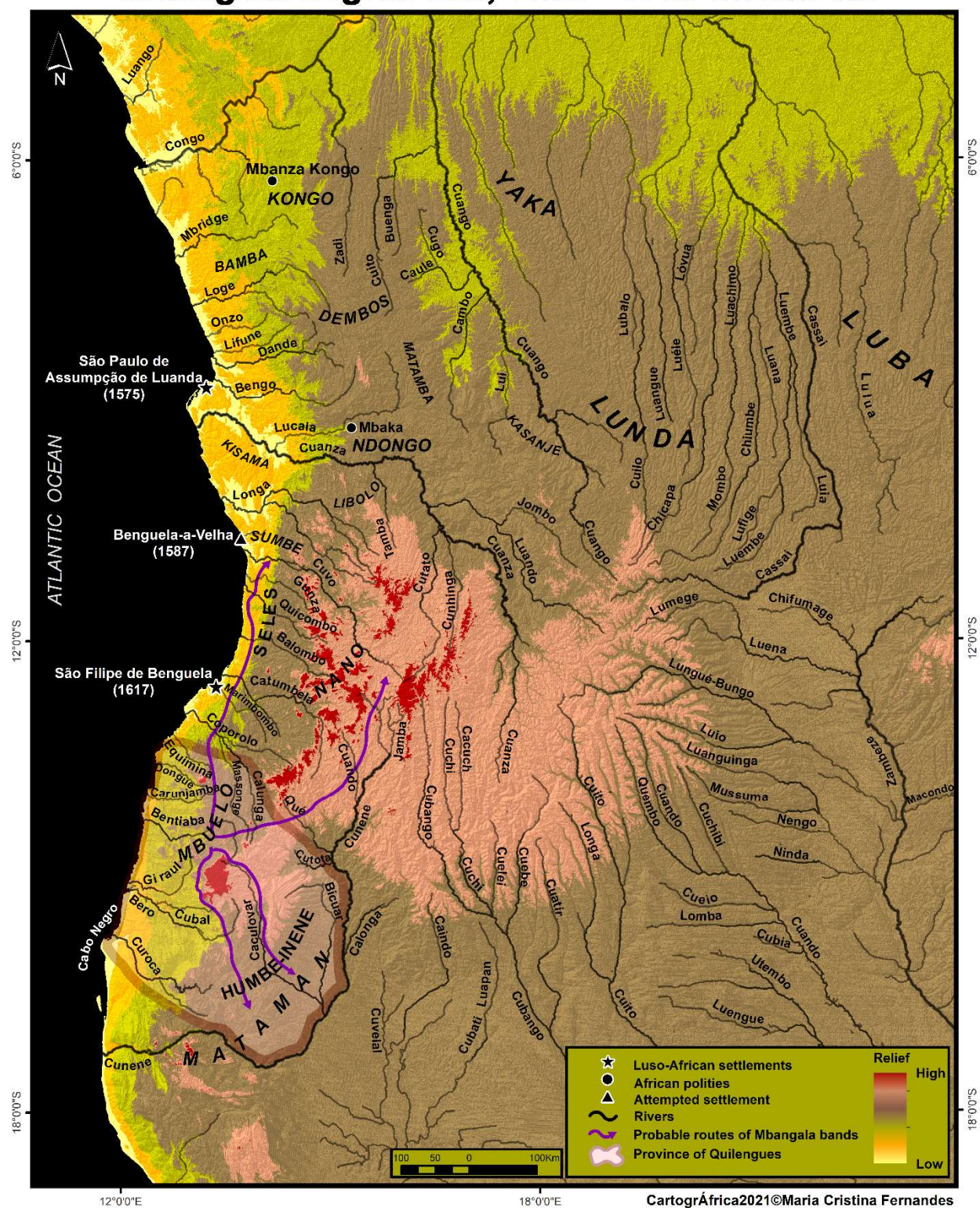
Map 1: Captaincy of Benguela, 1799

Captaincy of Benguela and its Seven