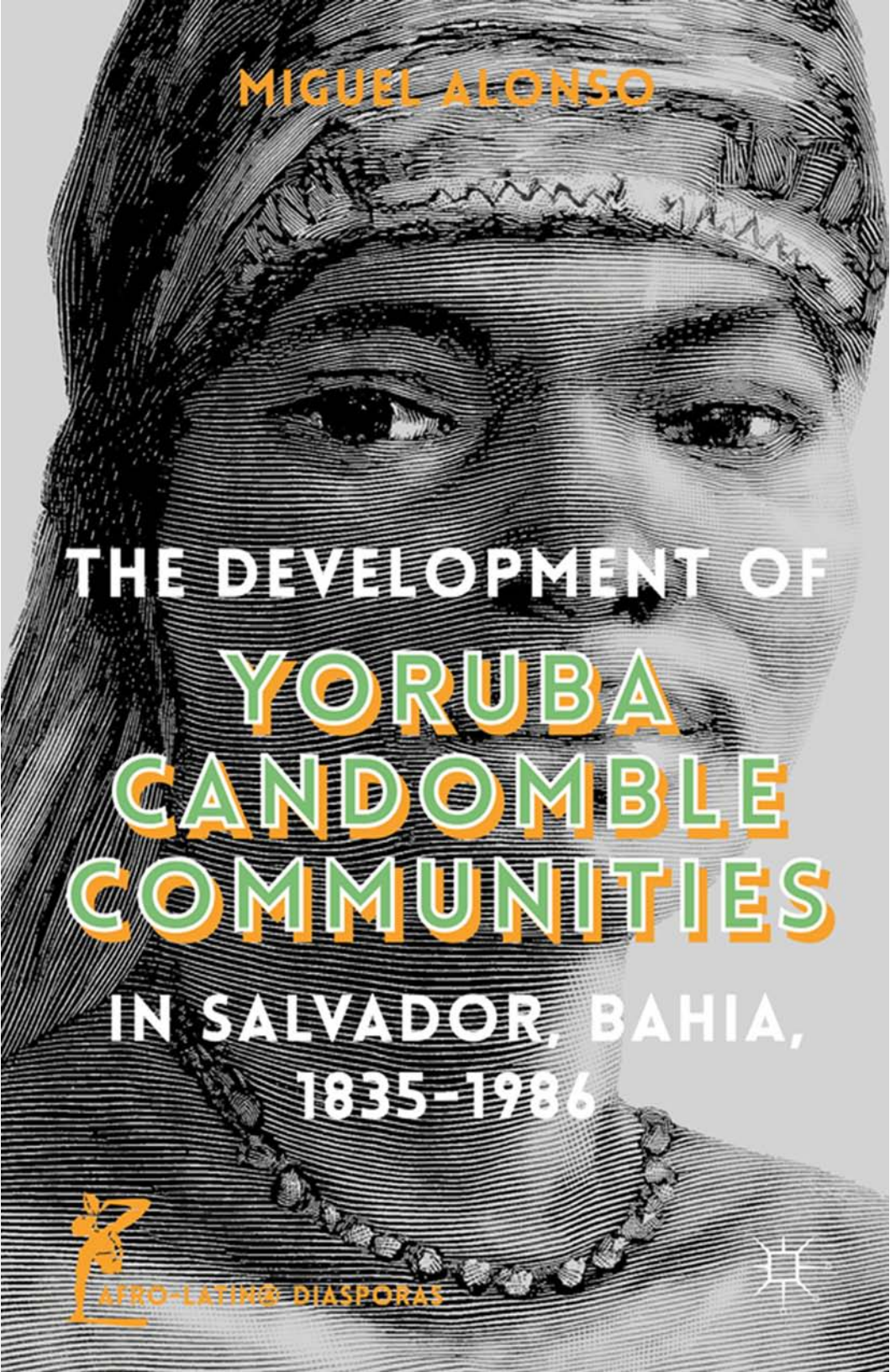
MIGUEL ALONSO
THE DEVELOPMENT OF
YORUBA CANDOMBLE COMMUNITIES
IN SALVADOR, BAHIA, 1835–1986
AFRO-LATIN@ DIASPORAS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF YORUBA CANDOMBLE COMMUNITIES IN SALVADOR, BAHIA, 1835–1986

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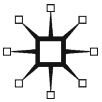

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Dedicated to the memory of Haydée Maria dos Santos Paim

Mãe Dede

Saudades. Vão Ficar Para Sempre

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Introduction

How the Yoruba Became *Nagô*

As the sweltering heat of the Bahian sun finally abated, I watched as the *pai-de-santo*,[1] the spiritual head of a candomble *terreiro* (temple) closed the shutters and bolted the doors for the evening. "*Casa de Nagô*," he whispered, harkening back to the days when members of the various *nações*[2] of Africa clustered together in their respective corners of Salvador, *Casa de Nagô*.[3]

The secrecy with which he conducted even the simplest of his actions spoke volumes in its silence. Salvador, Bahia, the oldest city in Brazil, was once the center of the nation serving as both the political and economic capital of Portugal's New World empire as well as the entry point for many of the enslaved Africans who survived the dreaded Middle Passage. They came from such disparate regions and ethnicities as the Hausa, Fon, Ewe, Bantu, Bi-Kongo, and Angola but it was the Yoruba or *Nagô*, as they were known in Brazil, who established some of the most visible cultural legacies. They came from what was called by some as the "Black Rome." Their religion and cosmology revolved around healing and peace of mind represented in the form of supernatural beings known as *orixas*, and their ritual and institutions created to make that energy accessible solidified their reputation as a self-sufficient and powerful African presence in Bahia.

The Yoruba however were not the only African-based religion to develop a strong following in the northeast of Brazil. The Jeje, or Fon, from the ancient kingdom of Dahomey, once bitter rivals of the Yoruba-based empire of Oyo, arrived in Bahia rather early and in significant numbers, laying down a cultural foundation upon which later groups built.

West African Muslims, or *Malês*, as they were called in Bahia (possibly a reference to the kingdom of Mali where many of the jihads

originated), were also common in Salvador until their rebellious nature led to their eventual repression and attempted expulsion from Brazil.

Bantus and Angolans imported from southwestern Africa also developed a strong and visible cultural legacy in Bahia. But sadly, for many years, they went unnoticed by many researchers and ethnographers. The Yoruba, however, remain for many the standard by which all other African cultural expressions are measured. For well over 150 years, their public ritual, celebrated through song, dance, and drumming, has been noted in Brazilian history. Yet until recently, little was known about the history of the early *Nagô* communities and institutions. What survived did so through closely guarded oral histories and memories passed down through ritual and dispersed in fragments to interested researchers during casual conversations or for political gain.

The world of the *orixa* and those dedicated to their worship is one shrouded in mystery but for those willing to commit themselves to their service, they are accessible over time. The history of the persons, communities, and institutions that created this Afro-Bahian world, however, is not. It becomes ensnared and enveloped in the complicated and rather beautiful concept of the *Casa de Nagô*, the house of the Yoruba, which is always locked, always shrouded in vague generalities and politeness, never directly revealing itself until the moment when this student realized he had learned without every noticing he was taught through a type of historical osmosis. As he closed his bedroom door for the last time that day, the *pai-de-santo* repeated with the mischievous chuckle that holders of secrets often display, "*Casa de Nagô.*"

This book attempts to bring together scattered fragments of the history concerning the formation, continuance, and evolution of a select grouping of Yoruba-based religious communities of Salvador, Bahia, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Chapter 1 focuses on setting the stage and providing the context for the environment in which the story unfolds. The widespread use of slave labor in Brazil led to it being employed in nearly every aspect of daily life. The slave system used in the urban centers of the nation in particular led to the creation of a sizable African and native-born black population. In an attempt to prevent the development of any type of pan-African identity or solidarity, local authorities often encouraged the retention of African ethnic identities or *nações* as they were called in Brazil. Allowed to maintain language and a certain amount of traditional cultural practices, these *nações* were the basis

for community formation, organizations, religious institutions, and trade groups.

It should be noted however, that the concept of *nação* was viewed by the authorities only as a means to an end—a smoothly functioning system of labor based on slavery and an organizational structure to allow the African-born population to be assimilated into a more Western-oriented and heavily Europeanized worldview. Obviously the framework for such a worldview was provided by the Catholic Church which viewed conversion of Africans to the faith as a vital national project. Using the system of lay brotherhoods imported from Europe, the Church facilitated the creation of such bodies organized along *nação* lines. Hoping to provide a network of Catholic-based mutual aid societies to assist in the conversion process, these organizations instead evolved into officially sanctioned and therefore safe places where African ethnic-based traditions were nurtured and maintained. They also provided vital training grounds for the acquisition of administrative and financial skills needed to, as Kim Butler has noted, institutionalize candomble centers of worship.

Chapter 1 ends with a discussion of the political turmoil engulfing Bahia during the nineteenth century culminating in a series of failed slave revolts. Chapter 2 then picks up the story with a brief overview of the history of the Yoruba people with an emphasis on religious and political institutions operating under the pressures of the emerging Atlantic slave trade. For example, when looking at how Yoruba religion and society were organized in the nineteenth century, some striking similarities and differences between Bahia and West Africa emerge. This sheds some light on the fact that while consistent contact between these two regions guaranteed a certain amount of continuity in the cultural practices of Afro-Bahians, the context within which they operated forced them onto slightly differing trajectories.

First, until the late nineteenth century, the concept of a Yoruba identity did not exist in any salient way. While the various city-states, or hometowns as they are called, of the Yoruba recognized a common ancestry and mythology, the fundamental basis for one's identity rested in the hometown. In other words an individual did not label himself or herself as Yoruba but rather as Oyo, Ketu, etc. Upon their arrival in the New World as slaves, however, they all shared the advantage of speaking a somewhat mutually intelligible language and a common religious tradition (either Islam or *orixa* worship) that made their cohesion as a group somewhat easier than some of the other *nações*.

Second, the Yoruba hometowns as a whole represented one of the most expansive areas of urban life in West Africa. Several hometowns had populations well over 100,000 and therefore those captives bound for Salvador held yet another advantage over their more rural-based counterparts. This helps to explain one of the factors contributing to the success of the Yoruba in maintaining traditional religious practices for theirs was one already proven adept at addressing the needs of a largely urban population.

Lastly, it should be noted that over the centuries, several of the major Yoruba hometowns had evolved into centers of great commercial and military activity. Many of them therefore had developed a fairly cosmopolitan outlook as merchants and conquering armies from across the region passed through their urban centers. Because of this, it can be argued, Yoruba religion evolved largely into a decentralized and flexible set of traditions easily able to incorporate foreign symbols, ritual, and cosmology into its own without a fundamental altering of its structure or systems of belief. Unlike Christianity or Islam, which present themselves as true and exclusive paths to salvation, Yoruba traditional religions allowed for the existence and practice of multiple faiths. Therefore when confronted with an alternative cosmology, Yoruba religious traditions bent somewhat, incorporating what it found useful from another tradition and reinterpreting it within their own relatively fixed and stable cosmology.

Female power, however, became the dominant mechanism through which Yoruba religious traditions were institutionalized in the New World. Hence, chapter 3 begins with the process of merging the previous two contexts into an evolving Afro-Bahian framework. As Stephan Palmie has pointed out in the case of Afro-Cuban religious traditions and what this work argues, Bahian Yoruba-based candomble was not merely a holdover from a traditional society struggling to survive within a modern world in which it seemingly had no place, but rather, it was, through its own flexible philosophical traditions, constantly evolving, adapting, and participating hand in hand with everything else around it. Yoruba-based religions in Bahia therefore functioned within, not in opposition to, the development of a modern nation-state in Brazil while offering its devotees a rational, spiritually based tool to cope with and make sense of the social fractures and psychological trauma associated with slavery, racism, and rapid change. Thus their modernity was based on Yoruba theological constructs and practices functioning within and integrated into Western social and political structures.

For instance, abandoning the traditional Yoruba custom of devotion to the worship of one particular *orixa*, the Bahian Yoruba developed a tradition of consolidating all of the *orixa* known to them into a pantheon worshipped by all. When also examining the ritual spaces of these same groups it becomes clear the Bahian Yoruba also made some adjustments. Rather than a site dedicated solely to religious practices, their temples followed the pattern of a traditional Yoruba family compound. In Bahia, however, these Yoruba religious/family compounds would be headed by an elevated class of economically and socially powerful women.

In urban slave environments across Latin America, women often enjoyed greater freedom of movement and economic opportunities than their male counterparts. That combined with a long-standing Yoruba cultural practice of leaving the administration of local market places to women allowed for increased opportunities on their part to acquire freedom, property, and businesses used to further their religious agendas. In time, these women formed the backbone of several Catholic brotherhoods and eventually the founding and continual leadership of numerous Yoruba-based religious institutions in Bahia. Their dominance over these spaces continued for generations forcing men into auxiliary roles or out of the Yoruba-based traditions altogether. All of this allowed these women to achieve a level of personal and financial power unimagined by white women of a similar social standing.

By 1830 what I refer to as the Big Women of Bahia began the process of institutionalizing their faith with the creation of the first permanent Yoruba-based religious institution—*Ilê Iyá Nassô*, more commonly referred to as *Casa Branca* or *Engenho Velho*. By the early twentieth century, initiates of *Engenho Velho* formed two more temples. These houses of worship are often viewed as the most elite and powerful African-based religious sites in Bahia, and have become collectively known as the Big Three.

As Kim Butler has pointed out, the emphasis the temple founders placed on this elite group of women's definition of purity and standardization of religious practice created an institutional model that all others, including non-Yoruba–based traditions, had to follow in order to be accepted as authentic to the larger candomble community.

As these institutions rose in popularity and political influence, so too did a larger contest emerge between the intellectual and social elite of Bahian society. Chapter 4 focuses on two competing groups.

One clearly views African cultural legacies and, in particular, religious practices as a threat to the development of a "modern," and civilized Brazil while the other claims the African legacies of Bahia as a national treasure worthy of serious academic inquiry.

Many attempted to pressure the government and its varied law enforcement arms to suppress and hopefully eliminate all vestiges of what they claimed to be an African past. They flooded local and regional newspapers with angry letters or editorials expressing their dismay that such practices were tolerated and even utilized by respectable members of the community. Worst of all, to them, the majority of those participating in African-based religions came from the native–born black population rather than the African born. This offered further evidence of what many termed the "black problem." Thus under tremendous pressure the police began arresting, jailing, and closing down candomble centers.

Other people held a different view of these traditions. Beginning in the late nineteenth century a wave of intellectuals curious about varied aspects of African life in Brazil began to fan out across Salvador in search of a more complete understanding of how Afro-Bahian society and culture had developed over time. Using techniques drawn from psychoanalysis, ethnography, sociology, anthropology, history, and the visual arts to demonstrate the continued existence of African cultural traditions in Brazil, these academics opened a golden age into the research of the old *naçõe*s and their Afro-Bahian descendants. Several even crossed over into political advocacy on behalf of full religious freedom for their subjects of interest. They organized academic conferences and political organizations designed to foster a greater acceptance of African-based traditions as genuinely and uniquely Brazilian in nature. Since this occurred not long after the previously mentioned creation of more permanent spaces for the continual practice of Yoruba-based religions, most of these researchers found themselves drawn to these exact sites. Without reserve, they came to rely heavily on them as primary sources on which to base their works. The Big Three temples in particular were fairly welcoming of this type of attention for they used it as a public relations maneuver. The two groups working together in a symbiotic fashion were therefore not only helping to create an image of Yoruba exceptionalism in the eyes of Bahia's progressive elite but also gaining access to levels of political power necessary for their survival.

Chapter 4 continues by examining the defense mechanisms employed by the many African-based religious communities for self-preservation until hardened attitudes waned. Based on the recreation

of a traditional Yoruba family compound, the *terreiros* evolved into isolated, enclosed spaces walled off from the outside community and often located in remote or hard-to-reach areas on the outskirts of Salvador. Thus, African and increasingly Yoruba-based cultural enclaves were created where it was (and still is) entirely possible to exist with voluntary and recontextualized contact with the outside world. Yet while relocating to more remote locales might have offered some protection, more effective forms of self-preservation quickly became a necessity.

The Big Three soon adapted and remodeled an auxiliary figure known as the *Ogan* from the Jeje traditions to help guide them through these often-treacherous waters. The *Ogans* were usually divided into two subcategories. One was of a more religious nature, performing vital functions reserved for men, yet all the while under the full control of their more powerful female leadership. The other was normally an honorific title given to what are often called friends of the house. Commonly selected from socially elevated figures, these *Ogans* were tasked with providing financial and political support to ensure the well-being of the temple. In return for keeping the police at bay, securing audiences with high-level political figures, and in the case of academics producing written works designed to create an image of authenticity and cultural sophistication for their temple, these *Ogans* gained the prestige of being associated with such institutions and also to the Big Women's access to powerful spiritual mysteries. These symbiotic relationships not only solidified the female-controlled Big Three as the only legitimate models for all African religious traditions in Bahia but also proved vital in the gradual acceptance of candomble by the rest of Brazilian society.

Chapter 5 discusses the further consolidation of female power in the Yoruba-based world of the Big Three by examining how the men of this world reacted to this oft-times repressive orthodoxy. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Big Women had marginalized or coopted all forms of religious power normally associated with men in Yoruba traditional religious practice. Many men therefore had to be content to accept a permanent second-class existence or branch out into other more accommodating African religious traditions. Identifying themselves as Jeje, Angola, and increasingly *Caboclo*, these older or less prestigious traditions were able to adapt more quickly to a changing, twentieth-century context simply because they did not have to adhere to the more conservative Big Three traditions. However, if they were to gain acceptance as a legitimate alternative to the Big Three or at least a genuine African tradition, the

public at large still expected to see Yoruba-based imagery, worship the *orixa*, and hear the familiar songs and rhythms associated with them. In addition, as noted previously, ideas of political and religious legitimacy have a long tradition in the Yoruba world, that of requiring a demonstration of linear descent from other accepted sources of such power. Therefore, even while attempting to be free from the Big Women, these male religious figures still needed to demonstrate that their religious training ultimately came from them. This was a challenging proposition indeed.

This notion of female power and seemingly monopolistic control over Yoruba-based religious sites was not without its detractors. The origins of this perception and the claim by some that it represented a tradition maintained directly from their African-born ancestors was a subject of great debate among many of the aforementioned Yorubacentric researchers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

American anthropologist Ruth Landes who arrived in Bahia in the late 1930s was one of a number of American academics who wanted to learn more about the so-called racial democracy, a concept the Brazilian academic Gilberto Freyre popularized earlier in the decade. Claiming that the lack of overt racial strife in Brazil was the result of a more benign form of slavery and higher rates of miscegenation, Freyre's theories fascinated American researchers looking to resolve their own nation's "black problem." Landes soon made the acquaintance of an Afro-Bahian journalist and amateur historian Edison Carneiro, an *ogan* at a Big Three temple known commonly as *Gantois.* Serving as her guide through the world of candomble, Carneiro pointed out the dominance of female power that quickly enthralled Landes. In her pioneering work of ethnography titled *The City of Women*, Landes described candomble as the "sweet matriarchy" and suggested in later published articles that the only men drawn to its priestly class were homosexuals or transvestites. Soon a cavalcade of criticism came down upon her work but Melville Herskovits, then the accepted authority in the emerging field of Afro-American and Africanist studies, generated the most severe of them. Their dispute later spilled into several academic journals and included some ugly personal attacks. However, it became clear that the root of the enmity laid in Herskovits resenting a nonexpert venturing into his field and reaching conclusions about what Landes observed without the proper Africanist perspective. But Landes was served well by her supposed lack of perspective. Freed from having to identify specific African survivals, she was able to view candomble with a set of fresh eyes and clearly understand it on its own uniquely Afro-Bahian terms.

By the mid-twentieth century, candomble had evolved from random clandestine gatherings to complex civil and religious organizations. The Big Three in particular held sway over large numbers of devotees and political influence not only across Brazil but also around the world. The final chapter of this work focuses on the emergence of a new strategy to preserve Yoruba-based religions and the power of the Big Women.