Provinces, 1799



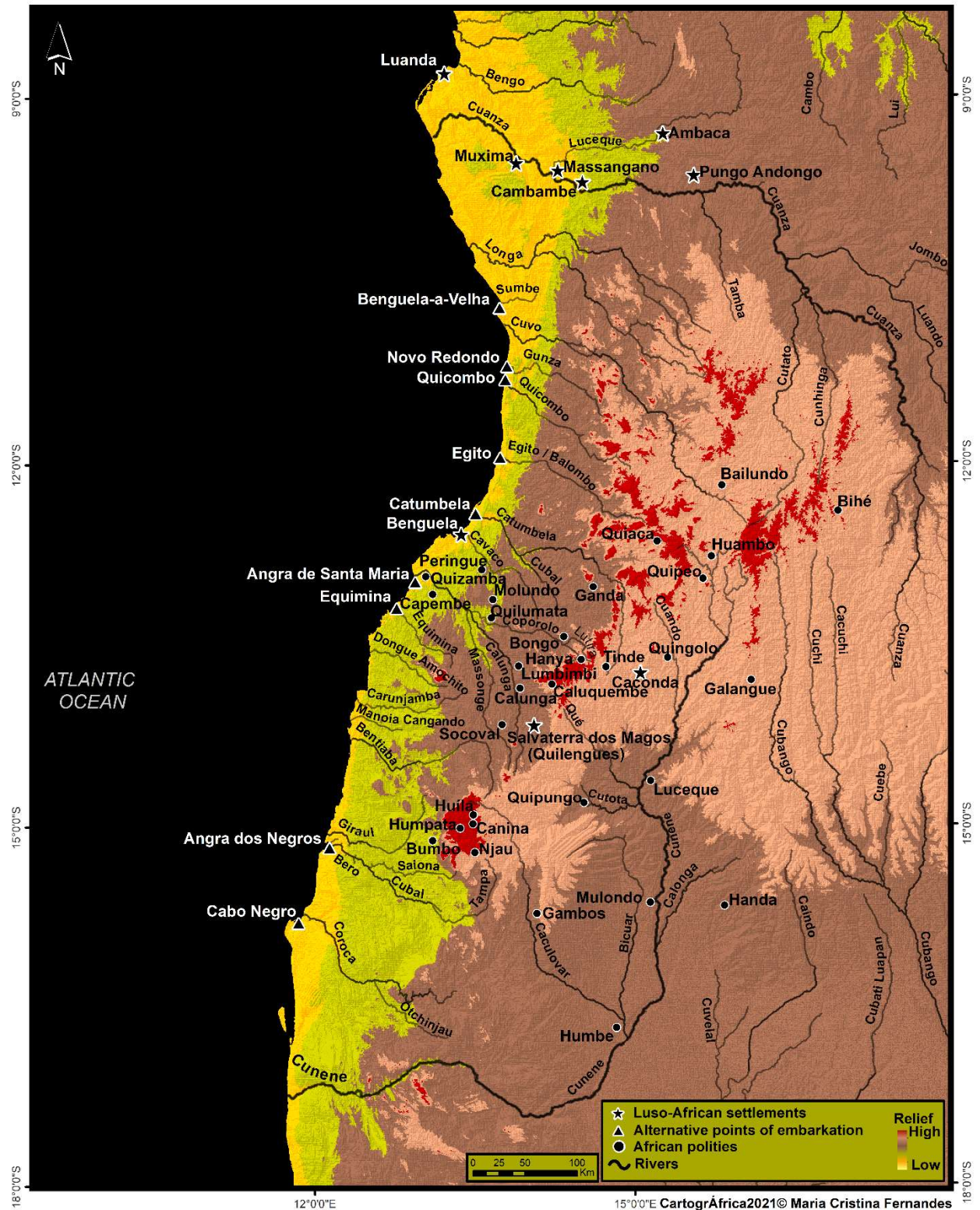
Map 2: Mbangala Migrations, 16th-17th Centuries

Mbangala Migrations, 16th - 17th Centuries

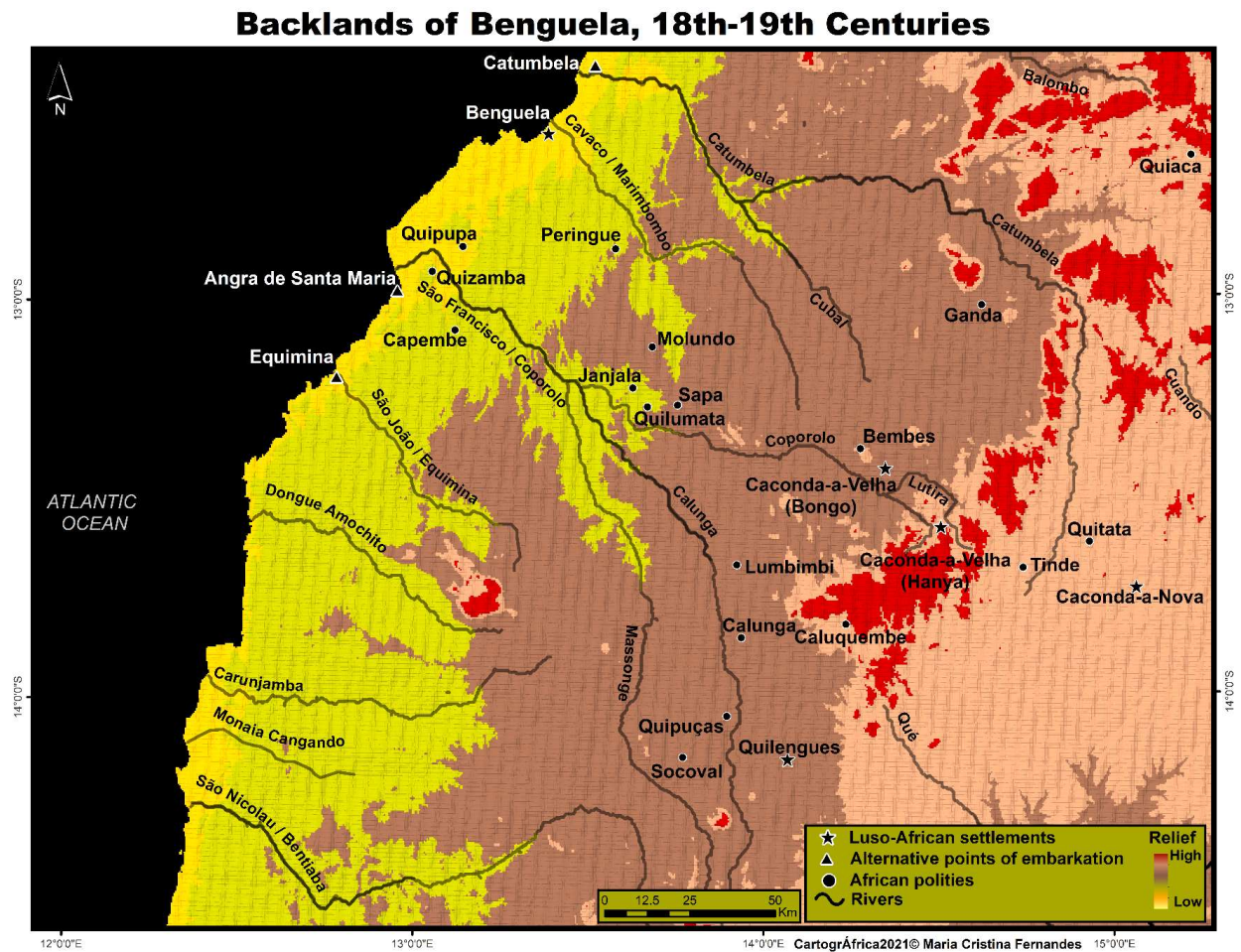


Map 3: Angola and Benguela, 18th-19th Centuries

Angola and Benguela, 18th-19th Centuries



Map 4: Backlands of Benguela, 18th-19th Centuries



Glossary

Aguardente – Sugarcane brandy

Arimos – Farmland

Cacimbo – Fog that covers the land in the early hours of the morning due to the dry and cold weather