By the 1940s, Mãe Menininha, the then spiritual head of *Gantois*, pioneered the effort to reassert control over the rapidly proliferating candomble houses and the public image of African-based religions in general. Expanding upon the use of researchers and *Ogans* to protect their temples and public images, Mãe Menininha began befriending creators of culture as well. She successfully built a following of famous writers, artists, and musicians, all who generated works of art with candomble sensibilities and honoring Mãe Menininha and *Gantois* in particular. Soon Yoruba-based religions became integrated into the popular and mainstream culture of the nation. Suddenly, those who carried out the repression campaigns of the past were made infamous in the novels of Jorge Amado. The musical movement of the late 1960s known as *Tropicalismo* was made famous by such performers as Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, and Gal Costa, all regulars at *Gantois*. All employed many candomble references in their music that circled the globe. The 1959 film *Black Orpheus* became an international sensation with its romanticized and exotic portrayal of nondescript Afro-Brazilian religious rituals. By the 1970s, Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Bahian culture had come to represent to the world what Brazil was and candomble in particular became the nation's second leading tourist attraction, second only to *Carnaval*.

By the 1980s, all of the legal restrictions or attempts to regulate African religious expressions in Brazil were removed. All that remained for the Big Three was the challenge of positing themselves as the exclusive guardians of these traditions and the standards of legitimate religious practice. Gradually, candomble practitioners felt compelled to create and publish their own works of literature, scholarly analysis, and visual art to better control the image and perceptions of their religious traditions. Using traditional and more modern forms of communication such as social media, candomble no longer faces the same challenges of the past in terms of survival. But being taken seriously as a religious faith instead of mere folklore remains a constant battle. As recent as May 2014, a Brazilian federal judge ruled "Afro-Brazilian religious ceremonies do not constitute a religion . . . (due) to an absence of a hierarchical structure and a venerated

God."[4] In response to public pressure, this ruling was ultimately reversed and the judge in this case forced to issue a public retraction. However, the ruling, an indication of how far Brazil has come due to the efforts of religious leaders such as those of the Big Three is also an indication of how far it still has to go.

Notes on Sources

As this introduction indicates, this project is one of several that brings together the many scattered fragments of history concerning the development of Yoruba-based religious communities and their rise to prominence in Salvador during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Primary sources for this particular work were somewhat limited and will, in the future, involve an ongoing effort on the part of researchers in a wide range of disciplines. As a result, this work employed many of the works of the early Bahian ethnographers as primary sources. It recognizes some of their inherent weaknesses such as the inability to corroborate much of their information and the aforementioned cultural biases from which they were constructed. However, by dissecting their information carefully and cross-referencing them with each other, patterns did emerge, which were, in fact, useful.

Newspapers housed at the Bahian state archive and also republished by many of the ethnographers discussed above were also helpful in gauging the opinions and images of candomble held by intellectual or socially elevated classes of people. Contained in them are numerous references to arrests, noise complaints by cranky neighbors, and police raids. Much of the time, however, these accounts were lacking in specific information.

Police records were also not quite as helpful as first imagined because a lack of financial support of the state archive left many of them inaccessible during my stays in Bahia. In addition, many of the more significant police campaigns designed to repress public displays of African-based religions during the 1930s were conducted haphazardly or clandestinely leaving behind few written accounts. The works of João Jose Reis, Rachel Harding, and Jocelio Telles have made extraordinary progress in unearthing and cataloging many of the nineteenth-century police records and there remains hope for more in-depth work to come.

Works published by scholars and practitioners of Yoruba-based religions in Brazil such as those by Pierre Verger, Carybe, Pai Agenor, Mãe Stella Azevedo, and Deoscoredes Maximiliano dos Santos were

also employed in several instances as primary sources. In addition, the field notes of Ruth Landes housed at the National Anthropological Archive in Washington DC and those of Melville and Frances Herskovits contained at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a division of the New York Public Library, were also consulted.

The Landes papers contain copious notes on the candomble sites she frequented, the religious figures she interviewed, correspondence with Edison Carneiro and Artur Ramos, and some unpublished works related to African religious traditions in Bahia. Her conflict with Herskovits is also discussed at length in her correspondence and journals and helped shed light on some of the academic disputes in which she found herself engaged.

The Herskovits papers were another surprising source of information that has been somewhat underutilized by scholars interested in these topics. There were several boxes of field notes that proved valuable not only in understanding his perspective on Landes but also on the non-Yoruba temples and some of men who were serving as their religious leaders during the 1930s and 1940s. Herskovits also preserved copies of candomble temple police permit applications required for the conducting of public ritual at that time. I used these not only as a representation of how widespread candomble had become by then but also as an insight into who had the necessary political clout to avoid police oversight of their rituals and, more importantly, who did not. Frances Herskovits, Melville's wife and research partner, continued to visit Bahia through the late 1960s and also had a useful perspective on the scope of social change in Brazil in terms of the popular acceptance of candomble as a viable religious tradition.

I also conducted several interviews with candomble leaders and participants during my stays in Bahia but due to the wishes of the interviewees, they were not tape-recorded and in many instances were only granted to me on the condition of anonymity. As a result, I used them only as a guide toward research topics or other sources of information. They did, however, prove invaluable in helping to understand some of the older source material and the *Casa de Nagô*.

These aforementioned conversations, however, did make it clear to me how real the "conspiracy of silence" twentieth-century researcher Artur Ramos alluded to in the 1930s still is. There exists in the candomble world a very pervasive tradition of silence. The ability to keep secrets is revered and in fact is considered a sign of great skill, knowledge, and trustworthiness. Those who speak too openly about their

knowledge or abilities are often looked upon with suspicion and are not viewed as competent or capable practitioners. It should be clear by now then that these communities also have had a long history of dealing with outsiders and researchers. They remain quite adept at manipulating or deliberately misleading them in order to protect privileged information or to preserve their own self-interests.

It is difficult therefore to gather oral histories or insight into earlier generations of religious leaders using traditional methods, a lesson hard learned by this researcher. I have also therefore relied to a certain extent on a limited form of participant observation leading to a difficult-to-describe sensation I mentioned previously as historical osmosis. This is obviously not a reliable method of research, if it can in fact even be called that but it is one skill historians use regularly as part of routine discovery. The real value of fieldwork is not exclusively found in musty archives and impossible-to-read handwriting of the past. It can also be found in immersing yourself, if possible, into the society, people, and culture whose histories you are attempting to understand. The intangible sense of comprehension that comes with experiencing and absorbing the sights, scents, and sensations all around you can make the unattainable seem somewhat closer to us. This is, I feel, a mere extension of the premise laid down by noted historians João Reis and Eduardo da Silva when they urged historians to understand the perspective of African slaves by focusing on what they chose to do, rather than what they chose to say.

My historical osmosis occurred by living inside a Yoruba-based candomble temple for several months covering both times of great ritual activity and times of relative tranquility. Late-night conversations, participation in ritual, and sitting patiently for hours waiting for any form of attention afforded me an understanding of the true significance of this topic and the value it holds for so many in understanding their existence on this planet. Projecting this feeling onto my historical subjects did provide me with a deeper comprehension as to why so many could never let them go and felt compelled to integrate their traditions into Bahian life. Inside the *Casa de Nagô*, some took to calling me *igbin*, the Yoruba word for a rather large African snail associated with *Oxala*, the oldest of the *orixa*. This quiet, slow-moving creature though does seem to capture the methods I was attempting to employ through deliberate and patient actions but most likely they probably recognized that I am the slowest moving human being on the planet.

As a historical study, this work does not include any detailed descriptions of Yoruba-based ritual or spiritual beliefs. I am pleased about this as I have a personal desire to respect these traditions as a religious faith that wishes on some level, to remain "secret." That said, there are numerous written accounts that interested readers can pursue, some of which are listed in the bibliography.

Chapter 1

The African Nations of Salvador

Off in the distance he could hear his children calling him the way they always had. The *şire*[1] had been played, the doors opened by his faithful messenger, and the rhythm begun to call him closer. It was much further away than usual but distance could not prevent him from hearing it still. Breaking through the mist, he descended into one of his favorite *cavalhos*,[2] an old woman long dedicated to his service and as he took control of his ride and looked up for the first time, *Oxala* had woken up in Bahia.

How the children of *Oxala*, some of whom he had known for decades, some only recently, had come to call him from such a faraway place is a story not forgotten but rarely told. Gazing down onto the Bay of All Saints from atop the *Cidade Alta* of Salvador the legacy upon which modern Brazil was built still stands for all to see. The old slave dungeon, the point of entry for countless numbers of enslaved Africans into Brazil, serves as a constant reminder of the brute force with which the Europeans and the Africans were thrust together in a far-off land shortly after the first permanent Portuguese settlements were established in the 1520s.[3]

As the indigenous population turned out to be a rather unreliable and often times politically incorrect form of slave labor, the Portuguese turned to their long-standing commercial ties with the kingdoms along the coast of West Africa to provide the solution they were seeking.[4] Beginning in the 1550s, and continuing until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Atlantic slave trade into Brazil would last close to three centuries and result in the importation of anywhere between 3.5 and 6 million captive slaves into the region. Slave ships loaded down with tobacco, sugar, manioc, beans, flour, rum, cloth, and meats made the return trip directly to Salvador

loaded down with human cargoes destined for sale on the auction block along with small amounts of *dende* (palm oil), rice, ivory, gold, and other products from Portuguese trading posts as far away as Asia[5] (figure 1.1).

Relying almost exclusively on slave labor, Bahia's burgeoning sugar industry fueled a regional economy where groups of small cane farmers, food producers, merchants, and moneylenders proliferated across the colony leading it to develop into one of the larger slave societies in the world based on the legal distinctions between slave and free and indeed an entire social order constructed principally on the concepts of slavery and race. The construction of that social order on the part of the developing Afro-Bahian population, however, was far from a simple division between white and nonwhite.[6]

Scholars such as John Thornton and Pierre Verger have demonstrated that the Atlantic slave trade was often conducted at very specific ports along the coast of West Africa. While these areas shifted

Figure 1.1 Map of Brazil

over time, slave traders usually relied on them for many decades at time. According to these theories, the majority of those sold into slavery were most likely done so in large blocs with its victims often sharing a common language or ethnicity. It is also entirely possible, as Thornton points out, that family, friends, neighbors, or those from similar communities were often enslaved, shipped, and auctioned off in rather homogenous groups. This trend had a profound impact on the development of the numerous African-based cultures and institutions in Salvador.[7]

Pierre Verger notes that the slave trade to Bahia can be broken down into four cycles, each of which brought significant and nearly homogeneous groups of enslaved Africans into the port of Salvador.[8] The slave trade began with the Guinea Cycle during the second half of the sixteenth century where large numbers of Fon or Jeje as they would come to be known in Brazil were imported into the city. By the seventeenth century, however, the Portuguese established a more permanent foothold in southwestern Africa leading to the Angolan/Bantu Cycle of the slave trade lasting nearly a century. Salvador therefore experienced a massive influx of Angolan- and Bantu-speaking slaves who would comprise the largest homogenous wave of African born yet to arrive. Their cultural expressions and legacies soon expanded alongside their Jeje counterparts as Angolan agricultural techniques and the deadly martial art form of *capoeira* proliferated across the region while Bantu forms of music and dance slowly evolved into what many now know simply as *Samba*.

As Brazilian slave traders and merchants emerged as an important social and economic class in the city of Salvador during the eighteenth century the slave trade slowly shifted north to more easily accessible ports opening the Mina Coast Cycle during the first three quarters of the century.[9] While Bahia began to send more sugar and tobacco to the ports of Grand Popo and Whydah, it was now viewed as more efficient to simply purchase slaves at those same locations for the return trip home. In fact, twice during the eighteenth century, once in 1750 and again in 1795, representatives from the kingdom of Dahomey visited Bahia attempting to negotiate more favorable slave-trading agreements.[10] The fact that they bypassed Lisbon in favor of a direct trip to Bahia is a clear indication of the degree to which the two regions were now indelibly linked together not only economically but increasingly on a cultural level as well.

This cycle of the slave trade was more diverse than the previous two in terms of the captives being imported. Due to the increasingly volatile political climate of West Africa at the time and the historical

trading routes linking it to the Muslim world, there was a wide range of slaves available for export. Many Ashante and Akan captives found themselves headed for Bahia, as did increasing numbers of Fon, Ewe, Aja, and Hausa.

Soon, however, events unfolding inside the Yoruba-speaking Oyo Empire changed the course of the history of the slave trade. As Oyo slowly began to crumble under increasing pressure from Islamic jihads and its own internal weaknesses, the city-states of the Yoruba erupted in a series of deadly and often fratricidal civil wars. As many slaves sold into captivity were prisoners of war; the slave markets in the ports of Lagos, Bagadry, and Porto Novo along the West African coast were now flooded with Yoruba-speaking captives setting off the final cycle of the slave trade named for the Bight of Benin. From around 1770 until the closing of the slave trade in 1830 (though it continued clandestinely in a diminished capacity for at least two more decades), Bahia became home to hundreds of thousands of Yoruba-speaking peoples. While smaller numbers of Hausa, Nupe, and Ewe captives were also swept up in the winds of war, their overt cultural impact on the African/Afro-Bahian communities paled in comparison to their Yoruba counterparts.[11]

While many across Bahia now viewed unfettered access to African slave labor as vital to their personal ambitions for social ascension, Salvador nonetheless developed into a city where the overwhelming majority of the population were of African or biracial descent, and given the varied but still limited opportunities for manumission, by 1808 nearly half of them were living as free people. Given this demographic reality in what was supposed to be an outpost of European civilization, social hierarchies based on status and color became the norm. Yet cultural identities often trumped complexion when it came to opportunities for social advancement. Thus those people of color who embraced a more Europeanized worldview, reflected in everything from one's choice of clothing to their spiritual identities, were often afforded access to a higher social status than those who tenaciously clung to an African past. Yet despite this obvious reality most continued to identify with an increasingly and highly competitive Africanized vision of the future.

Those Africans living in an urban center such as Salvador of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries surely shared a much different reality than their rural counterparts working on the numerous *fazendas* dotting the countryside.[12] As even the most minute forms of manual labor were seen beneath free white persons of a certain social standing, there emerged a rather sharp demand for slave labor

in areas of work that in other parts of the world were performed by poor or working-class people.[13] A very unique market thus emerged in places like Salvador where even those of very modest means acquired slaves as a sign of social status and to demonstrate they were free from having to perform such demeaning work. Many Africans that urban dwellers purchased were therefore known as *ganhos*, or slaves for hire to be rented out or left to their own creativity to find employment.[14] All that was required of them was to return a set amount of their earnings each day to their master leaving the rest up to their own ingenuity and personal support networks.

Their work routine was also more varied than rural slaves, and according to Katia Mattoso, they were found in a wide range of employment working as cooks, coachmen, embroideresses, seamstresses, caulkers, masons, boilermakers, carpenters, and barbers. As the *ganho* system evolved over time, certain professions came under the domain of specific ethnic groups, known as *nações* across Brazil.[15]

The idea of *nação*, as it was used by the Brazilian slave state, usually referred to the ethnic or national origins of African-born persons. When used by Africans themselves, however, the definition of *nação* involved much more than merely one's place of birth. To the African communities of Bahia, *nação* spoke to the very essence of what these groups defined themselves to be and centered on a powerful set of values and ideas from which there was no easy separation. Overtime, as many such as Kim Butler have outlined, the concept of *nação* was expanded to include voluntary associations with particular African-based traditions and was not restricted to those sharing a common ancestry. There were, however, numerous ways in which this concept could be employed.[16]

For example, *Ganhos*, who belonged to the same *nação*, often congregated on particular *cantos* or street corners under the direction of a *canto-captain*. The nineteenth-century ethnographer Nina Rodrigues noted that the Yoruba were often found on the *Rua do Comercio* while the Jeje preferred *Campo Grande* for their meeting point. Later he described the *Arcos of Santa Barbara* belonging to the *Gruncis* and the *Hotel de Nações* to the Hausa.[17] On these corners, as Mattoso informs us, Africans, both slave and free, gathered together in the daily struggle to earn a wage. These ethnically based work groups formed the basis for some of the cultural and religious institutions to be discussed later.[18]

Other slaves were rented out for a predetermined length of time and some even eventually became wageworkers despite the fact that

they had to turn most of their salary over to their owners. As a result of this highly flexible system of slavery, many African slaves in the urban centers were able to avoid excessive oversight on the part of their masters and were thus free to form relationships and associate with others from their same *naçãо* in a variety of ways. The Count of Ponte, the former governor of Bahia, complained in 1807, "The slaves of this city . . . gather when and where they please having no regard whatsoever for the laws or policies of the government."[19]

Interestingly, when it came to work or economic competition, Mattoso points out that African women were far less likely to attempt to control a particular *canto* on the basis of *naçãо*. Rodrigues, while not offering a tangible explanation, also noted that same pattern of behavior when he identified the *canto* of *San Miguel* and several others as belonging to women but "in general they didnot separate much, like the men, according to their nationalities."[20] When it came to the question of religion, however, it could sometimes be a different story.

Passing though Salvador in 1800, the British traveler John Turnbull was struck by the overall religiosity of Bahian society and noted that he could "say with much satisfaction that there is no country in the world in which religion is in such fashion. The churches are filled with people of all social classes from the most vulgar of slaves to his excellency the Governor."[21] Bahia is said in fact to have a church for every day of the year and from its inception seemed destined to be the spiritual center of the nation. Under the direction of the Catholic Church, daily life in Salvador, on the surface, appeared to have a serious religious component to it, one with which the majority of its African inhabitants surely felt a connection. By the nineteenth century, the city of Salvador was not only home to the Catholic faith, several Protestant houses of worship, and a small Jewish community but also to a significant but underground Islamic community and numerous African-based religious traditions. Bahia truly had lived up to its title of the city of All Saints.

The primary objective of the Catholic Church so far as the African population of the colony was concerned was to make sure they were fully indoctrinated into the Catholic faith, which included undergoing all of its rites and rituals of initiation and living a good, clean Christian life. In most instances, however, the reality of daily life in Salvador prevented or severely delayed this outcome, at least in a manner acceptable to the mother church.

The first major obstacle the church faced in large-scale conversion of Africans to Catholicism was the language barrier. The overwhelming

majority of the African-born population spoke little Portuguese and in fact had no real pressing need to perfect the language given the relative cohesion of *nação* life.[22] Because most clergymen had no working knowledge of West African languages, Africans, both free and slave, also had only minimal contact with the church. In 1707, the Archbishop of Bahia, D. Sebastião Monteiro da Vide, issued a rather large volume of rules and regulations designed to combat this problem. He urged slave masters to ensure that the Africans under their supervision learned the Portuguese language and became practicing Catholics. As he stated, "the slaves of Brazil are most in need of the Christian doctrine, so numerous are their nations and so diverse their languages, we should search for every means to instruct them in the faith."[23] The church made some attempts at using African languages to teach church doctrine and encourage conversion using Portuguese missionaries from Angola as well as Yoruba Catholic converts from Africa itself but by and large these efforts were unsuccessful.[24] In fact, much to the chagrin of the church leadership there was emerging simultaneously African-based spiritual alternatives in the form of the rapidly proliferating centers of worship known as candombles.

In her comparative study of post-abolition São Paulo and Salvador, Kim Butler points out that the candombles began as gatherings or congregations of Africans sharing a common language or cultural background.[25] Coming together for self-preservation or what Butler called "self-determination," these candombles centered around a desire for protection and the comfort any outsider finds among those of a similar background, once again using the concept of *nação*, as their starting point.

Butler and other candomble scholars such as Luis Nicolau Pares have identified the Jeje candomble *of Zoogodô Bogum Malê* as one of the oldest documented temples in Bahia founded sometime around 1620 in the *Federação* district of Salvador, dedicated to the traditional Jeje religion of Vodun.[26] Pares, in his exhaustive study on the formation of candomble in Bahia, in fact, credits the Jeje and not the Yoruba, as we will see later, with creating the institutional model on which all future candombles would be based.[27]

Katia Mattoso thus points out that most Africans in Brazil were confronted with essentially two religious options: (1) conversion to Catholicism or (2) association with a candomble temple of their *nação*.[28] Both seemed to have advantages attached to them from the African perspective, for the religion of the masters had a certain mystical power. Catholicism was after all the religion of the dominant social class in Bahian society and therefore had a fair amount

of prestige associated with it. Further, it was clear to those Africans practicing traditional religions that their own deities were powerless to prevent the slave trade and much of the suffering they were forced to endure in their new homeland.

Nevertheless, the traditional African religions housed in the candombles were closely connected to their *nação* identity and represented a living link to their ancestors. Further while Catholicism worshiped an abstract and distant God whose human representatives seemed intent on imposing His will on others by holding out the promise of paradise in the afterlife, many African-based religions addressed more pressing needs in their daily lives and were structured to lend comfort, support, and clear explanations for the trials and tribulations they were now forced to endure. In addition, it should be remembered that in most African-based cultures, religion did not exist in isolation from the rest of one's life on earth but rather provided an organizational framework for all lived experiences.

What many African communities chose to do however should come as no surprise to those familiar with West African religious traditions. They began to practice both simultaneously. From the European Catholic perspective, this is a sin of the highest magnitude no doubt influenced by Satan himself, for their interpretation of Christianity could not be clearer. There is only one God and only one true way to worship Him.

From the West African perspective, however, there was no conflict at all. According to Roger Bastide, "however attached the black might have been to his ethnic divinities, he still borrowed and worshiped those of neighboring ethnic groups if they seemed more effective than his own in some particular field. The Yoruba and Dahomeans (Jeje) therefore exchanged gods and religious practices quite freely... Pragmatism therefore compelled the Africans to add Christian gods to their pantheon."[29] Melville Herskovits identified the same pattern of what he called intertribal syncretism among the same two groups and had no doubt that this survival strategy was flexible enough to incorporate Catholic imagery and beliefs just as easily as those of similar African religions.[30]

Nina Rodrigues studying at the famed Yoruba candomble house known as *Gantois* was one of the first to document this phenomenon in Bahia. He quickly offered it as proof that the process of acculturation was indeed taking place among the black population of nineteenth-century Bahia and that African-based religions would soon disappear.[31] What Rodrigues did not understand however was something that has only been made clear by the anthropological work

of the mid- to late twentieth century. The type of syncretism that he, Herskovits, and countless others have described as being one of combined worship whereby the symbols and belief systems of the Catholic and African religions have become so intertwined that it is impossible to determine where one ends and the other begins, is in fact as Mattoso points out, "a misnomer."[32]

While it is true that many Africans chose to practice both religions, they generally did so separately and in a fairly compartmentalized way. Each faith had its own separate physical space, rituals, rules, and guidelines to be observed and were done so on their own terms. Catholicism was practiced within the confines of a church building or in other church-sanctioned institutions. African religions were carried out in candomble gatherings wherever they happened to be at a given moment. While there was a certain amount of borrowing of Catholic symbols or imagery, Bastide notes that it was done so, "by adapting the cult of the Saints while robbing it of part of its significance and accepting only what could be adopted to a barter economy of gifts and counter gifts of exchange without celestial investment. To the slaves, Christianity did not offer compensation for their lot . . . of suffering."[33] In so doing Bastide adds that those Africans employing this strategy viewed "Catholicism as a social activity rather than as a mystique . . . as an institution rather than as a faith."[34]

Ironically though, it was under the supervision and sanction of the Catholic church itself that this survival strategy developed into an institutional force that forever doused the dream it held of transforming Bahia and its African population into a modern, Eurocentric, Catholic civilization.

The Catholic Church had, since the twelfth century, sponsored and encouraged the formation of Catholic brotherhoods. These were mutual aide societies formed to spread the faith, emphasize a Christian lifestyle, and engage in early attempts at social welfare programs for its members and their families providing funds for medical services, clothes, burials, and other pressing needs.[35] The brotherhoods of Spain and Portugal included Africans, whites, and slaves, and were part of a centralized colonization project that allowed for the transfer of Iberian political and social institutions to the New World.[36]

By the late seventeenth century, the Catholic Church, having been frustrated in its earlier attempts to convert the African population of Salvador to the faith, turned to these brotherhoods as a new strategy to win over the souls of the nonbelievers. The brotherhoods, however, were primarily an urban phenomenon requiring on the part of their members a great deal of free time and money to

operate—something only the environment of a place such as Salvador could provide in ample supply.[37] There was one significant change in their structure, however. Given the realities of life and the social hierarchy of the Bahian slave state, along with the aforementioned difficulties in finding a common language though which to transmit the gospel to the diverse African communities of the city, these new brotherhoods were largely formed along ethnic and racial lines.[38] The Angola and Congolese, for example, formed *the Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosario* in the *Praça do Pelourinho*. Its Jeje belonged to the brotherhood of *Nosso Senhor das Necessidades e de Redenção* located in the Chapel of *Corpo Santo*. The Yoruba established *Nosso Senhor do Martirio* for men and the sisterhood of the *Boa Morte* for women that met at the small *Barroquinha* church.[39]

Later in the eighteenth century, as the native-born black population began to increase, brotherhoods reserved for mulattos or creole blacks such as *Nosso Senhor da Cruz* were established. Regardless of the composition of their membership, however, they all followed essentially the same organizational framework.[40] The brotherhoods were administered by an elected governing body known as the *mesa* that served for one year and were made up of a male and female judge, a procurator to prepare background checks on potential members, a treasurer, and a secretary. Each year the *mesa* was also charged with selecting a king and queen for the year that led the brotherhoods membership in the annual public processions to honor the feast day of their patron saint or on other high holy days.[41]

In time these brotherhoods served as an introduction for new arrivals into both organized Christian and *nação* life. There an officially sanctioned site would provide opportunities for the rebuilding of social structures destroyed by a slave society and for the blending of European and African philosophical traditions. In addition, they often operated as a buffer against the racial inequalities of the city allowing the African population to practice their faith (whichever it may be) without being relegated to an inferior or marginal position. They also guaranteed certain Catholic functions that the clergy of Bahia could not, such as religious education, medical assistance, alms for the elderly or abandoned slaves from their same *nação*, loans for manumissions of friends or relatives, and retirement pensions for long serving members in good standing.[42] Most importantly, however, the brotherhoods guaranteed a decent Christian burial and prayers for the souls of the departed, a concern, Mattoso illustrated, that was shared by countless Afro-Bahians of limited means.[43]

All that was required to belong to one of the brotherhoods was to be a baptized Catholic of good moral standing and to make regular payments of membership dues. In fact, for some, belonging to these organizations and living according to church doctrine seemed to be of some significance. Most brotherhoods excluded unmarried couples, the unbaptized, and known sinners though, interestingly but not surprisingly, these traits did not necessarily exclude them from being part of a candomble community made up of the same people.[44] Once again, those who chose to practice both religions did so separately and tried to live according to the guidelines of both as best they could, though usually the African religion became their frame of reference for just how it should be done.[45]

Aside from having the support of the Catholic Church, the brotherhoods had to rely on several other forms of financial support to cover their administrative and social service expenses along with the physical upkeep of their church or chapel, religious icons, and their annual processionals. Revenue was usually generated through the collection of dues, rent on any properties owned by the brotherhood, and the cultivation of generous benefactors.[46]

Members of Bahia's elite often gave rather sizeable donations (sometimes even in the form of slaves) to the brotherhoods as was to be expected of their class in a slave society. In addition, many paid the membership dues of their own slaves and it appears these brotherhoods enjoyed rather widespread support among the ruling classes.[47] The Portuguese monarchy encouraged their existence and saw them as a great leap forward toward their goal of the large-scale conversion of the African population.[48] Local elites saw them more as a good alternative to the secretive candomble gatherings they found so disturbing. For, as Bastide points out, whites in Bahia were "aware that within these closed sects formidable forces are manipulated and since his conscience it not always clear where blacks are concerned, he is afraid that these forces may be used against him."[49] The fact that these brotherhoods were organized somewhat along ethnic lines was also part of their appeal to the slave masters for they maintained the old ethnic rivalries and antagonisms brought from Africa and were a further obstacle in not only an emerging pan-African unity but also a larger, more feared, black unity among Creoles and the African born.

In the end, however, these brotherhoods were, according to A. J. R. Russell-Wood, the only legally permitted form of communal life for Africans during this period and they provided the social welfare programs for their *nação* that no other institution would.[50] Most

importantly, they also nurtured a physical space where those Africans with little or no command over the Portuguese language could meet as well as providing whites with a way to accept and understand a group of people they ordinarily would not.

Leaving all of these vital functions aside, however, the brotherhoods devoted the majority of their time to religious activities such as the delivery of Catholic mass in African languages and participating in the annual procession for their chosen patron saint. In an environment such as Salvador was at the time, where public displays of African culture were clearly discouraged, the brotherhoods, through their commitment to and enthusiasm for these processions, proved to be one of the most effective avenues for its preservation and display.

While the brotherhoods always struggled to survive given the overall conditions of poverty within which most of their membership lived, they also continued to exist well into the twentieth century. Though they would lose their roles as cornerstones of the community once the candomble houses began their own institutionalization process in the mid-nineteenth century, it can be argued that it was within these brotherhoods that certain sectors of the traditional African religious communities were better able to maintain their respective faiths, build networks of support with like-minded individuals of their same *nação*, and learn the administrative and political skills necessary to take on the challenges of carrying out the vision they held for the future of their religious traditions.

Outside the Catholic brotherhoods and the candomble houses, there remained other viable options for those still not willing to coexist with Christianity. By the nineteenth century, as Bahia began to experience a period of turbulent and sweeping change, a small but very visible Islamic community was also taking shape.

Though 55 percent of Salvador's black population was free by the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, just about one third of the total state population consisted of enslaved Africans.[51] With the demand and prices of slaves remaining relatively stable due to the sugar boom in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution, Bahia continued to import more and more Africans into the port of Salvador well into the century even after the slave trade was officially ended in 1830. As a result, the African *nações* of the city enjoyed a fairly high level of cultural continuity with each new group of arrivals. As the nineteenth century began, those arrivals had come to include an increasing number of West African Muslims caught up in the regional wars and religious jihads, which resulted in their capture and enslavement.[52]

In fact, Bahia itself, during the first decades of the new century was not beyond these types of political instability now wreaking havoc across much of West Africa. Numerous revolts, not all of which were directly related to slavery, were plotted in the city and carried out with varying degrees of success. Some attributed the outbreak of such frequent political violence to the arrival of so many Muslim slaves. The fact that several of the more significant slave revolts of the era appeared to be led by Muslims led many to conclude they were too belligerent and rebellious by nature to ever be part of a slave society. To make matters worse, during the first decades of the new century, Islam appeared to be gaining momentum and winning new converts.[53]

Islam as an African religion faced the same legal obstacles as the candomble houses but its exclusive and rigid nature as a faith did not allow it to make use of the survival strategies employed by their West African brethren. Further, Islam had long been viewed as a threat to Christianity and to tolerate it in the New World was seen as nothing more than a defeat for the mother church in the unending war for the souls of Salvador's faithful. Much more importantly, however, the existence of Islam in Bahia threatened to undermine the existing social order, subverting the concept of *nação* by potentially uniting Africans of different ethno-linguistic groups under the banner of the Prophet Mohammed and connecting them to a larger global vision of righteous warfare against oppression.[54] Most alarming was the fact that many in the West African *nações* of Salvador appeared to hold these Muslims in very high esteem, for not only were many of them at least semiliterate but were also deeply respected for their devout worship and magical abilities.[55]

Because the Islamic faith was illegal in Bahia, religious services and instruction usually took place in the homes of spiritual leaders known as *alufas*.[56] Under their direction, daily prayers were organized and new converts taught the pillars of the faith. While the reality of a slave society made literacy in any language a rarity, it appears that most of the faithful had at least the ability to read important passages of the Koran and copy them onto small pieces of paper in Arabic.[57] It was within the confines of these homes, whose existence was made possible by the flexible nature of urban slavery, that several of the revolts so feared by Bahia's elite were plotted and carried out.

By May of 1807 the suspicions and paranoia of the elite came to life when a small group of Hausa Muslims attempted to carry out a revolt after fleeing Salvador for the safety of the countryside. The Count of Ponte described the event as a highly organized affair with

the Hausa assigning a captain and an ambassador to each sector of the city in order to recruit other Hausa both in Salvador and on surrounding plantations. The plot was exposed before it could be carried out, however, and, according to Caldas Brito, the leaders of the conspiracy—two Hausas named Antonio and Baltasar—were executed in the *Praça Publica* on March 20, 1808.[58]

Less than two years later, in early January 1809, a second Hausa revolt was organized but this time, to the alarm of Bahian authorities, several Yoruba and Jeje people were named as part of the conspiracy. This certainly confirmed the deadly potential Islam held as a unifying force among *nações* who were traditionally rivals.[59] The government responded with a brief ban on drumming and dancing along with restrictions on the movement and public assembly of the black population. These repressive actions were short lived, however, for the ironfisted regime of the Count of Ponte was now coming to an end.[60]

The new Governor of Bahia, the Count of Arcos, took office in 1810 and quickly established himself as the man of the Enlightenment João Reis describes him to be. According to Reis, the Count of Arcos had come to view slavery as the cause of Bahia's unrest due to the wicked and excessively cruel nature of its slaveholders.[61] While he was practical enough to realize slavery was at this point essential to the economic survival of his region, it was to him at best, a necessary evil. Under the new regime, restrictions on the movement and actions of slaves were relaxed. Drumming and dancing were once again legally permitted. In fact, at times, they and other African cultural practices, including some religious observances were encouraged, for, according to the Count, it was possible that without this, "the different nationalities of Africans will totally forget the hatred which comes to them so naturally for each other . . . "[62]

The Count was therefore returning to the older divide-and-conquer strategies of his predecessors by attempting to encourage and exploit any differences and divisions between them. He later pointed out: "To prohibit the only acts of disunity among the Negroes would be an indirect act of encouragement on the part of the government to unite them and I could not envision the terrible consequences which would result."[63]

In his stated goal of preventing further violence, however, the Count of Arcos ultimately failed. During his eight years in office, there were no less than three major uprisings organized by Africans across the state. The worst violence came in early 1813 when another significant group of Hausas, under the leadership of a Muslim cleric,

fled the city and attacked a fishing site owned by a Manuel Ignacio da Cunha Meneses. There, another group of slaves from a nearby *quilombo* (a community of runaway slaves) joined them and, after killing several people, including several slaves who refused to act in concert with them, they moved on toward the village of *Itapuã* where the violence continued. On their way to the countryside to continue their attacks, they were intercepted by local militia units and defeated within an hour. Fifty-eight rebels lay dead alongside 14 militiamen killed in the brief conflict.[64]

Another and potentially more dangerous pattern of violence however became even more alarming to the Bahian elite. For instance, with the 1809 revolt, there was no betrayal of the plot and what was more there was again the participation of Yoruba and Jeje people. In the *Recôncavo*, the sugar-producing countryside of Bahia, the Hausa led two more slave revolts in March of 1814 and again in 1816.[65] It appeared that the old ethnic hatreds the Count of Arcos was banking on to keep the peace were showing signs of breaking down.

For the next several years, things remained peaceful allowing the Count of Arcos to depart in 1818. However, the pattern of violence associated with Muslims over the previous decade appeared to carry over into the free population in the form of anti-Portuguese riots, military revolts, and Liberal and Federalist movements that frequently emerged over the 1820s and 1830s.[66] The shocking events of 1835 however would be a turning point for not only the Muslim community of Bahia but also the African *nações*.

In the predawn hours of January 25, 1835, two Yoruba Muslim clerics and their African followers took to the streets of Bahia in an outbreak of violent rebellion. Because a fearful slave had exposed their plot to local authorities, they were forced to begin the uprising sooner than they had planned. Militia and cavalry units defeated them in a matter of hours. Even though the fighting itself did not last long, the bloodshed stunned all of Salvador who placed the blame squarely on first the Yoruba but later the Muslim community as a whole.[67]

After the smoke had cleared and the situation brought under control, the Bahian government began a series of highly publicized trials to uncover the origins of the conspiracy. Quickly, however, the judicial proceedings were transformed from a mere legal exercise into what was now viewed as a moral campaign in defense of the nation and Christianity itself. The ruling classes of Bahia had long been uncomfortable with such a large African-born population living in their midst, and this campaign seemed to be the perfect opportunity to reinforce their vision of a new nation based on the prevailing values

of European Liberalism. Naturally this required removing anything African from Bahian society, and the authorities quickly responded by once again legally restricting the freedom of movement of the African population using rather repressive police state tactics.[68]

Interestingly, while the Muslim community of Bahia in the 1830s was portrayed as one of devout separatists continuing the wave of jihads that swept across West Africa, a deeper analysis of the revolt done by the historian João Reis paints a much more plausible picture of these events. According to Reis, the African communities of Salvador still relied primarily on the concept of *nação* for community organization and collective action. The 1835 revolt had many non-Muslim participants and was initially viewed as a Yoruba, not a Muslim, undertaking. As a result, there was virtually no black creole and only limited non-Yoruba participation in the incident.[69]

While the Bahian elite clearly feared the potential unifying force Islam represented, there is little evidence to suggest that such unity was in fact becoming a reality. Clearly those Africans practicing Islam were just as offended by the continuation of traditional African religions as they were in their view of Christianity. And while they might have tried to limit their contact with both groups, it did not preclude them from also being a part of the larger non-Muslim segments of their *nação*. Ethnicity, as has been pointed out by many, could at times be just as, if not more, important than one's religious affiliation. Kim Butler has noted a similar pattern of behavior among the Jeje when a group of Muslims approached the aforementioned candomble of *Zoogodô Bogum Malê Rundo* for assistance in a nineteenth-century slave revolt. According to the oral history of the candomble house, it may have even been this same 1835 revolt.[70] What is significant here, as Butler and Reis inform us, is the idea that *nação* had become central to a person's individual identity even though differing religious faiths caused them to live apart most of the time.

Despite the fact that their communal and religious institutions were eliminated or driven completely underground after the failed 1835 revolt, practicing Muslims remained a part of the Afro-Bahian community as they fully integrated themselves into their respective *nações*. Nina Rodrigues, writing later in the century, mentioned coming into contact with several *alufas* still practicing their faith such as the Hausa Jato and the Yoruba Derisso and Antonio.[71]

Although the fluidity and effectiveness of the Islamic community was destroyed by the repression of the Bahian authorities after 1835 they remained a powerful part of the popular imagination of

the Afro-Bahian population as a symbol of resistance. Butler points out that the Jeje candomble *Zoogodô Bogum Malê Rundo* makes references to its Islamic ties through the use of the term "Malê," most likely a derivative of Mali, the West African kingdom where many of the jihads originated.[72] Artur Ramos, while researching at the famed Yoruba candomble house of *Gantois*, noted several references to Allah and Islam in ritual songs he recorded in 1939.[73]

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the African Muslims of Bahia had been reduced to being idealized, and at times imaginary, figures no longer capable of leading resistance movements, preserving African cultures, or providing a legitimate spiritual alternative to the Catholic faith. But, as the old Muslims were hunted down or forced underground, a new movement was ready to replace them as the guardians of an African-based vision for the future, one that would eventually become capable of exercising institutional power to rival that of a Western-based, white supremacist society. Ironically, it would be those in the aforementioned Catholic brotherhoods, those who the mother church thought were their closest allies, the fruits of their laborious efforts at spreading the faith, who now rose to challenge the self-proclaimed spiritual authority the church claimed to hold over the Africans of Salvador.

It should not be surprising, however, that the structure and protection afforded those who belonged to the Catholic brotherhoods offered such an opportunity. For several decades, numerous Africans had been trained to serve as community and spiritual leaders for their respective *naçõe*s. They learned essential administrative, political, and economic skills under the auspices of the archbishop's office and were now in a position to consolidate their resources to form a self-determined vision of the future using primarily Western political institutions and, at times, ideologies to reinforce a Yoruba-based philosophical and spiritual faith. But unlike their Muslim brethren who were confined by the shackles of religious orthodoxy and were therefore unwilling to reconcile their own belief systems with those of the dominant class, those in the brotherhoods tended to come from the ranks of the traditional African religions with a long-standing tradition of decentralized and fluid religious foundations. As was discussed earlier, practicing Catholicism in Salvador in no way implied an abandonment of traditional religion, despite what the leadership of the Catholic Church inferred from their voluntary associations with the brotherhoods. Therefore, in preserving certain African traditions, direct confrontation with the Catholic authorities was unnecessary and avoidable. So long as the *Orixa* of the Yoruba people, for

example, were content to patiently exist on the symbolic margins of religious society, their devotees were also willing to do so.