Cassíma – Water well dug in the sand

Capitão-mor – Captain-major, commander of *presídios*

Conselhos – Portuguese administrative unit; counties

Degredado – Exiled criminal

Derrota – Reconnaissance expedition; “route of the armies”

Devasssa – Inquiry

Districto – Portuguese administrative unit with no permanent military force

Epungu – Maize

Farinha – Manioc flour, staple ration of caravans crossing the *sertões*

Feitorias – Trading posts

Filhos do país or *filhos da terra* – Individuals born locally, in Africa

Fidalgos – Nobles

Guerra preta – Local “black” soldiers

Libambos – Shackles used on slaves

Libatas – African settlements, hamlets

Liconde – Fiber extracted from the bark of the *nkondo* tree

Imbangala – Groups of Mbangala warriors who settled in Kasanje and Matamba

Impuri – African fortification built using the natural setting of local rocky hills

Jaga – Generic name given by Portuguese and Luso-Africans to the leaders of the Mbangala bands

Jagas – Nomadic warriors who invaded *Mbanza Kongo* in the 17th century, often mistaken with the Mbangala

Jagados – Territory under the control of the *Jaga*

Kilombo – Military cult of the Mbangala; military encampment

Kinguri – Mythical founder of the Imbangala of Kasanje, the “lion king”

Macotas or *Makota* – Elders and advisers of the *sobas*

Maji-a-samba – Ritual to produce a protective “magic” unguent

Mani-Kongo – Ruler of Kongo

Massambala – Sorghum

Massango – Millet

Mbangala – Nomadic warriors of the interior of Benguela who also worked as mercenaries

Mbanza Kongo – Capital of Kongo, also São Salvador do Congo

Mbuelo – Lowlands in the interior of Benguela

Miombo – *Brachystegia-Isoberlinia* woodland ideal for ranching, also known as *mato-de-panda*

Moradores – Inhabitants; dwellers living within and around Portuguese administrative units

Mucanos or *Mukano* – Mbundu customary laws; for the Portuguese and Luso-Africans these were legal cases regarding one’s condition as a free person or a slave (*Juízo dos Mucanos*).

Mucunde – Beans

Mwaant yaav – Ruler of the territory the Portuguese called *Muatiânvua*

Nano – Highlands of the central plateau in the interior of Benguela

Negociantes – businessmen

Ngola – Ruler of Ndongo

Nguri – Lion

Nkondo – Large and fibrous tree, also known as *Mbondo*, *Imbondeiro* or *Baobab*

Ombala – Capital of the *sobado*

Peça d’Índia – A healthy male slave in the prime of his life

Pretos calçados – “Shod blacks”, Europeanized Africans

Pretos descalços – “Barefoot blacks”, Africans under no or little European influence

Presídio – Portuguese administrative unit composed by a fort and surrounded by local dwellers, a military outpost and its personnel.

Pumbeiros – Itinerant trader, often a “black” slave

Pumbo – African market

Quiculos – Funeral urns to keep the bones of ancestors

Quimbares – African soldiers, who also worked as mercenaries and bounty hunters.

Quipaca – Fortified corrals

Sertanejos – Caravan leader and itinerant trader

Sertões – Areas in the interior, often outside Portuguese control; “core of the lands”

Sobas – Local African ruler

Sobados - Territory under control of the *soba*

Soldo – Salary paid to soldiers

Tembanza - First wife of the *Jaga*

Tendala – Interpreter

Undamento – Culturally-mixed ritual of subjugation that followed the signing of a treaty of vassalage, which also served to confirm the local authority of the African vassal

Yijila (sing. *kijila*) – Laws of the *kilombo* regarding the destruction of lineage and ancestry.