But as the failed revolt of 1835 also made clear, ethnicity and not religion was still the primary foundation for *nação* organization in nineteenth-century Salvador, and, as the decades progressed, the Yoruba, for some, came to represent the dominant cultural force behind this movement, which some have identified as one of self-determination. It is to a better understanding as to the origins of that cultural force to which we now turn out attention.

Chapter 2

The Dispersal of the Yoruba People

Motivated by an increase in the tobacco trade with the West African coast in the late eighteenth century, Brazilian merchants and slave traders shifted their base of operations away from their counterparts along the Mina Coast to the ports of Lagos, Badgary, and Porto Novo in the Bight of Benin.[1] Soon afterward what became known as the Yoruba Wars began ensuring Brazilian ships with a seemingly limitless supply of captives bound for Salvador and points beyond. This final phase of the Atlantic slave trade, which officially ended in 1830 but remained a clandestine practice for years to come, resulted in a massive influx of Yoruba slaves. By virtue of being the last wave of mostly homogenous groupings of slaves to arrive in Salvador, they would leave one of the most visible and lasting cultural imprints on the growing Afro-Bahian community of Salvador, resulting in what Miguel Calmon called, "the brutal metamorphosis of Mangolas (Bantus) into *Nagô*s (Yoruba)."[2] So dominant would their language and cultural customs become and so successful at assimilating others into their worldview would they be that by the middle of the nineteenth century, for many in Bahia, Yoruba culture became synonymous with African culture as a whole.

The history of the Yoruba people is one of dispersal. Originating from the sacred city of Ile-Ife where, according to legend, the mythical figure of *Oduduwa* became the first human being to exist on the earthly realm of *aye*, the Yoruba dispersed outward to the corners of modern-day Yorubaland (stretching from southwestern Nigeria into the neighboring Republic of Benin) and through the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade to various points across the Western Hemisphere. In the process, they constructed what many have claimed to be one of the most advanced and culturally sophisticated civilizations in

western Africa and eventually the New World. The flexibility and cohesion with which their worldview was constructed, interpreted, and reinterpreted toward meeting every historical process within which it found itself had a profound impact on the development of not only precolonial and colonial West Africa but also American societies such as Cuba, Haiti, Trinidad & Tobago, the United States, and of course, Brazil (figure 2.1).

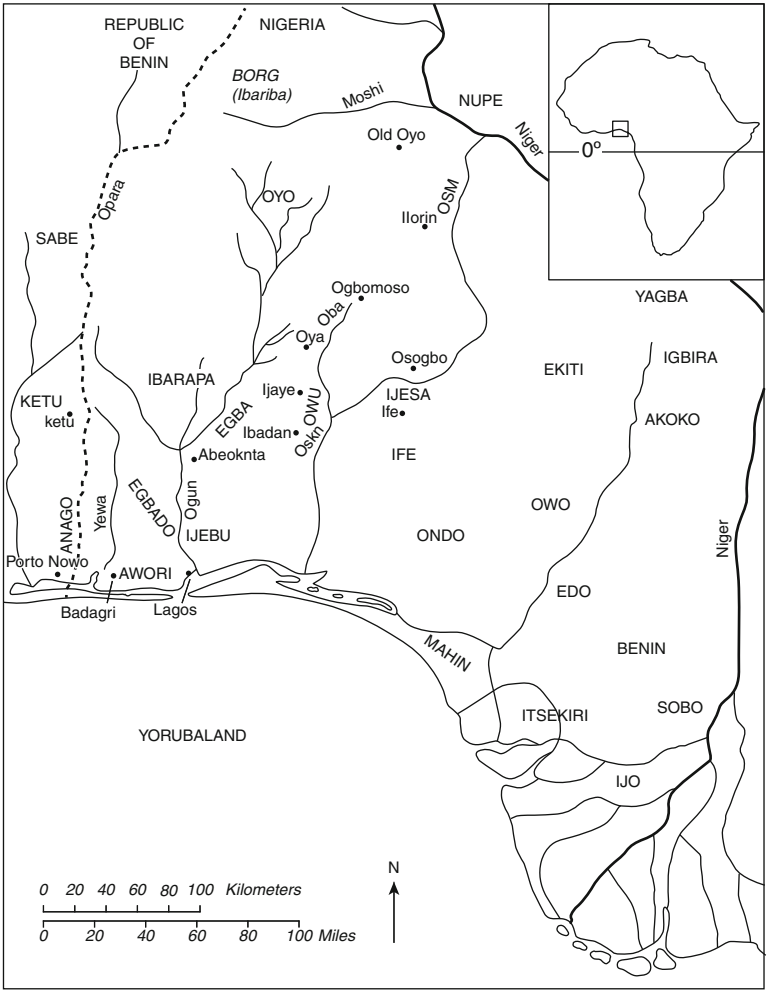

Figure 2.1 Map of Yorubaland

As a culture rooted in oral traditions whose history and legends are passed down through living, interactive mechanisms such as song, dance, and religious rituals, the precolonial history of the Yoruba is not without mystery and academic dispute. Through the study of Yoruba mythology, anthropologists such as Andrew Apter have long documented the primacy of the city of Ife in Yoruba history and its long recognized role as the "birthplace" of Yoruba civilization.[3] In addition, the Yoruba people's remarkable similarities in religious ritual and political systems based on the concept of divine kingship around the globe and a fair amount of archeological evidence make it difficult to dispute the central role Ife has played in their development and dispersal.[4]

Linguistic evidence collected over the past half century has also supported the notion that the Yoruba share a common religious and political heritage with traditions established in Ile-Ife.[5] The most common example of such evidence is found in the aforementioned myths surrounding the figure of *Oduduwa*. Scholars such as Apter maintain that mythology can be used to explain or legitimize the political realities of the present society that employs them. In the case of the Yoruba, who have developed over the centuries into numerous city-states often acting independently from each other, the figure of *Oduduwa* and his progeny are frequently invoked to maintain a sense of cultural, if not political, unity emanating from the spiritual authority of the rulers of Ife known as the *Oni*.

The *Oni* of Ife are looked upon as the direct descendants of *Oduduwa*, the first human being created by *Olodumare* or *Olorun,* owner of heaven and creator of all things in both the natural and supernatural worlds.[6] While there are varying accounts of *Oduduwa*'s creation, all more or less agree that he was molded into a human form by *Oxala* (the first *orixa*) and then descended from heaven on a chain to inhabit the earth. Upon establishing his realm on earth *Oduduwa* thus became the first *Oni* of Ife and soon came to share his kingdom with his 16 sons.[7] When the crown princes had reached the proper age, *Oduduwa* sent them into the interior to establish their own kingdoms with a capital city under their direction and later with appointed chiefs to rule lesser towns under their control.[8] What legitimated their power and the power of all those who ruled after them was the *Onis* of Ife's recognition that they were indeed direct descendants of *Oduduwa* and his sons whose power originated from none other than *Olodumare* and the *orixa* themselves.[9]

This political system, a form of divine kingship, is what Robert Smith claims allowed for a concentration of power in the hands of

local kings and chiefs, thus leading to the development of complex societies with a high degree of urbanization and whose economies soon developed into ones based on large-scale trade and markets.[10] Alongside this also developed a culture with a high degree of artisan skill, characteristics that provided the Yoruba with valuable survival tools in the urban slave societies of the New World.[11]

Despite sharing these common political and religious traits, the Yoruba did not, however, view themselves as a united political entity nor as even one people. In fact, as will be discussed later, the term "Yoruba" was a nineteenth-century construct developed in the port city of Lagos as a reaction to the slave trade and colonial ambitions of the British in Nigeria. Rather each Yoruba city, or hometown as they are often called, tended to act in an autonomous fashion, each developing a localized identity that, while distinguishing itself from other hometowns, still recognized its ancestral ties and obligations to the city of Ife.[12] However, various hometowns and their strong local identities (that remain the focal point of Yoruba life to this day) still shared enough commonalities to allow in certain instances for discussion of them as a whole. In doing so, it is possible to better understand how their descendants in the New World attempted to construct their own institutions and community structures within a very different cultural context.

Most Yoruba hometowns shared very similar basic social structures and organization. Initially a cluster of huts formed around a farm, which in most cases is some distance from an already established capital city. When a sufficient number of such structures are constructed, a town will be formed and its founder given the hereditary title of *Bale*. The towns thus serve as the most fundamental unit of political organization of Yoruba society each acting in a semiautonomous fashion with its own hereditary leader. Soon after, the *Bale* selects his three principal advisors, the *Otun*, *Osi*, and *Balogun*, and oversees the construction of a central commercial market that also serves as the town's religious center.

Individual homes are generally built into compounds known in Yoruba as *Agbo Ile* and can house several families within its confines. All internal affairs and disputes within the *Agbo Ile* are judged by the compound's leader, most likely its founder or eldest male authority figure. This mirrors the fundamental nature of Yoruba society as one governed by relations of indisputable authority.

This authority, however, can manifest itself in different forms. Power and authority are for all intents and purposes designed to descend down a very rigid hierarchy. *Olodumare*, it should be remembered,

delegated authority to the *orixa* over nature and humanity. The *orixa* in turn designated *Oduduwa* and his progeny to rule over the mass of the Yoruba people thus making those whose power is legitimated by virtue of belonging to or being associated with this lineage second only to the gods themselves. Beyond this, power and influence belong to the various heads of the *Agbo Ile* who in turn struggle daily to be recognized as what Karin Barber had identified as "Big Men."[13] In the past, in a region such as precolonial West Africa, ownership of land was technically impossible as everything belonged to the King. In addition, land being in such ample supply was not a good barometer of the rung one occupied on the social ladder. Control over people, however, was.

In her pioneering study of the importance of women's role in maintaining and reciting the historical and religious incantations known as the *oriki*, Karin Barber made note of a Yoruba proverb that states, "I have money, I have people, what else is there that I haven't got?"[14] She then explained that "money was one of the principal ways of gaining public acknowledgement (as a Big Man); but 'having people' constituted that acknowledgement itself."[15] In other words social mobility as a community leader and public recognition as such was directly related to the number of individuals attached in one form or another to a Big Man.[16] The attachments took the form of numerous wives or offspring, other immediate or distant relatives living in the compound, laborers in the employ of the Big Man, indentured servants, other unattached individuals not from the same locality (or what are known in Yoruba towns simply as strangers), friends, associates, and even the most casual of followers. However, as Barber also notes, the defection of just some of these followers to a rival Big Man resulted in an immediate loss of status and therefore indicated that if tangible benefits were not offered to one's followers, then a high degree of coercion might be necessary to maintain them.

One of the more common ways to acquire new followers in precolonial times was through the institution of slavery that, as a social institution, persisted on the African continent well into the twentieth century. According to the historian Paul Lovejoy, slaves were exploited in unique ways justified on the basis of the following five factors: (1) slaves were property, (2) slaves were strangers, (3) slaves had no rights over their own labor or sexuality, (4) slaves were denied their heritage, and (5) slaves were coerced at will.[17] In effect, as Lovejoy emphasizes, slavery was a mechanism by which strangers were denied the inherent rights of society, therefore allowing for them to be exploited for political or economic purposes.

Through the use of warfare, kidnapping, raiding, and, in some instances, judicial punishment for criminal behavior, the Big Men of Yoruba society had no trouble acquiring large amounts of slaves to enhance their personal following and powerful reputations.[18] It should be noted, however, that, according to Lovejoy and others, societies like those found in Yorubaland operating under this model of a marginal use of forced labor were not considered to be slave societies. For one, slavery existed alongside numerous other forms of labor such as serfdom, clientage, wage-labor, pawnship, and communal work. In addition, slaves were found in all arenas and occupations society had to offer, including military generals commanding thousands to agricultural laborers. In other words, the presence of such a large number of slaves did nothing to alter the basic social formations found in lineage-based societies such as the Yoruba towns.[19] Slavery was viewed and implemented as just one of many instruments of dependency useful to lineage chiefs and other Big Men. Slavery, therefore, was not the central institution upon which the well-being of the hometown or its economy rested. Slaves and in particular, female slaves, were viewed as potential members of the lineage. In exchange for complete assimilation into the culture of the hometown kin group they now found themselves a part of, they could gradually be emancipated and incorporated into the group as a full, albeit unequal member. But although they would be granted nearly all the privileges and opportunities that native-born members of the group had, they would still be viewed as outsiders and thus bear the social stigma of their previous condition of servitude.[20]

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the developing Atlantic slave trade radically transformed the nature of African slavery. The effects of the trade on Yoruba and West African society in general have been the subject of extensive scholarly research and debate.[21] While Eltis has argued that the Atlantic slave trade was never large enough to have any significant impact on the course of African history, Lovejoy viewed it as a radical societal transformation that incorporated many African kingdoms into a system of international trade to which they held the vital link.[22] European societies and their colonies desired a steady and large supply of slaves of either sex to fuel their expansionist goals on a global scale.

Most African societies, however, valued primarily female and child slaves to enhance their kin-based modes of production.[23] Logic, therefore, dictated that the African continent, being the area that contained the most steady supply of captive labor, be integrated into this slowly evolving network of chattel slavery that the New World

planters deemed essential to their own economic and social progress. Over time, Lovejoy even argued that there "was the consolidation within Africa of a political and social structure that relied extensively on slavery . . . Production depended . . . on slave labor. Political power relied on slave armies. External trade involved the sale of slaves, often as a major commodity."[24]

The British scholars Patrick Manning and Robin Law offer some support to this theory by pointing out that the neighboring West African empires of Oyo, Dahomey, and Benin emerged together as regional powers along with the growth of the Atlantic slave trade.[25] Driven by intense political and economic rivalries, all three kingdoms attempted to use the Atlantic trade to fuel their domestic goals of expansion and conquest but, according to Law, soon became overly reliant upon it for their collective prosperity.[26] In the case of the Yoruba empire of Oyo (whose development will be briefly discussed later), Law argued that when the external supply of slaves became too unreliable, the imperial leaders of the city developed internal supplies of captives taken from weaker Yoruba towns under their control. In the nineteenth century, this triggered a brutal series of fratricidal civil wars, a key development in the eventual collapse of the empire and the further dispersal of the Yoruba peoples.

J. D. Fage, taking a more fatalistic approach, also views the Atlantic slave trade as causing major upheavals and disjunctions within African civilizations for it was "the demand for slave labor (by Europeans) that led to the growth of the institutions and corrupted indigenous society (in a way) that was so great it depopulated and corrupted West African society."[27] In other words as African kingdoms became increasingly involved in this international system of commerce and trade, slavery became the primary means of mobilizing labor to meet its demands and stay on top of local competitors. In the end, Lovejoy agreed with this for "the ability to supply slaves required the development of a commercial infrastructure which caused an increase in the domestic use of slaves . . . (where) kinship based societies eventually evolved into slave societies."[28]

The rise and fall of one of the most successful expansionist Yoruba city-states known as Oyo played a definitive role in the dispersal of the Yoruba peoples to yet another region of the world. While throughout this period, the Yoruba political leaders did not question the primacy of Ife in their political and spiritual legitimacy, the amount of political and economic power the *Onis* of Ife were capable of exercising over their neighbors gradually decreased. Eventually it was the town of Katunga or Old Oyo, which legend says *Oranyan*, one of the 16

princes dispersed into the interior founded, that replaced the political but never the spiritual place once held by Ife.[29]

Arising first as a military power in the northern reaches of the Yoruba towns, Oyo dominated the region for four centuries beginning sometime in the 1300s. Operating rather inauspiciously at first, Oyo seemed destined to live in isolation, removed from the more prosperous coastal regions of Yorubaland then dominated by the influence of Ife.[30] As was previously mentioned, the hometown is the most fundamental political unit within Yoruba society. Most were relatively autonomous, with their own hereditary *Bales* and *Obas* commanding indisputable authority over the various hometowns and compounds under their control. These hometowns however would usually be attached to a larger capital city under the control of the descendants of *Oduduwa* whose lineage must be legitimated by the rulers of Ife. Oyo, a large kingdom, was one example of such an arrangement, composed of a number of smaller hometowns that recognized the absolute authority of the *Alafin*, as the king of Oyo was known.

While the *Alafin* was technically a hereditary title, as all such rulers must prove direct descent from the mythical founder of the Yoruba people, it was not necessarily handed down from father to son as one might expect. A matrilineal line of descent could also be established where the son of the sister of the *Alafin* or any another eligible candidate can be chosen as the successor.[31] Along with the *Alafin*, there ruled a second branch of government comprising seven hereditary lords from nonroyal lineages, known as the *Oyo Mesi*, whose authority, while not absolute, held the responsibility of selecting the *Alafin* from the eligible candidates and in extreme cases also demanded that the current *Alafin* commit suicide, a form of impeachment from office. The head of the *Oyo Mesi*, the *Bashorun* was a politically intriguing character without whose support the *Alafin* could not effectively rule. Underneath the *Bashorun* and the *Oyo Mesi* lies a second tier consisting of a nobility called the *Esos* and the commander of the Oyo military, the *Kankanfo*, whose position was the only leadership role conferred entirely on merit.[32]

A third branch of government designed to restrain the power of the *Bashorun* and the *Oyo Mesi* was a secret religious society of political and spiritual leaders known as the *Ogboni*. The *Ogboni* through their worship of the earth and the ancestors served as a source of moral authority both legitimating the rule of the *Alafin* though the control of religious ritual and representing a mediating and potentially overriding force in the relationship between the other two branches of government.[33] At first glance it might seem that the existence of

a state-controlled religious organization like the *Ogboni* would represent a threat or alternative to the influence exercised by the *Oni* of Ife but Oyo was never able to politically assimilate their neighbors enough to effectively undermine this centuries-old system.[34] The *Alafin* of Oyo, it seemed, had to be content with outwardly recognizing the ultimate power of Ife in conferring legitimacy to his rule; yet the threat of overt violence on their part was enough to keep the *Oni* from attempting to step beyond their traditionally accepted role as spiritual caretakers of the various Yoruba political traditions. Well into the mid-nineteenth century, in terms of raw power, no one could question that Oyo reigned supreme over the Yoruba hometowns.

In summary, this complex political system based on the notion of divine kingship allowed for the development of large towns and a high rate of urbanization whose economies came to rely on large-scale trade and control over markets. Over time, due to Oyo's geographic location in the interior of Yorubaland, it developed into a vital commercial center linking European traders and goods to Sudan and eventually became a large-scale exporter of captive slaves.[35] It was the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, therefore, that provided Oyo such an expansionist opportunity. But it came at a heavy price for their continual economic expansion and prosperity now depended on a steady stream of revenue based on an equally steady stream of human captives that could only be acquired in numbers large enough to sustain their development through state-sanctioned violence.[36]

Until the early nineteenth century, this violence was largely directed at external threats such as the competing West African empires of Dahomey and Benin. Military and diplomatic victories over these empires eventually won for Oyo effective control over the Bight of Benin, site of one of the most extensive slave-trading networks anywhere in the world.[37]

In the course of only a 60- to 70-year period, as business boomed along the slave-trading coast of West Africa, the empire of Oyo experienced both its greatest prosperity and its ultimate demise. Based primarily on the exportation of captive labor to the New World, the port city of Ouidah (Whydah) in the modern-day Republic of Benin emerged as a vibrant center of regional commerce. Estimates published by David Eltis and David Richardson suggest that at least 20 percent of the total captives sold to New World merchants over the course of the entire Atlantic slave trade were moved through Ouidah. This represented a loss of at least two million people, many of whom were destined for sale in Bahia.[38]

While ruling the region and the neighboring empire of Dahomey as a tributary, Oyo became the major facilitator and beneficiary of the revenues generated through the sale of slaves in Ouidah and other points of departure in the Bight of Benin.[39] This windfall, however, was just as much curse as a blessing. The *Alafin* of Oyo controlled the distribution of the profits generated by his regulation of the slave trade that were distributed among the various traders, chiefs, and royal personages participating in the venture. According to the historian P. C. Lloyd, the failure of the *Alafin* to monopolize these profits altered the very delicate balance of power within the empire itself as the affluence gained by those participating in the slave trade, namely the various chiefs and members of the *Oyo Mesi*, expressed itself at the expense of the monarchy. Lloyd portrays this development as eventually leading to a political stalemate with neither the *Alafin* or the *Oyo Mesi* being able to impose their will upon the other.[40]

In addition, the stakes of control over trade routes among the Yoruba city-states had risen to extraordinary levels. In fact, the Yoruba scholar Toyin Falola has documented, not surprisingly, that trade in general was very often the key factor in inter-Yoruba relations and the cause of much of the instability and warfare that became so endemic in Yoruba political life in the early to mid-nineteenth century.[41] So complex were these diplomatic nuances that many people such as Donna Maier have cautioned scholars about placing too much emphasis on the Atlantic slave trade as the primary cause of the now infamous Yoruba Wars of that same century, which she suggests were more likely caused by more pressing economic and political realities the various actors in question experienced.[42]

While Maier is probably correct in warning against placing too much emphasis on the slave trade as the trigger for the fratricidal calamity that began in the early nineteenth century and continued until the imposition of British colonial rule at the end of the century, one cannot deny that the revenues and political strategic advantages of controlling the sale of slaves was at the very least one of the primary factors contributing to the bloodshed and chaos that followed.

Religion too, it seems, played a role in the then impending collapse of Oyo. The Yoruba, possessing an economic system based on large-scale commerce and markets, rapidly developed a rather cosmopolitan outlook on the world and had regularly come into contact with a wide range of worldviews and cultural ideologies. One of the first to reach Yorubaland were the Muslim traders making use of the rather extensive network of commercial links running across western and northern Africa.[43]

Islam had been introduced into West Africa early in the ninth century by the powerful empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay who soon began exporting the faith through both peaceful and violent means.[44] The Yoruba's northern neighbors, the Hausa, were the first to convert in large numbers and quickly established trading outposts stretching from Yorubaland to the Ashanti kingdoms. Hiskett has identified this as a Hausa diaspora whose Islamic-based culture many adopted from the respective communities in which they were based.[45] By the 1790s, while Oyo was at its apex of political and economic power, conversions to Islam became more frequent and the rather large contingent of Hausa slaves within Oyo became a potential source of instability and agitation against the imperial elite, sometimes in Bahia as well.[46]

By 1804, reacting against the growing military and spiritual inroads being gained by the Christian nations of Europe within western Africa and driven by a sense of immediacy and an expanding religious reform movement, a series of holy wars or jihads, both peaceful and violent, swept across the region.[47]

The Fulani Muslims were the first to take up arms against the traditional non-Muslim Hausa kings.[48] Having been encouraged to move into Hausa territory because of their skills as diplomats, doctors, and amulet makers, the Fulani Muslim community, through their literacy and an Islamic worldview shaped by pilgrimages to Mecca, had come in touch with new movements for social and political reform expressed locally by the Fulani cleric Shehu Usumanu.[49] The movement started slowly as this new wave of jihadists with a message of social and political justice for the poor attracted large numbers of both Fulani and Hausa followers. However, it quickly turned violent, climaxing in 1812 with the establishment of a Fulani Muslim empire whose previously autonomous and decentralized communities were now united under the control of the newly proclaimed Sokoto Caliphate.[50] In his lengthy analysis of the spread of Islam across West Africa, Hiskett highlighted one of the causes of such violence as the resentment literate Muslim functionaries felt over their exclusion from the highest levels of power by their nonliterate rulers. This obstacle was removed, Hiskett notes, when Islam rose from a tolerated minority sect into an official state ideology capable of encouraging and supporting like-minded political movements across the region.[51] Peaceful jihad now seemed to be too slow and unpredictable in reaching its desired outcomes. Military jihad therefore became the vehicle through which the social, political, and religious reform so desired by its adherents was to be carried out.

After consolidating their hold over the seven Hausa kingdoms, the leadership of the Caliphate began attempts at territorial and ideological expansion designed to bring under its control Nupe, Yorubaland, and no doubt the lucrative trading routes running through them.[52] The political and military leadership of Oyo, having acquired one rival too many, now faced an overwhelming series of historical processes playing themselves out seemingly at their expense.

Oyo, as illustrated by Law, achieved its greatest power at a time of tremendous regional instability.[53] Along with its participation in the slave trade arose the aforementioned political stalemate, which effectively shut down efficient governance, as a series of protracted, and at times violent, confrontations between successive *Alafins* and the Oyo Mesi took place.[54] After the death of the *Alafin* Abiodun in 1789, a competition for power arose among five rival leaders, each with his own economic and military base from which to draw support.[55] This quest for power along with the instability the Fulani jihad wrought and the nature of the Atlantic slave trade culminated in the outbreak of war.

One such rival for power was the Oyo dissident Afonjá who took advantage of the stalemate gripping the Oyo government to consolidate his control over the town of Ilorin, one of the vital links between the Oyo empire and its neighbors to the north now in the midst of the Fulani jihad.[56] Having been passed over for succession in favor of his rival Majotu, Afonjá, in a daring move, in 1817, aligned himself with the Fulani expansionists from Sokoto and rose in rebellion against the new *Alafin*.[57] By 1824, however, Ilorin secured its independence from Oyo and fell into the hands of the jihadists from the north who then successfully overthrew and executed the rebel Afonjá.[58] The key element in Afonja's brief success rested in the support received not only from the native Yoruba population but also from Fulani farmers and the aforementioned contingent of Hausa slaves who made up a sizable portion of the town's population.[59]

The ensuing chaos spread with Ilorin now serving as a base for further Islamic military incursions into Yorubaland.[60] In addition, Oyo now faced a backlash against its centuries-old domination of its smaller Yoruba neighbors and new threats against their control over the Atlantic slave trade from their former vassal state of Dahomey.

The Nigerian scholar Dare Oguntomisin points out that Yoruba kingdoms seldom fought wars alone, preferring instead the political intrigue and opportunism that shifting alliances brought to those efforts. Warfare, according to Oguntomisin, presented opportunities to forge, break, or reaffirm old alliances in order to best complement

the respective self-interests of the various Yoruba kingdoms now rushing to arms in order to fill the power vacuum left by the impending fall of Oyo.[61]

By 1821, fresh on the heels of Afonja's 1817 revolt, the Owu War pitting the city-states of Ife and Ijebu against the Owu broke out in an attempt to conquer valuable commercial markets taken by the Owu in previous decades.[62] By 1825, not only had the city of Owu been destroyed, but also another series of wars lasting three years resulted in the destruction of most of the towns controlled by Egba, another powerful Yoruba hometown.[63] In addition, Ghezo, the newly installed ruler of Dahomey who seized power in a palace coup identified by Robin Law as being partially organized and supported by the local Brazilian slave-trading community declared independence from Oyo. This resulted in a series of military incursions, which by 1829 had not only reversed Dahomey's previous position of inferiority but also saw the outbreak of war between Ife and Ondo, resulting in the destruction and abandonment of the latter's hometown.[64]

As multitudes of Yoruba were displaced and scattered by the winds of war, various refugee communities came together and formed new centers of power within a very fluid and chaotic state. Ibadan, once a destroyed Egba town, was repopulated by warriors from Ife, Oyo, and Ijebu, who claimed allegiance to the *Alafin* of Oyo and offered their services as a military outpost to help restore the empire.[65] Abeokuta became a home to a flood of Egba fleeing the destruction of their hometowns and compounds and emerged as a center of military and commercial power.[66] Llorin, now under the control of the Sokoto Caliphate and the emir, Abdul Salami, declared war on all of Yorubaland, launching a new round of the jihadist incursions culminating in the capture of Old Oyo, the once seemingly impenetrable center of imperial power in western Africa by 1835.[67]

Two years later, hoping to reunite the various Oyo refugees scattered across Yorubaland, the *Alafin* Atiba, backed by the increasing military power of Ibadan, constructed a new capital city. With a new base of operations and a strong desire to restore the empire, newly united Yoruba armies were dispatched to the north to meet the Fulani incursion and then west to reestablish control over Dahomey.[68] By 1840, the Ibadan-led army had halted the Islamic advance near Oshogbo and slowly began to recover some lost territories. But they were, however, unsuccessful in their western campaign against the newly professionalized armies of the Dahomean monarch, Ghezo.[69]

The wars continued as rival Yoruba towns were unwilling to submit to Atiba and Ibadan's attempts to restore their dominance over

their brethren. In 1862, the Egba, fearing the imperialistic intentions of Ibadan, allied with the Ijaye to halt encroachments on their markets and trading routes.[70] In 1878, also in reaction to perceived imperialist desires, Ibadan had to face another formidable alliance of eight Yoruba towns led by Ekiti and Ife.[71]

Decades of warfare being justified by centuries-old grievances and bitterness do not lend themselves to peaceful or diplomatic solutions very easily. For the first time, according to Oguntomisin, the idea of total war was being carried out across Yorubaland as the complete destruction of the Egba and Owu hometowns demonstrate.[72] He further claims that although these various inter-Yoruba alliances may have led to the further development of economic and political cooperation among the various towns participating in the conflicts, they were also motivated purely by self-interest, causing no alliance to be sacred and no military conflict too short.[73] By 1893, after nearly 80 years of uninterrupted bloodshed and chaos, many Yoruba leaders looked to British intervention to stop the cycles of violence. This resulted in the unforeseen imposition of colonial rule effectively ending the history of the Yoruba as independent states.[74]

An additional interrelated cause of this cycle of violence was directly related to the transatlantic slave trade. As the European and Brazilian demand for slaves continued to grow steadily, Oyo had risen in an attempt to satisfy it. As the external supply of Nupe, Hausa, and other Muslim slaves were no longer sufficient, Oyo turned to an internal supply of slaves that various sources provided. Either private contractors acquiring their cargo through kidnapping or acquisition of those convicted of crimes or through the prisoners of war belonging to uncooperative client states, Oyo gained bodies. Eventually as the chaos proliferated, Oyo was still struggling to maintain its death grip on the supply of slaves to the Bight of Benin but was finding it increasingly difficult to do so. As the majority of slaves sold to the New World merchants were indeed prisoners of war, the Yoruba Wars guaranteed, from 1810 to the closing of the slave trade, an almost uninterrupted and relatively homogenous flow of Yoruba-speaking captives destined for sale across the great ocean.[75]

As there was a backlash against Islam across those areas controlled by Oyo and its allies due to the Fulani-led jihadist incursions, many Muslim prisoners of war were also sold to the merchant ships. Later, as Robin Law demonstrated, the monarchy of Dahomey began to use the slave trade to also rid itself of political dissidents or other prisoners of conscience.[76] One can also logically assume that the various factions competing for power and influence in the Yoruba states did

the same thing. As Pierre Verger first posited, this resulted in at least a certain amount of high-level political and religious leaders arriving in Bahia throughout the duration of the slave trade, but particularly during the chaos of the nineteenth century.[77]

Kristin Mann, analyzing the construction of a black Atlantic world of which Brazil and West Africa were a part, reminds us that Africans brought with them to the New World not only their culture but their history as well.[78] In terms of their more immediate history, at least during the nineteenth century, it was one wrought with dramatic episodes of the worst possible violence any imagination can muster. Warfare resulting in the total destruction of long-standing Yoruba hometowns created several generations of strangers, disconnected from their most fundamental notions of personal and collective identity and forced to reconstruct lives and ritual in creative ways. Some did do so in other parts of West Africa as a more fluid sense of Yourbaness began to emerge while countless others were forced to do so on the other side of the world, but most continued to rely on notions of indisputable authority, ultimately deriving from similar if not identical spiritual energy as their guiding principles.

A deeper understanding of this process leads to a reexamination of history as older Yoruba belief systems, political movements, and cultures attempted to continue operating or were reinvented in a new time and place that on the surface did not seem to be very compatible with the old. Yet, interestingly, as J. Roland Matory has noted, they would do so within the context of emerging national identities on both sides of the Atlantic as Yourbaness and Brazilianess were "simultaneously in gestation."[79]

Religion and spiritual authority were the basis for many human interactions and experiences in Yoruba society. In terms of political power, religious ritual controlled and exercised by both the *Oni* of Ife and the *Alafin* of Oyo were designed to ensure legitimacy of their rule and a stable transfer of power from one ritually sanctioned individual to the next. In terms of Yoruba society, the worship of the various *orixa* also became expressions of political and cultural unity among the various hometowns dominated by their capital cities. *Xangô*, the deified fourth *Alafin* of the Oyo Empire and the *orixa* of political power, thunder and lightning became the foundation of the authority exercised by those who maintained his divine existence, namely the *Alafin* himself. In analyzing the power ritual and spiritual orientation held for the Yoruba, Andrew Apter notes that towns subordinated to Oyo often developed rituals of resistance organized around *Oxala* whose worship is centered in Ife, the traditional political rival

of Oyo.[80] Apter also explains that the divinatory corpus of religious literature known as *Ifa*, without whose insight many felt Yoruba society could not function, was also an Ife-centered ritual practice that served as a counterweight to the authority of Oyo.[81] Other towns or regions also developed a close connection to powerful *orixas* such as *Ogun*, protector of the Nigerian state that now bears his name and *Oxossi*, the deified hunter who made his spiritual kingdom in the western Yoruba city of Ketu and the town of Oshogbo that rests comfortably under the ever-loving gaze of *Oxum*, the very embodiment of female power on both the material and supernatural planes. What is important to make note of here, however, is the commonly employed strategy by the Yoruba, in multiple and varied contexts, of using ritual and control over religious mysticism to counteract any negative or oppressive tendencies on the part of more powerful political or cultural elements of which they may find themselves the potential victim.

The Yoruba of Bahia, for example, when confronted with Catholic dominance and white supremacist ideologies designed to marginalize or eliminate their own cosmology and worldview, brought multiple *orixas* under one pantheon. Although these were previously only regional protectors worshiped in a highly localized ritual, together they fostered a sense of pan-Yoruba cooperation in the face of overwhelming obstacles to their continued existence.

In addition, given their small numbers in relation to the total population of Bahia that each individual Yoruba hometown represented, maintaining such a localized identity through spiritual exclusivity surrounding the worship of just one *orixa* was simply not practical. In fact, it would be counterproductive to the ambitious agenda they held for the future of their community and an emerging Yoruba identity. It can be argued that societies with religious worldviews such as the Yoruba both in Africa and in Bahia were operating under religious institutions often served as agents of political mediation. In fact, what the Yoruba of Bahia were desperately trying to recreate in a New World context was a source of political and spiritual power through which to mediate the Euro-Brazilian and competing African societies. They were seeking what some would call their self-determination as a community and religion under the leadership of a new generation of Yoruba women determined to play a pivotal role in this process.

Chapter 3

The Institutionalization of Yoruba Female Power in *Nagô* Candomble

Waiting by the banks of the river bearing her name, *Oxum*, the most beloved embodiment of supernatural feminine power, wondered why it had become so quiet. It had to have been, she thought, the winds of war that had scattered her children across the great ocean. Yet she knew that just as rivers can ebb and flow over time bending and shaping all that they touch, she would see them again.

Exact numbers are impossible to calculate, given the unregulated and oftentimes clandestine nature of the slave trade, but surely in its final phase, Yoruba prisoners numbering in the hundreds of thousands arrived in Bahia. Some, Pierre Verger (offering an explanation perhaps for their perceived cultural dominance) claimed, were "those of an elevated social class and the priesthood."[1] João Reis and Beatirz Mamigonian in addition, have estimated that while Yoruba-speaking slaves made up 31 percent of all African-born slaves in 1835, they would come to account for 76 percent of African-born and 86 percent of the total slave population by the 1850s.[2] Nina Rodrigues also noted that by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Yoruba were "the most numerous and influential Africans" in the state of Bahia and that within its communities, there were representatives of nearly every Yoruba hometown. Rodrigues claimed that the majority of Yoruba in Salvador were from the city of Oyo but he also found others hailing from Ijesha, Abeokuta, Lagos, Ibadan, Ife, Yebu, Llorin, and Oshogbo.[3] Roger Bastide, writing in the twentieth century, noted the presence of those same Yoruba subgroups but pointed out that those who claimed origin from the town of Ketu, located near the border with Dahomey, came to dominate the Yoruba-based religious communities. As he stated, "their city had been destroyed by the Kings

of Abomey and their priests and princes sold as slaves in Whydah to Felix de Sousa, also known as *Chacha*, a Bahian slave trader."[4]

Gradually throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the collective Yoruba culture and language proliferated across the northeast of Brazil and soon came to dominate the region. Fayette Wiberly, writing on the expansion of Afro-Bahian religious practices in the interior city of Cachoeira, notes that by the mid-nineteenth century the Yoruba language had become the lingua franca for inter-*nação* communication there as well.[5]

Back in Salvador, Rodrigues, again writing in the later part of the century, noted that Africans of all *nações* were speaking Yoruba, as were increasing numbers of native-born blacks and mulattos.[6] In addition, a constant flow of goods and people between the Yoruba coastal areas and northeastern Brazil consistently renewed and reinvigorated their presence for not only were large numbers of Yoruba coming into Bahia, but a small number were leaving the city bound for Nigeria as well. Some who desired a return to their native land left Bahia behind forever, while others, as customs records and ship logs show, made the trip between the two nations on a consistent basis.[7]

Aside from sharing a mutually intelligible mother tongue, the adaptation of the newly arrived Yoruba to Salvador was made easier by the already established African communities found in the city. The *cantos* where the *Africanos de ganho* would meet in their daily quest for employment were fully prepared to incorporate newcomers of their respective *nações*. African ethnic *bairros*, or neighborhoods, had already been in existence for decades if not centuries, and were fully capable of integrating new arrivals as well. And while the trauma of having been sold into captivity and enduring the dreaded Middle Passage could not easily, if ever, be erased, the Yoruba imports were not entering into an entirely alien way of life. Yoruba women set up shop across the city, filling the air with the powerful aroma of sizzling palm oil, announcing the arrival of a fresh batch of *acaraje* and many other West African delicacies.[8] Other Yoruba merchants traveled among their compatriots offering goods imported from the West African coast such as *pano de costa* (cloth), *buzios* (cowrie shells), and the much desired stimulant and religious necessity, *obi*, or the kola nut. Given the historical propensity for an urban existence, their transition into the rhythms of life in Salvador was in all probability as smooth as could be expected.

There remained, however, a fundamental expression of Yoruba culture that the ruling authorities of Bahia could not bring themselves to easily or knowingly tolerate. For no matter how many African cultural

expressions they may have indeed tolerated, from drumming and dancing to the African-inspired processions of the Catholic brotherhoods, when it came to the acceptance of alternative religious faiths, there was no room for debate. The Africans imported into Bahia were done so under the protection of the Catholic Church with the understanding that the proponents of the institution of slavery would guarantee the slaves' conversion and loyalty to the official state religion. And while there were well-documented conflicts between the slaveholding elite, its government, and the church over how best to reach that end, they remained fundamentally united around concepts of white supremacy and a specific brand of Catholic Eurocentrism.

Even after Brazil achieved political independence in 1821 and the liberal political elite shunned references to race and color, there still existed an understanding that the nation was founded as a host and nurturer of a culturally Europeanized, Catholic society. In order to ensure the hegemony of its upstanding citizens, the spiritual power of the Catholic faith and its Brazilian leadership must not be openly questioned. Recognition of that power, the secrets of which the church patriarchs jealously guarded, was thought to be essential toward achieving their stated goal.

For the Yoruba, this notion was problematic, to say the least. Religion, it should be remembered, is inextricable from Yoruba culture and is in fact their point of reference for nearly every possible experience one could have. Everything from the mysterious powers of the supernatural world to the most mundane minutia of daily life was made clear to them through their relationship to the *orixa*. Even today, for those initiated as religious leaders, the *orixa* are closely bound to their existence for once a commitment to serve them is made, it can be abandoned only at the risk of great personal peril on a physical and psychological level. For most, giving up the traditional worship of the *orixa* was never an option; maintaining and refocusing those traditions posed the most challenging obstacle they faced as a community.

There were, however, foundational elements for how to deal with such obstacles already in place. Beginning in the eighteenth century, many began to note the proliferation of what they called *calundus* on the outskirts of urban centers such as Recife and Salvador. At first designed to be centers of healing and divination, they had by this point grown into a diverse social network moving beyond the institution of slavery. As Luis Pares has noted, these communities tended to be led by freed persons looking to serve a wider clientele including those outside the African populations and thus developed

"a strategy of social inclusion not merely a safe haven from the horrors of slavery."[9]

The way that certain elements within the Yoruba community however chose to meet that challenge eventually institutionalized the inherent contradictions laying beneath the foundations of Bahian society. Bahia, it seems, was destined to never develop along the strict Catholic, European model its Iberian founders had hoped for but rather into one of the most hotly contested theological battlegrounds of the western world. In the process, Salvador revealed itself for what it was, an inherently African-based city built upon highly complex layers of competing but at times completely compatible spiritual worldviews. The Yoruba religious leadership, while having no choice but to temporarily acquiesce to the temporal power of its Eurocentric rulers, nonetheless refused to yield the tremendous spiritual and political power they possessed in their own right.

At first glance, things seemed to be improving for the papalists in this war of the saints. Largely disapproving of the many African languages and customs tolerated in the public sphere, the paternalistic Catholic brotherhoods carefully supervised the most industrious and capable children of the Dark Continent. Following the example of the ambitious Portuguese settlers who founded the *Irmandade de Nossa Senhora das Angustias* in the *São Berto* monastery, the Angolans along with several of their Congolese counterparts established the *Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosario* in the *Praça de Pelourinho.* Meanwhile, the Jeje from the ancient kingdom of Dahomey in the chapel of *Corpo Santo* settled into their own brotherhood named *Nosso Senhor das Necessidades e da Redenção.*[10] Clearly, the strategy appeared to bear fruit as creole black communities gathered under the protection of the *Irmandade do Senhor Bom Jesus dos Martirios.* The Yoruba, being the newer arrivals to the city, soon formed their own brotherhood: the *Irmandade de Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte* that met in the rather humble *Barroquinha* church. A group of Yoruba women were the founders of the brotherhood and gave every indication to the ecclesiastical authorities that they would be absorbed quite nicely into the religious structures already in place.[11]

Within the confines of the *Boa Morte* brotherhood, or what should more accurately be called a sisterhood, however, a quite dangerous process (as far as their Catholic sponsors were concerned) was beginning to unfold.

The peoples of West Africa, as noted previously, had long lived in cosmopolitan and diverse societies where contact with a wide range of ethnic groups, races, and religious traditions was common.

Alongside numerous traditional religions, Islam and later Christianity found fertile ground across the region. In particular, the Yoruba, a collection of highly urbanized and commercially oriented societies, had long recognized that there existed beyond their own territories powerful spiritual and material forces from which they might benefit. Islamic converts and traders with their talents for literacy, piety, and diplomacy clearly profited from the protection provided by the words of Allah spoken through the Koran. Their neighbors from Dahomey, political and economic rivals to the *Alafins* of Oyo, also seemed to hold powerful and remarkably similar deities under their control and no one could dispute the obvious force behind the one the Europeans called Jesus Christ.

The Yoruba, therefore, were never as bold or orthodox as to proclaim that there existed no God other than their own or that other religious perspectives were not just as valid and purposeful as their own *orixas*. In fact, living in such a turbulent and chaotic time in history fraught with peril at seemingly every turn, one could never have too much protection. If another religious entity was more adept at providing guidance or protection in specific arenas of life, then to ignore that reality was surely foolhardy. Therefore, the Yoruba and others in West Africa had long incorporated certain elements, symbols, and even ritual into their own *orixa*-centered worldview. Some eventually came to a more sophisticated conclusion that indeed all religious power derived from a common source of energy, or *axé*, which reveals itself in such a way as to be understood and internalized by its host culture. For example, the Yoruba of Oyo understood the message and power of *Xangô* because it was revealed to them within their own cultural and historical contexts. For the Catholics of Portugal, that same message was best understood in the form of, say, Saint Barbara.

To the Yoruba of Salvador, then, the Catholic religion and by extension their brotherhoods in Brazil surely must have seemed the most logical and accommodating aspect of the dominant culture. Much like their own traditional religion, Catholicism was presented for all intents and purposes as a cult of Saints whose power, derived from one Supreme Being, humans manipulated and called upon to help them through the trials and tribulations of daily life. They watched as the faithful focused their spiritual energies on images and likenesses of their Saints and quickly drew parallels to their own use of symbols and altars. They observed with a knowing nod as offerings of fresh flowers were left at the feet of iconic images and the loving care with which the Blessed Mother was adorned with crowns and elegant

garments every spring as they did with their own female deities. They surely noticed the great importance the one they called Jesus Christ held for the Christians and based on his obvious senior status and flowing white robes, must have viewed him as just another reflection of the energy they referred to as *Oxala*.

Catholic ritual was conducted in strange languages but the symbols and imagery it employed spoke volumes to the Yoruba. To associate one's self with this immense power that even the *orixa* could not prevent from dragging them in chains to the far reaches of their universe would surely prove useful in a society controlled by its devotees.

Thus began a reinterpretation of Catholicism within a Yoruba cosmological framework. The symbols, words, and, on rare occasions, rituals of the Catholics were not to be used just as a mere disguise to continue worshipping the *orixa* but actually incorporated and reinvented by some as extensions of Yoruba religious practice. It was entirely possible, therefore, to practice both religions without any negative spiritual consequence. Each religion had its own compartmentalized time and space but there existed no conflict in living what might appear to some as a double life but what was in reality a coherent whole. Perhaps accidentally by virtue of it being rooted in their cultural world view, perhaps by observing the strategies already employed by more established groups of Africans or perhaps deliberately in an act of ingenious political calculation, the religious leadership of the Bahian Yoruba had discovered a way to turn the power of the Catholic liturgy and clergy on its head. In the process they came to reinforce their own power and status as indisputable authority figures within the Yoruba and later Afro-Bahian community.

What made this process interesting, however, was not that Africans expressed a strong desire to maintain traditional religions, which in all likelihood should be a natural impulse. Rather, it was the significant following the Yoruba developed among the ever-increasing black creole, mulatto, and even white population of the city.

One explanation for this development was the refinement of the *nação* concept into one that was no longer rigidly defined by ethnicity or place of birth alone. What was once defined as a small group of Yoruba women's institutionalization of their version of candomble around 1830 ultimately came to represent the new definition of *nação* as a voluntary, cultural identity flexible enough to be assumed by almost anyone. As the slave trade began to decline so too did many of the old ethnic rivalries that had divided the Afro-Bahian population in the past. Not only were the old African *nações* no longer able to rely on a steady supply of newly imported compatriots to reinvigorate

their own ethnic identities and organizations but also beginning around 1830 there was a marked increase in the Brazilian-born black population. As Kim Butler has noted, this created a shift of the *nação* concept into an overarching definition of African, with individual ethnicities existing only as more peripheral identities. Hence, the candomble houses became less exclusionary as those born on the continent slowly faded into history.[12]

Within this framework emerged a select group of Ketu-Yoruba, those belonging to the aforementioned *Irmandade da Boa Morte*, who acquired the skills, resources, and political savvy necessary to finally and quite literally transplant the *orixa* not only into Bahia's soil but into its collective conscience as well.

Although not pleased, the *orixas* living in Bahia had become accustomed to life on the margins of society. While never a complete secret from the Africans of Salvador, serious attempts had been made to limit their exposure from the public eye. Rituals were conducted in remote or secluded spaces or in the locked apartments of their devotees mostly living in the *Cidade Alta* along the *Praça da Se*.[13] At some point, however, their devotees reached the conclusion that in order for their traditions to survive, evolve, and thrive, the *orixa* must be moved into the light of day. As these religious communities grew larger, however, what was needed was a fixed and permanent institution that could be maintained long after its founders had completed their transition away from life on earth and returned to the embraces of their ancestors on the other side. For without such a home to access the power and support of the *orixa*, they had no choice but to submit as inferiors, defeated in a final sense by the power of white society and forced to adopt the cultural worldview of others, including rival African religious traditions.

No doubt, the African-born women of the Ketu-dominated sisterhood of *Boa Morte* understood this well. They enjoyed the status and prestige that the brotherhood system gave them but it had its limits. Africans and creole blacks would always be relegated to positions of relative inferiority, forced to remain in marginal institutions while their own traditions were driven out or banished to the dungeons of folklore devoid of true meaning and spiritual power. Given that some had internalized the belief that all religious traditions emanated from a common source of energy and differed only in their physical manifestations or others who merely believed in the superiority of their own faith, Yoruba and later "African" or Afro-Bahians would best be served by a religious leadership and mysticism designed to address their particular needs as a people.

History has proven in this instance that when confronted with multiple competing spiritual options, one seemingly created, dominated, and perpetuated by whites offering no real solutions to their daily struggles against a racist and oftentimes violent society, and another created, controlled, and perpetuated by Africans and their descendants that actually celebrated their uniqueness, the choice became clear. Yoruba religious traditions are after all fundamentally of a healing nature, designed to offer guidance, structure, compassion, and tangible solutions to a marginalized group plodding through a complex, urbanized existence. While many in Bahia were required on some level to openly acknowledge the superiority of white skin and culture, the Yoruba religious hierarchy offered tangible evidence of the fallacy of this absurd notion.

The Yoruba, it should be remembered, however, were building upon already established practices of their Angolan, Bantu, and Jeje counterparts who through great effort had successfully adapted their traditions to an alien setting. Again Pares reminds us that these efforts already occurring over the previous century were by the 1830s allowing for new spiritually based institutions to emerge created and led primarily by freed Africans appealing to a rapidly increasing base of potential devotees.

According to the Bahian researcher Edison Carneiro, around 1830, the first regularly functioning Yoruba-based candomble temple *Ilê Iyá Nassô* more commonly referred to as *Engenho Velho* and today as *Casa Branca* was founded by three African-born women, *Adetá, Iyá Kala*, and *Iyá Nassô*.[14] Pierre Verger, a famed photographer and historian, lists only two women, *Iyalusso Danadana* and *Iyanasso Akala*, as founders but suggests they received assistance from a Yoruba *babalorixa* or a *pai-de-santo*, known as *Baba Assika* with the original name of the site being *Axé Aira Intile*.[15] Yet another version is offered by Vivaldo da Costa Lima who suggests that all of the previous names actually refer to only one person holding several administrative and honorific titles.[16] Maria Escolastica da Conceição Nazareth or Mãe Menininha of the famed candomble temple of *Gantois*, an offshoot of *Engenho Velho*, offered yet another version of the story when she insisted that the original founder of the house was indeed *Iyá Akala*, who was replaced after her death by a woman named *Iyanasso Oka*.[17]

The social origins of these women, whichever version of the story is accepted, are also a subject of great debate. Both Verger and Carneiro agreed that at the time of its founding, the creators of the temple were manumitted slaves. Ruth Landes suggested that perhaps a priestess brought from Africa for that purpose founded the temple

while the American sociologist E. Franklin Frazier merely noted that free Africans founded it[18] (figure 3.1).

In all likelihood, given the opportunities some slaves had to acquire their freedom it seems plausible that at some point in their lives some or all of these women could very well have been enslaved. However, great emphasis is always placed on the fact that whatever they may have been in the past, at the time of the temple's founding all of its principal personalities were said to have been free. In fact, most oral histories make no mention whatsoever of any role played by slaves in the founding or perpetuation of the temple for surely spiritual power of such immense proportions, which all of these women held through their devotion to the *orixa*, rendered it impossible that

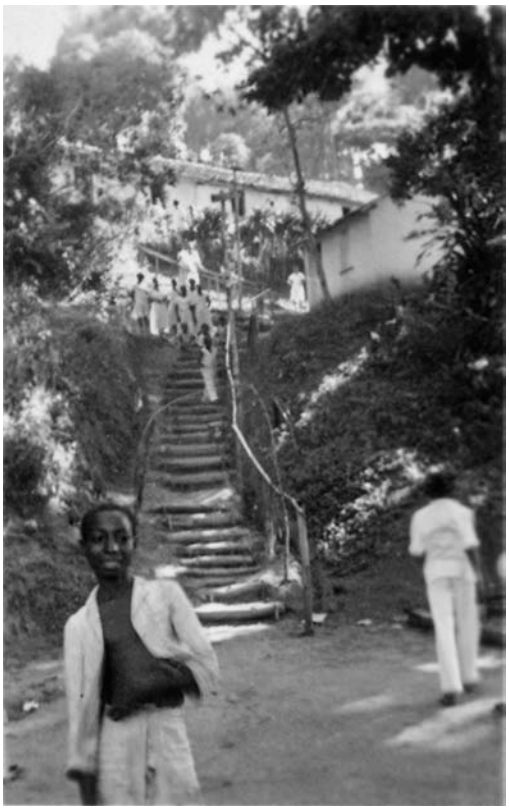

Figure 3.1 Devotees descending staircase leading to Engenho Velho, 1938. Photo courtesy: Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropologial Archive, Ruth Landes Papers.

such a person be relegated to such an inferior status. In order to offer the Afro-Bahian population a religious and cultural alternative on the same level as that of white society, it had to do so from a position of strength, economic independence, freedom of movement, and spiritual equality that only a legally free person could provide.

What makes this narrative interesting, however, is the return of all of the temple's founders to Africa during the formative stages of this endeavor. All the versions of the story agree that at some point the founders of the temple returned to the Yoruba town of Ketu to further their religious training. This explains Landes's account of *Engenho Velho* being founded by a priestess brought from Africa. Verger and others have documented the regularity with which Afro-Bahians traveled between West Africa and Bahia; so this, too, was not unusual. According to Verger, *Iyalusso Danadana* traveled to Africa where she passed away before having the chance to return to Salvador. *Iyá Nassô* however, who traveled to Ketu with her daughter Marcelina da Silva and her granddaughter Madalena did in fact return to Salvador seven years later with two more grandchildren born to Madalena in Africa and a third, later named Claudiana, gestating in her womb. Another founder, *Iyá Akala*, chose to return to Africa permanently.[19]

The return of these women to Africa can be seen as a conscious effort on their part to learn, understand, and plant in Bahia, the religious traditions of the Yoruba or perhaps an interesting myth establishing the purity necessary for popular acceptance of their efforts, an element to the story covered later. While many continue to debate the degree to which they were successful, others note that the significance of this action is not in how faithfully they reproduced Yoruba religious traditions but rather their burning desire to mold them to fit a Brazilian environment. In doing so, these women added to a growing number of institutionalized versions of African religions that Kim Butler sees as the "standard elements of *candomble* by which others were measured and which was imitated to varying degrees throughout Salvador."[20]

This pattern of travel by candomble initiates and leaders to the various hometowns of the Yoruba persisted well into the twentieth century and are a practice that, to a lesser extent, still exists today. By doing so during its developmental states, there came to be a greater emphasis placed on "*pureza*" or the "purity" with which Yoruba traditions are maintained in Bahia, thus creating the necessity to replicate the standard elements Butler refers to. Stefania Capone theorized interestingly that this emphasis on purity, especially in reference to a direct and ongoing interaction with Africa was a uniquely Bahian-

Yoruba construct used, according to her, as "a sign of superiority in relation to other African cults which have lost their roots forever."[21] In other words, a future candomble temple's "legitimacy" was now determined by two essential characteristics: (1) the ability to trace the spiritual lineage of the temple back to *Engenho Velho* or one of its founders, and (2) how faithfully the traditions learned there were maintained by the new house.

Absolute power within the temple structure itself however, rested in the figure of the *Iyalorixa* or *Mãe de Santo*, usually an experienced priestess with many years of service rendered to the *orixa*. After the death of *Iyá Nassô*, the first leader of *Engenho Velho*, power passed to her daughter Marcelina, also known as *Obatossi*. Upon her death there arose a serious contestation over succession between two elder priestesses, Maria Julia Figueiredo and Maria Julia da Conceição Nazareth.[22] According to Carneiro, after Maria Julia Figueiredo was selected to assume leadership over the temple, her rival left in protest with the intention of opening a new house under her direction. Along with her Egba-born husband, Francisco Nazareth, Tia Julia, as her followers knew her, purchased a plot of land on which the temple *Ilê Iyá Omin Axé Iyá Massê* opened in 1849.[23] Kim Butler later pointed out however that if the temple was actually founded in 1849, then the succession dispute that precipitated Tia Julia's departure was more likely with Marcelina Obatossi whose passing came in 1885 and not with Maria Julia Figueiredo as popularly believed.[24]

In either event, the temple more commonly known as *Gantois* quickly garnered a sizable following as a worthy alternative to *Engenho Velho* for not only could it trace its origins to the founders of that temple, but it also developed a strong reputation for meticulously preserving the "authentic" and "pure" ritual practices observed there.

Yet another power struggle occurred in 1903 after the death of the third *Mãe de Santo* of *Engenho Velho*, Mãe Ursulina or Sussu. Eugenia Maria dos Santos, known more commonly as Aninha, remembered in candomble mythology as one of the very first Brazilian-born blacks to be initiated into the religion at *Engenho Velho*, supported the candidacy of a male religious leader, Joaquim Vieira, as the next spiritual leader of the temple.[25] Since during those years, there was a perception by some that men should be strictly forbidden from rising to such a position. Tia Massi was selected as the next ruler of the temple, a decision that resulted in a decline in its popularity over the coming decades.[26]

Mãe Aninha, the child of two African-born parents of Grunci heritage (Sergio do Santos or *Aniyo* and Lucinda Maria da Conceição or

Azambriyo) was born in Bahia on July 13, 1869. Making the acquaintance of Maria Julia Figueiredo, Mãe Aninha's parents allowed her to become initiated into the religion at *Engenho Velho*, completing her initiation rites under the tutelage of Figueiredo, Marcelina da Silva, and the legendary *babalawo* Rodolfo Martins de Andrade or Bamboxê.[27] This is yet another clear example of how the concept of *nação* as Kim Butler has noted evolved into one defined by a voluntary and often religious association. By choosing affiliation with a Yoruba-based temple, Mãe Aninha had now become at least partially of Yoruba descent herself. Brazilian born blacks it seemed now also had multiple cultural options from which to choose.

Once the leadership at *Engenho Velho* was satisfied with Mãe Aninha's dedication to the religion and confident in her capabilities as a practitioner, she quickly became a vital part of the fabric of the house and was given the responsibility of initiating and training new members. It was at this point she began also frequenting the *Camarão* temple of the aforementioned Joaquim Vieria who played a decisive role in her future as a public figure.[28]

But before she moved into such a role (one which Pai Agenor, one of the last living *babalawos* of the era, described as one of "dissidence"[29]), Mãe Aninha lived a life of independence and entrepreneurial success operating a business importing and selling West African products.[30] First located in the commercial center of the city where many traditional African markets flourished, she later moved her storefront next door to the *Rosario* church, home of the Catholic brotherhood of the same name.[31] Soon, she purchased a tract of land in *São Gonçalo do Retiro* as well as several homes and farms in both Salvador and Rio de Janeiro.[32] Her life thus illustrates the strategies and defense mechanisms so many Afro-Bahian women developed over the previous centuries. Using the brotherhood structure and economic opportunities afforded to many women of color, she accumulated enough wealth and social standing to acquire the land on which she, like so many others, permanently housed and protected the *orixas*.

Leaving *Engenho Velho* after the selection of Tia Massi to head the house in 1903, over the next seven years she constructed her new spiritual home. By 1910, along with 18 new initiates, she formally opened the *Ilê do Axé Opó Afonjá* temple that, like *Gantois*, was also accepted as a "legitimate" candomble site.[33] Mãe Aninha later became known across the nation for her fierce and unyielding devotion to the *orixa* and defense of African culture. She was instrumental in promoting the formal study of the Yoruba language and building upon the "pure" and "authentic" traditions she learned under the

tutelage of the famed Marcelina Obatossi, the daughter of *Iyá Nassô* herself.[34]

Together, these temples made up what became known as the Big Three of the candomble houses of Bahia. Their popularity attracted scores of the Bahian faithful, including many members of the so-called elite, to their doors as interested onlookers, academic researchers, and religious clients. In doing so they carefully cultivated a national reputation for religious purity, causing many to promote Yoruba culture as somehow being an exceptional and more sophisticated form of African culture. When properly understood, it posed no threat to the development of a modern twentieth-century Brazil and in fact may actually have enhanced it. Mãe Aninha was often quoted as saying *Engenho Velho* "was the head and *Opó Afonjá* the arm," and along with *Gantois* this was indeed how many viewed them.[35]

Soon other temples proliferated across the city. Some were Yoruba-based while others followed the traditions of competing African *nações* such as Jeje and Angola. The significance, however, placed on "purity" by the Afro-Bahian population, for whose loyalty they were all in competition, led these other temples to follow the model and, in many instances, ritual practice laid down by the Big Three. This only added to their prestige as even those defining themselves as non-Yoruba were forced to adopt a certain amount of Yoruba ritual standards that even included the worship of the *orixa* themselves. Yet as Capone has also indicated these adaptations are living proof that, "Afro-Brazilian religions are neither completed fixed religious constructions nor mutually exclusive entities."[36] In other words, the pure religion some prefer to speak of may actually never have been a reality.

Most interestingly, however, is how this concept of "purity" came to be associated by some with exclusively female religious leadership. While this will be covered in more detail shortly, it should be remembered that Yoruba women in particular played a vital role in the maintenance and transmission of the very types of religious ritual re-created in a Bahian context. In her discussion of the political and religious bodies of literature known as *oriki*, Karin Barber outlines the role of women in its preservation and recitation. The *oriki* are praise poems celebrating historical figures, events, and actions that the community considers important enough to remember. According to Barber, they "are the living link through which relationships with the orixa are conducted . . . (and) is one of the principal discursive methods through which people apprehend history, society and the spiritual world."[37]

The deep spiritual significance the *oriki* holds and the role of women as those charged with its protection cannot be understated for there remains a widely accepted belief in Yoruba traditional religions that utterances, if said with enough conviction and in the correct way, have powers that will come to pass. This life force, or *axé*, which is transmitted through ritually trained voices of women, therefore, contains supernatural power—power that is exclusively female. This is not to suggest that men did not play a leading role in the religious hierarchy of Yoruba society for they were in fact the ones who controlled access to many, but not all, spiritual mysteries. However, their power was useless and impotent without the cooperation of their female devotees.

Henry Drewal, in his study of the religious masquerade rituals among the western Yoruba kingdoms known as *Geledé*, outlines the vital role women played in maintaining cosmic harmony and balance. Studying in the former kingdom of Ketu, the city-state from which the founding mothers of Bahian-Yoruba candomble claimed their origins, he noted that the *Geledé* performances "are designed to pay homage to women so that the community may benefit from their innate power . . . (and) are (an) artistic expression of the Pan-Yoruba belief that women and particularly old women have powers equal to or greater than the *Orisha*."[38]

The *Geledé* as Drewal points out had its origins in honoring spiritually powerful female elders and deities but particularly the town's collective great-grandmothers known as *Orisha egbe*.[39] The term "*egbe*" represents Yoruba society as a whole but also a secret society of women referred to as *awon iyá wa* or simply, our mothers. Ultimately this is recognition of women's roles as possessing beneficial and terrible secrets to which all of humanity owes a great debt. Women after all, possess the secret to life itself, the power and knowledge necessary not only to bring human beings into the world, but to remove them as well. According to Drewal, over time, women become more powerful than men, and after going through menopause, rise to positions of power as "progenitors, healers, guardians of morality, social order and the apportionment of power, wealth and prestige."[40]

The *Geledé* celebrations also take place in the one venue of public life most associated with women in Yoruba towns, the marketplace. The market is under the protection of the *orixa Oya*, wife and most loyal companion of *Xangô*, and therefore a woman bearing the administrative title of *Iyalode* must head it.[41] The market, as was noted earlier, was the material foundation of the Yoruba society and once served as the source of prosperity, cultural sophistication, and

warfare among the various hometowns reliant upon its efficient and profitable operation. A female-controlled market, therefore, provided many with a source of economic independence, thus offering even husbands avenues for a higher level of wealth and status. The market was the one place in the Yoruba public sphere where women's power as a group was at its most salient.[42] Interestingly, this aspect of Yoruba life also held true in Bahia where women, through a commitment to a commercial existence based on the exchange of goods and services in a somewhat open market, built the economic resources and social independence necessary to institutionalize the worship of the *orixa* and consolidate their control over its future course of development.

Barber however cautions us not to place too much emphasis on control over markets when attempting to analyze the position of Yoruba women in regard to public power and social status. Women, she points out, did have various mechanisms at their disposal to acquire some level of economic success and independence. However, there were still widely held beliefs and immense amounts of social pressure that dictated that women not stand alone. Rather, they must be associated with either a powerful husband or in the case of widows looked after by devoted sons to whose authority they must ultimately acquiesce.[43] Women had no legal obstacles in their path to success in terms of wealth or even in professions associated with men but societal taboos prevented them from doing so. If they did, it would surely suggest some ill-intentioned manipulation of supernatural powers destined to bring ruin upon the entire community.

Therefore, Barber continues, "women's power is acknowledged but not made visible in public personalities; like men, women are the mediators and the knowers."[44] The Yoruba women of Bahia, however, either through deliberate action or merely out of practical necessity removed these societal barriers, becoming not only adept at their traditional positions of power but effectively grasping it on multiple levels of the community. They became therefore, the public personalities normally associated only with the Big Men of Yoruba society, attracting immense followings, material wealth, and with time, political influence that reached regional and on brief occasions, national levels.

The powerful roles ascribed to Yoruba women did not end with their spiritual and economic functions. In their roles as founders of dynasties, states, and lineages, and as key agents of socialization and transmitters of culture, female power proved to be an inevitable element for the success of men. In fact, during the Yoruba Wars of the nineteenth century, women often played key roles in decisions

regarding the organization and preparation of war efforts and in vital war-related religious ritual often accompanying armies into battle and performing the *oriki* to keep fighting morale high.[45] While the war's destruction affected women greatly by leading to the separation of families, death, and enslavement, it also created opportunities not previously available to them. For example, Funso Afolayan has shown that the diversion of trade to new commercial markets not directly impacted by the wars increased the amount of trade under female control. Some of these trading women, particularly those involved in the sale of war materials, acquired significant wealth and prestige while others took advantage of the absence of so many men to assume traditionally male professions and workloads.[46] In short, the warfare endured by the Yoruba had the effect of creating a multitude of opportunities, both in the Old and New Worlds, for women to advance to positions of power and influence.

Once again, it is important to remember Mann's assertion that African people brought with them to the New World their history along with their culture. In the case of the Yoruba women of Salvador, this indeed held true. The institutions and traditions they deliberately re-created certainly followed these aforementioned ascribed roles and the opportunistic paths of development they took in the New World. For if the actual or attempted recreation of a Yoruba-based world in Bahia is viewed as an extension of nineteenth-century Yoruba history, then those actions of its initial adherents take on a deeper sense of continuity and logic than if they were viewed as merely folkloric cultural survivals visible in an emerging Afro-Brazilian identity. Given the deep commercial and cultural links Bahia had with West Africa well into the twentieth century indicates that the connections between these two groups of Yoruba people was more real than imagined and those operating in Salvador came to view themselves as the living links between them. While not functioning exactly as representatives of Yoruba power in Bahia, they certainly manipulated existing centers of that power to improve their social standing in the African communities of Salvador.

For example, Vivaldo da Costa Lima was one of the first to point out that the name of the legendary founder of *Engenho Velho*, *Iyá Nassô*, was actually an honorific title given to a high priestess of *Xangô* and had its origins in Oyo, not in Ketu, the hometown popularly believed to be the birthplace of the temple's founders.[47] Following this theory, an explanation for this may lie in the political and historical realities of Yoruba life in the nineteenth century. Oyo and not Ketu was, after all, the dominant political force across the Yoruba

world when these women were enslaved and transported to Bahia. Ketu, one of the principal western markets and a buffer between them and their emerging rival Dahomey, had strong connections to Oyo. It is therefore entirely possible that in seeking claims to political power, association with *Xangô*, the principal *orixa* worshipped in Oyo, was beneficial in the legitimization of that power and in cementing political alliances between the two cities. Thus, while *Iyá Nassô* may have held on to her localized identity as Ketu, politically it did not have the same significance and power as being associated with Oyo, which at the time of *Engenho Velho*'s founding in the 1830s was not yet entirely vanquished and still held weight in the political subconscious of the Yoruba people.

Verger, in another theory discussed later, suggested that in fact *Iyá Nassô* might have come from Oyo. Yet, upon her arrival in Salvador as a slave, she may have employed a Ketu identity as a symbol for the reunification of all the Yoruba peoples now living in that city. While this surely predates the development of the concept of a Yoruba people, it does lend support to the theory posited by Matory and Reis that this idea existed in Brazil before it did in Africa.[48] As the African-born was gradually replaced with a native-born population, however, the significance of Oyo naturally declined, thus explaining the confusion later generations of researchers and practitioners had in uncovering the origins of *Iyá Nassô*.

Ironically, the symbolic role the women's temple played was not that of the politically dominant Oyo but rather that of the spiritually dominant Ife. As described earlier, the myths and traditions surrounding the dispersal of the Yoruba were essential components of their own history and worldview.

In a sense, by claiming origins minimizing their connection to slavery and by maintaining a belief that many of its early founders were from elevated religious and political classes, the creation myths surrounding *Engenho Velho* imply a continuation of the dispersal of Yoruba peoples. And while the temple's founders may not have been attempting to claim direct descent from Ife or even Oyo for that matter, their consistent reference to themselves as the only legitimate source of Yoruba ritual created the impression that they surely must have had such a connection. And while the leaders of the temple made reference to the institution of slavery to provide a historical and social context for their own legacy of resistance to state and ecumenical power in Salvador, slavery and its eventual decline played only a tangential role in how the temple's founders or its devotees saw themselves.

On another level, there was also the implication that these New World Yoruba religious institutions represented a transfer of life, both human and deity, to a new environment and thus served as a living metaphor for the dispersal myth of *Oduduwa* in a new context. Surely the *orixa*, and by extension, *Olodumare* himself, played a direct role in breathing life into its creation. In other words, *Engenho Velho* is a New World institutional representation of *Oduduwa* whose crown princes had now been dispersed into Bahia and eventually most of Brazil and beyond, thereby establishing new Yoruba-based communities wherever they settled. In particular, the relationships between the Big Three Yoruba-derived temples in Bahia often mirrored the political tensions associated with Ife, Oyo, and other Yoruba hometowns.

In consolidating the financial resources and emerging political influence of the Yoruba community in Salvador, *Engenho Velho* again came to serve the same symbolic function as that of Ife, the place where it all began, so to speak. As outlined by Butler and others, the ritual and organizational structure *Engenho Velho* adopted came to be seen as "authentic" and, in effect, the correct way things were supposed to be done. In other words, all future and existing temples, whether they were derivatives of Yoruba religious traditions or not, had to follow the same model and structures laid down by *Iyá Nassô* and her founding sisters if they had any hope of being accepted as "legitimate" by the larger Bahian population. This too reflected the consistent Yoruba structure of power and of hierarchies being based on that of indisputable authority, the source of which is the *orixa* themselves. In order for future rivals to acquire power of their own therefore, they must on some level acknowledge or prove their personal connections to *Engenho Velho*, just as those in the Old World had to do regarding Ife. This esteemed position guaranteed *Engenho Velho* a perpetual position of respect and status even when their political influence in the outside world once again waned. This was how it had been for centuries with Ife and so it was again.

While the myth of dispersal and migration is often portrayed in Yoruba legend as *Oduduwa*'s deliberate action, the dispersal of the Bahian Yoruba priestesses is portrayed as largely an involuntary action taken by those dissatisfied with the outcome of internal political disputes at *Engenho Velho*. Yet despite this difference the end result was the same. New Yoruba-based temples were founded by female religious dissidents who rose to compete with and, at times, eclipse the political power of *Engenho Velho* as Oyo had done with Ife centuries earlier.

As mentioned previously, the first to leave was the famed priestess Maria Julia da Conceição Nazareth who in 1849 dispersed to the outskirts of the city to open *Gantois*. Having been initiated and trained in *Engenho Velho* meant the temple would have little difficulty establishing a reputation for "authenticity." *Opó Afonjá*, founded by Eugenia Anna dos Santos, or Mãe Aninha, in 1903, followed a similar path and made identical claims as those made by the leadership of *Gantois*.

Over the next two decades, Mãe Aninha in particular attempted to construct what she viewed as an even more "authentic" Yoruba religious community whose political power rivaled and eventually surpassed that of *Engenho Velho* itself. However, due to the perception of *Engenho Velho* as the oldest legitimate site of Yoruba religious activity, it would have been a form of political suicide to claim spiritual authority over them. But just as Oyo was unable to politically assimilate other Yoruba towns sufficiently to supplant the primacy of Ife, so too did *Gantois* and *Opó Afonjá* fail to supplant *Engenho Velho*. However, through skillful manipulation of existing centers of power within the Bahian society, both of these temples eventually had their days in the sun as nationally recognized spiritual leaders across Brazil. Through it all, however, both maintained their legitimacy to claim these positions through their historic ties and relationships to *Engenho Velho*.

Over the years, many temples proliferated across Bahia and the nation. But again, just as the hometowns of the Yoruba in West Africa, they all sought claims to legitimacy through a direct historical connection to *Engenho Velho* or indirectly through *Gantois* or *Opó Afonjá*. Any other myth of origin simply did not carry the same weight in the eyes of other African-based religious communities, and thus they would be relegated to a second-class existence constantly struggling to justify their own legitimacy deserving of large followings and generous benefactors.

Another interesting point of comparison between these divergent Yoruba groups was the ways in which these women physically constructed their new institutions. In Africa, the hometown formed the basis for individual and collective identity. Within the hometowns however there were also varying sub-identities linked to the individual family compounds of which the towns were comprised, as the *Agbo Ile* were enclosed central spaces housing several families. The head of the compound and his wife were the masters of these communities. The heads of all the families residing within were obligated to pay deference to them in several ways, the most common being prostration at the feet of social superiors much the same way one would to

an *orixa*. The master of the compound thus held absolute authority within the gated community. He conducted all of its commercial and political affairs, resolved internal disputes, and meted out justice reinforcing the idea that notions of indisputable authority govern all of Yoruba society from the supernatural to the material plane.

The Yoruba religious communities of Bahia interestingly followed much the same pattern but adjusted it to fit their own unique context. The most obvious difference was the sex of the compound founders, with the most powerful Bahian Yoruba religious sites being created and led exclusively by women. Another difference was the expressed purpose of the Bahian compounds as sites of religious worship, not as physical shelters, though from time to time some did reside in the temple permanently or semipermanently. Yet in all of its other functions these temples represented an attempt at fusing out of practical necessity both the familial and the religious structures of Yoruba society into a coherent whole.

The American theologian Joseph Murphy described these compounds as "a consecrated privately owned area within the environs of Bahia, often walled or hedged, where ceremonies to the spirits take place.[49] It may be a large compound of many acres containing numerous shrines and sacred sites, or a simple building and yard screened from a city street." Kim Butler expanded on this notion by claiming that "the *terriero* (temple) was thus transformed from the groves and unclaimed spaces where the faithful gathered for special ceremonies to a new form as modern *quilombos* (fugitive slave communities) where fugitives from the mainstream society could find sanctuary in a new society of their own creation . . ."[50]

Both of these descriptions portray the religious community as an alternative space for the nurturing of a Yoruba-centered existence within what was supposed to be a heavily Europeanized society. Outside the compound walls, however, its members existed in a different reality, going to work, caring for children, and perhaps attending Sunday services at a local Catholic church. Yet within the compound they had to adhere to alternative forms of dress and social behavior as well as a strict hierarchy based on the indisputable authority of its spiritual leader. Some modifications however were necessary to ensure its functionality and survival.

While most religious and leadership positions in Yoruba society were based on birthright or age, in Bahia they were based on more modified spiritual concepts. In other words, by accepting initiation into a Yoruba-based religious home, one agreed to adopt a second family, referred to as their family in saint. The head of the compound

became known as the initiates' *Mãe de Santo* or Mother in saint, with all the responsibilities and obligations the title implies. In addition, age was based on one's date of initiation into the religion and not actual birth, thus ensuring that those with the most experience and knowledge in spiritual matters were placed above those possessing lesser degrees of both. Despite these differences, the compound itself functioned in much the same way a West African one might. The founder or leader of the compound was still the indisputable authority figure and exercised absolute power over their spiritual dependents. Outside the temple walls, however, only a select few maintained the same levels of deference and authority.

In addition to this, the leaders of the Bahian compounds often placed the same level of importance as their African counterparts on the desire to attract and maintain a large, devoted following. During my time in Bahia, I often found disgruntled devotees refer to the temples as prisons and their spiritual parents as slave drivers. This seemed to imply that a certain degree of coercion might be needed to maintain their followers just as it did in West Africa. While this represented the views of a small minority of candomble practitioners, it is worth noting for comparison's sake.

Bahian temples were often judged by the size of their membership and the number of *filhos de santo* (children in saint) their leaders initiated. These leaders used various techniques to attach them to their community alone. Many viewed the defection or merely the perceived defection of one member to another temple or religion as an immediate loss of status on the part of the former temple and its leader.[51] Such defections were often vehemently discouraged. Sometimes members of one temple even expressed fear at just being seen visiting a rival site of worship. As one can imagine, there always existed a certain level of political intrigue and competition between the varied compounds for recognition of their "authenticity" and the size of the followings these Big Women attracted. Often this resulted in bitter disputes or personal rivalries between temple leaders and while most were too gracious or guarded to admit their feelings publicly these disputes were far from the biggest of their secrets.

In terms of religious organization, however, there were striking differences that made these Bahian communities unique. First, as was mentioned, the *orixa* of various Yoruba localities were consolidated into a pantheon that all temples worshipped. Each temple might have a designated "*dono*" or spiritual owner of the house such as *Oxossi* in the case of *Gantois* or *Xangó* in *Engenho Velho*, but all the *orixa* of the pantheon were maintained at the temple and worshipped in an

annual ritual calendar. While this might have originally been done out of practical necessity it might also have been a by-product of the most striking difference between the Old and New World communities—that being the dominant role taken on by women.

What should be clear by now is how remarkably compatible and advantageous Yoruba women's roles and socially conditioned positions in society were within the Brazilian slave state of the nineteenth century. For one, Yoruba women already had ample experience functioning in urban, commercial environments such as Salvador. In addition, some also had a working knowledge of how markets functioned and the creative mechanisms one might employ to make them work for one's own benefit. Therefore, Yoruba women in Salvador were able to acquire a fairly high degree of financial independence working in varied professions.

Once enough money was saved and private property secured for the institutional base, the re-creation of these Yoruba communities began to take shape under female direction. Since it was a necessity for women to take on positions of power and leadership in traditional Yoruba religion, it would on the surface seem that this would not be unusual. What was unusual here however was the almost complete disregard for male leadership on any institutional level in the early years of the Big Three's founding. For, as Rachel Harding uncovered, while women in the nineteenth century made up approximately 65 percent of candomble devotees men represented close to 62 percent of those identified as temple leaders. By 1888, however, as slavery ended and the Big Three increased in stature, female leadership rates increased to 41 percent.[52] In spite of this reality, some Yoruba temples have allowed male initiations and full participation in public ritual only relatively recently. Men were still used in vital roles such as carrying out blood sacrifice rituals or drumming but these were done mainly though auxiliary roles known as *Ogans* who did not function on the same level of the religious hierarchy as the female leadership did.[53] In fact, women's domination in the higher levels of Yoruba-based religious and institutional power in Bahia was so complete that by the early twentieth century several academics and researchers concluded that only homosexual men were drawn to the Yoruba priesthood. Melville Herskovits and others hotly disputed this idea by urging them to undertake a more complete understanding of how these traditions functioned in Africa.[54]

The most notable usurpation of male dominance however was through the marginalization of the male religious figure known as the *babalawo*. The *babalawo* were considered among the oldest and

most vital spiritual figures in Yoruba traditional religious practice. They alone were the guardians and interpreters of the *Ifa* corpus, a collection of myths and legends that through the art of divination were employed to facilitate communication between the *orixa* and humans.[55] Without such divinatory practices, Yoruba religion would be fundamentally altered, a dilemma surely not lost on the founding priestesses in Bahia.

Deep within candomble myths and legends many powerful male figures working as *babalawos* in Bahia are remembered and their names often recited during ritual practice. There was the powerful Bamboxê Obitikô revered as a founding figure of the Ketu traditions of Salvador. In addition, there was Bamboxê's close relative Felisberto Sowzer or Benzinho, linked to *Engenho Velho* and its founding mothers and of course the legendary Martiniano do Bomfim, a source for most of the leading candomble researchers of the 1930s and devoted companion of Mãe Aninha of *Opó Afonjá*. Yet while enjoying immense prestige among candomble practitioners, these men paled in comparison to the power exercised by the women they were associated with. For over time, these women gradually modified the tradition of divination to include simpler forms that did not require the *babalawo* thus eliminating their absolute necessity. The figure of the *babalawo* in Bahia gradually became more legend than reality and was employed by the temples only when absolutely necessary or to resolve disputes involving succession to power after the passing of a leader. By the twentieth century, many feared that the traditional figure of the *babalawo* had disappeared.

A great deal of this early female dominance could be explained by the greater freedom of movement and economic opportunities available to female slaves. Thus while male slaves and free Africans were monitored by the authorities much more closely, women, by exercising traditional Yoruba gender roles in a more flexible manner, came to dominate the compounds of the Big Three. In terms of the meaning this may hold for current practitioners, I am unsure but it gives us a fascinating glimpse into the historical implications this may have for modern gender relations within candomble communities. Surely women are still accorded a much higher position of authority and independence within the compounds than in the outside world.

Over time, these structures remained remarkably consistent though in the twentieth century, the meaning they held and the functions they performed gradually transformed as two processes began to simultaneously gain ground. One was the eventual decline of the African-born population of Bahia and the assumption of power

by an entirely Brazilian-born religious hierarchy and following, thus requiring a new set of survival mechanisms. The other was the severe backlash waged against African-based cultural institutions in general and candomble in particular. For the Bahian elite, of all racial backgrounds, these communities were viewed as a fundamental threat to the development of a modern, Western-oriented society based on the ideals of European liberalism. Many even of African descent saw the continuance of African culture and ritual in Bahia as an impediment to their own desires for social mobility and acceptance by the lighter-skinned ruling elite as well. These challenges forced many in the candomble world to develop more creative and aggressive forms of self-defense to which we will now turn our attention.

Chapter 4

Self-Defense Strategies in Bahian Candomble in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

As the Western world neared the final century of the millennium, a war between the saints raged not only in the hearts and minds of many of Salvador's citizens but also in its streets. There, on an almost weekly basis, angry intellectuals and members of Bahia's enlightened elite confronted the battle cries of ancient polyrhythmic drums of spiritual conquest heard across the multitude of *bairros* that made up Brazil's once capital city. Mobilizing for what many felt was a definitive conflict between modernity and their own barbaric past, the Bahian elite called upon all of their collective power and paramilitary might to eliminate the scourge that had ruined their international reputation. Theirs, however, was a reaction out of desperation. The battle, they feared, was already lost, carrying with it disastrous consequences for them all.

Initially the hierarchy of the local Catholic authorities thought they were gaining ground in this contest through the introduction of the brotherhoods designed to incorporate the African *nações* into the rigidly constructed hierarchy of their Iberian colonial masters. And while the brotherhoods may have succeeded in creating an outwardly Catholic aesthetic among a certain segment of the Afro-Bahian population, in reality they served as vital training grounds for those who eventually institutionalized Yoruba-based centers of religious thought and worship. Rapidly these institutions multiplied, creating a patchwork of African-based religious institutions. While following similar institutional models, they developed into a wide range of diverse spiritual paths struggling to build and maintain loyal followings connected to the legitimacy of the Big Women of Salvador.

And while the outcome of this competition was unclear to those who opposed this vision of a pluralistic, African-based society, it did not deter them from launching a ferocious attack in defense of a Eurocentric vision of the future. With each new attack, Afro-Bahians deployed strategies of resistance in cunning and intelligent ways to protect the greater interests of their larger communities. The Big Women of the Big Three in particular became quite adept at manipulating and making use of existing structures of higher-level political and economic power to preserve such interests. In the process, they gained momentum and eventual success in creating a climate of acceptance of a modern, re-Africanized Bahian society based largely on their version of Yoruba-based religious philosophies.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, members of Salvador's elite and professional classes launched an aggressive, sensationalistic media campaign and several pieces of legislation designed to sully the reputation of candomble and pressure the police to violently repress the "fetish cults" they found so offensive to their modernizing sensibilities. As a result, widespread police repression and violence took hold, including the harassment, brutalization, imprisonment, and desecration of sacred spaces of a certain class of candomble practitioners.

After the fall of the Brazilian monarchy in 1889, the nation's new republican constitution paid lip service to the ideals of the separation of church and state by declaring religious practice a matter of personal privacy protected by law.[1] According to Paul Johnson, African religions were of great concern to the newly formed republican elite who sidestepped any potential constitutional disputes by declaring them a matter of public health and therefore under the jurisdiction of law enforcement bodies.[2] Many of the uninformed just viewed this as part of an overall project of national modernization designed to deal with the communal problems of public hygiene in the nation's urban centers. By 1890, the new provisional government, being careful not to openly contradict the nation's new legal framework, redrafted parts of the Penal Code. Articles 156, 157, and 158 criminalized the unlicensed practice of medicine, long considered some of the most dangerous components of African traditional religious practices.[3]

Interestingly, Julio Braga noted that by the 1920s, in order to avoid police persecution, several leaders of African-based religious groups designated their temples as "Spiritist Centers" with a licensed medical practitioner as their designated leader.[4] These rather creative defense mechanisms were largely ineffective, however, as the authorities could always fall back on the rather open-ended 1893, Law 173, which

regulated religious associations and guaranteed full legal protections only to those "that did not promote illicit and immoral ends."[5] By the first decades of the twentieth century, the combined efforts of the newly formed Service of Administrative Hygiene of the Union and the grip the newly popularized Positivist doctrine held over the nation's enlightened classes placed some pressure on local law enforcement to raid candomble temples. As these actions made clear, the newly proclaimed freedom of religion could be circumvented by denying the true nature of African-based spirituality, defining them merely as practitioners of false medicine.[6]

Against this continuously developing backdrop, anxious agents of the new modernizing vanguard took to the streets, as the 1888 abolition of slavery now required them to share the same legal and physical space as those by whom they had once measured their own superiority. In particular, an entire generation of sensationalistic journalists exposed the location of candomble centers that they uncovered either through their own efforts or in the letters of concerned citizens. As one devoted "patriot" pleaded to the editors of the Bahian daily *Jornal de Noticias* in May of 1897, he wanted to "call to the attention of whoever is responsible for the disappearance of this religious spectacle practiced by African idolaters (*fetishitas*) which day by day take deeper root in this land."[7]

At other times, journalists took it upon themselves to publish accounts of candomble centers operating without disruption or fear in the hope that concerned readers would pressure local law enforcement to raid and shut down the locales. In October 1896, one reader informed the *Diario de Noticias* "that for the past six days, on the site known as Gantois, there has been functioning a rather large candomble gathering. The trolleys of the *Linha Circular e Transportes* pass through midday until five in the evening with people destined for this locale." To further enrage the good citizens of Salvador into action, the paper continued, "We have also just been informed that among the people who have gone to appreciate the candomble, we believe, are a police official, several patrolmen and some secret agents of the same police force."[8] In this instance, the editors' pressure tactics bore fruit as they reported the following day the police planned to shut down the temple. In all likelihood, though, they did not. The paper's mention of the presence of several police officials and officers at the candomble house was a clear nod to its editor's emerging middle-class sensibilities and support for the national efforts toward modernization. From their perspective, only the pressure of an enlightened readership would force the police (many of whom came from the same

social classes as most candomble participants) into action. Clearly, a certain number of them did not necessarily view these gatherings as being quite the disruptive force that the paper's editors did.

Because Article 72 of the Brazilian constitution expressly protected the individual's right to free religious expression, there also remained for the police a certain hesitancy about the legality of raiding or closing candomble centers. And despite the fact that many of Bahia's legal scholars and judges no doubt agreed with the notion that religious freedom was never intended to apply to black Africans, there did remain a strong desire to avoid such potentially embarrassing confrontations over the issue. Surely in Bahia, there were people much higher up on the chain of command than the ambiguous "police official" designated in the *Diario de Noticias* who also employed candomble as a spiritual option.[9]

Therefore, a much more urgent and legally sound justification than the assertion by *Diario da Bahia* in December 1896 that "for many days the *batucajes* (drums) in one of the *terreiros* of *Engenho Velho* have reigned supreme, disturbing the populace with the clamorous noises of the *tabaques* and *chocalhos*" was necessary.[10] Increasingly Bahian tabloids amped up the pressure on the police to take action. They published sensationalized accounts of predatory charlatans practicing false medicine, sequestering young women against the wishes of their parents, and most disturbingly, in fits of orgiastic debauchery, manipulating the forces of black magic for personal profit.

It is important to note, however, that some of the harshest critics of candomble, and many of the officers charged with eliminating it, came from the Afro-Bahian community itself. Not surprisingly, in a society where the vast majority was of African descent, social hierarchical structures were most often based not on racial but rather on cultural distinctions. These constructs consisted of those who had fully assimilated into a Europeanized version of Bahian culture and those who insisted on maintaining an African or as has been suggested, Yoruba-based Afro-Bahian identity.

For example, in 1863, the Afro-Bahian journalist and social critic Aristides Ricardo de Santana took over the position of editor in chief of the short-lived newspaper, *O Alabama*. Taking the name of a doomed Confederate naval vessel that had briefly docked in Salvador, *O Alabama* identified itself as a "critical and humorous" publication designed to address such pressing issues as abolition, racial prejudice, and discrimination, with a design toward offering a counterpoint to the elitist and often reactionary political culture of Bahia's political elite.[11]

As Dale Graden points out in his analysis of the editorial stance in *O Alabama* toward candomble in the mid to late nineteenth century, de Santana was representative of a larger group of upper- and middle-class Afro-Bahian intellectuals who desired acceptance into the progressive, liberal mainstream. Hence, they condemned these religious practices as a destabilizing force in Bahian society, one that undermined the progress of the nation and blacks in particular because it "threatened patriarchal domination, social tranquility in Salvador and Roman Catholic values and traditions."[12] And while the paper devoted many column inches to the undesirable elements drawn to candomble houses, such as runaway slaves and Afro-Bahian veterans of the Paraguayan War now helping their compatriots avoid military conscription, it seems plausible that what they feared most was a vision of modernity based on Yoruba-derived philosophies as opposed to the elite-driven processes *O Alabama* clearly preferred. The fact that many candomble temples favored Conservative political agendas and political candidates surely contributed to their views of them being culturally backward and degenerate institutions.[13]

The journalistic style of writers at *O Alabama* therefore tended to mirror that of their more mainstream liberal counterparts and while it was clearly critical of candomble, it was far from humorous. "Most ignorant of our population, principally those persons descended from the African race," wrote one such contributor in March 1867, "are given to the practice of candomble, where they go to read fortunes, lift up their heads and involve themselves in other extravagant pursuits."[14] The writer proceeded to mimic the sensationalistic mood of the era by lamenting "this year the police consented to such revelry on a large scale in several locations around this city, where the terreiros attract an immense number of Africans and people of different classes and even persons in influential positions."[15] What clearly perturbed the editors at *O Alabama* and other newspapers were those of their own supposedly enlightened and progressive social classes who were frequenting candomble houses, thereby falling under their corrupting influences. A similar complaint had emerged one year earlier in August 1866 when police failed to shut down a candomble gathering in the house of an African identified as Julia where "no one was able to sleep because of the infernal sounds they made. The house attracts creole and mulatto women and men who have the reputation of being serious (and responsible citizens.)"[16]

In 1864, yet another example of the paper's futile attempt at prompting the authorities into action appeared. In this case, the chief of police was urged to shut down a candomble house known as

Dendezeiro because "these blacks had offered solace to uneducated people, including Portuguese born inhabitants of Salvador, who believed following such advice would help them."[17]

Such criticisms reflected many different fears operating on several levels. Aside from the obvious fear of so-called serious and responsible citizens and police officials frequenting these pagan rituals was the outrage at the presence of the creole and mulatto women who, by virtue of having been born in Brazil, should have been freed from the shackles of barbarity gripping the African-born population. Aside from this was the fear common among nineteenth-century liberals of the backward and conservative bias that religious leadership could impose on a populace not under the direction of government-operated schools that stressed the power of science, intellectual growth, and the blind patriotic loyalty necessary for projects of national development.

In Bahia, it seemed that the candombles represented a serious threat to all of these values. Interestingly, Roger Bastide, writing much later, expressed an opposing view by suggesting that "the stronger their attachment to candomble, the more successful their integration into Brazilian society."[18] The critics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, were constricted by their narrowly defined vision of what Bahian society was or could be, thus preventing them from realizing the potentially self-destructive nature of the struggle they were waging.

These critics of candomble were fairly effective in mobilizing pressure on the police to act more aggressively. By the 1920s, under the direction of Assistant Police Chief Pedro Azevedo Gordilho, who later achieved literary infamy in the Bahian novelist Jorge Amado's 1969 work *Tent of Miracles*, the authorities waged a merciless and brutal campaign of repression against certain segments of Salvador's candomble practitioners. Temples were raided, religious altars and icons destroyed or confiscated, and many spiritual leaders became more and more accustomed to the inside of a jail cell. All the while the police continued to be guided to their targets by a seemingly endless flow of newspaper accounts; letters to the editor; and citizen complaints giving names, addresses, and the specific violations of law allegedly committed by the temples.

In a precursor to the more sensationalistic methods of some modern journalists, respected newspapers such as *A Tarde* and *Diario da Bahia* sent reporters to accompany the police on their raids of candomble sites. They then published their accounts under headlines such as "When the *Atabaques* ring: The police and a reporter in an

African sanctuary," and "It is now necessary to cleanse the city of the lairs."[19] Another proclaimed, "Bahia, despite its elevated level of culture is a city full of *mucambos* and *candombles*," and "Gutter spirituality is claiming each day more victims. No other city in Brazil possesses such reprehensible customs as does Bahia."[20] On August 28, 1928, *A Tarde* regrettably reported, "These rituals are still cultivated in our midst," and that while accompanying Colonel Octavio Freitas on a raid in the *Rio Vermelho* section of the city that "*candomble* houses . . . in which boys and girls were imprisoned in large numbers," they encountered a large gathering of "unkempt people denoting exhaustion and fatigue causing them to lay in infected beds in considerable numbers."[21] In a self-indulgent fit of progressive paternalism, the account reminded its readers: "and so it is day and night as successively they pervert young and old, women and children, whose lack of education does not permit them to repel the influence of this pernicious sect, prohibited by the Vice Police (*policia de costumes*). Yesterday's diligence was a crowning success but it must be followed by others in the remaining districts."[22]

In January of the following year, yet another valiant journalist risking life and limb for the souls of respectable citizens reported in the *Diario da Bahia*, "In spite of being one of the largest centers of national culture . . . possessing numerous high schools, kindergartens, teaching colleges and universities . . . Bahia still has a rather large number of illiterates, millions of people given over to ignorance and all the consequences of this state of mental blindness."[23] He then proclaimed, "The press has on numerous occasions described these sessions of Satanism . . . Bahia is no longer an entrepot of slaves as it was in colonial times. It is one of the wealthiest capitals in the country. Extinguish from her, once and for all, the fetishism."[24] Alas, Bahia was no longer one of the nation's crown jewels as our intrepid reporter had wished it to be. It was by then an increasingly marginal region of a rapidly developing nation watching with increasing anxiety, no doubt, as precious resources, labor, and prestige drifted south toward Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo taking with them Bahia's political influence. It seemed to some that candomble only contributed to that decline.

This sentiment was echoed by yet another editorial appearing this time in *A Noite*. A classic representation of the journalistic style of the era, its publishers proclaimed, "The level of civilization that we have attained, can no longer support the practices of these totally ignorant individuals. Bahia, for example, much more so now through its material progress, still preserves some of these practices originating

from imbecile Africans."[25] The editorial concluded by stating, "We are convinced that we must extinguish from our midst these condemnable beliefs which are not compatible with civilization. The police must before these idolaters return, peruse them, extinguish them."[26] And if that was not enough, the paper directed the police to take actions against some of the male-headed candomble houses such as those of "Cypriano de tal in *Mata Escura*, Bernardino dos Santos (and those) in locations named *Brejo da Fazenda Grande* and *Pitangueiras*, where the individuals Bonifacio, João and Franciso de tal work with *candombles*."[27]

What this aggressive and irresponsible brand of journalism also reflected, however, was a larger intellectual movement to bring Bahia in line with projects of national development taking place across Latin America whose elite classes struggled with their own obsession for modernity and their dismay about the reality of their own racially heterogeneous and in the case of Bahia, heavily Africanized societies. It is an attitude best expressed by the thoughts of a man the American researcher Ruth Landes encountered during her stays in Bahia in the 1930s when an employee at the American consulate told her, "The blacks are always holding secret meetings, killing animals, dancing and beating drums in the jungle in the dead of night…We'll never get anywhere as a nation until the temples are gone!" The man only identified as Jorge lamented, however, "Wherever you go you meet somebody who takes part in *candomble* or believes in it. Even the police believe in it."[28]

At an earlier point in time, the Brazilian government believed that encouraging European immigration would put the nation on a proper course. As the population gradually whitened, it would filter out the racial and cultural impurities holding it back. But few immigrants were drawn to the economically depressed northeast preferring instead the rapidly developing and more dynamic south.[29] This form of "Scientific Racism" as many now refer to it, included some brief attempts at eugenic reform, which many hoped would eventually extinguish all vestiges of African influence ushering in a brighter and whiter future for Brazil. The Africans and their descendants, it seemed, were not destined to be part of this new society. However, as Thomas Skidmore has noted, this trend was simply intellectually incompatible with Brazil's reality and although many remained convinced the strategy showed signs of working, it never completely took hold in the minds of the intelligentsia.[30]

The northeast of Brazil, with its largely rural economy based on production for local or regional markets rather than the more lucrative

export-oriented crops, found it hard to attract many immigrants. In addition, Bahia's heavy concentration of Afro-Bahian residents and the seemingly impenetrable cultural legacies with which many of them identified made any process of whitening, cultural or otherwise, virtually impossible. However, there developed alongside an intellectual trend toward a deeper understanding and appreciation for what some called Brazil's "black problem."

Writing in the late nineteenth century, the Bahian ethnographer and essayist Silvio Romero wrote, "The black man is not merely a beast of burden but rather an object of science."[31] He later lamented the fact that the Portuguese had regular contact with India for over two hundred years "but left to the English the glory of deciphering the Sanskrit."[32] Romero worried that the same fate would befall the dying Africans of Bahia whose languages, customs, and traditions had up until then gone unstudied and unrecorded by those who had lived side by side with them for generations.

Nina Rodrigues, a self-identified white Brazilian studying forensic medicine at the Medical College of Bahia, had long been interested in this "black problem" and found inspiration in the words of Romero. Rodrigues had been conducting his own research within Bahia's African populations since the 1880s where he developed an interest in spirit possession, which he viewed through the lens of what the medical community referred to as hysteria. According to accepted logic of the time, hysteria was not supposed to exist in black people. Ultimately Rodrigues came to the conclusion that the poor intellectual development of blacks combined with the exhaustion and anxiety of their religious rituals did in fact bring on such hysteria in both the African and Brazilian born. In both instances, however, African religion, from his point of view, represented some sort of psychological phenomenon that could be cured or, hence, eventually disappear.[33]

Rodrigues, through his contact with the African and, in particular, the Yoruba communities of Bahia, soon developed a taste for ethnography. Having been invited into the previously discussed *Gantois* temple in the late nineteenth century, Rodrigues began the first detailed ethnography of an African-based community in Bahia and consequently laid the foundation of what became among academics an explicit Yorubacentric view of African culture and religion in Brazil. In his two published works, *O Animismo Fetishita dos Negros Bahianos* published in installments in 1896 and 1897 and *Os Africanos no Brasil* published posthumously in 1932, Rodrigues wrote that Brazilians had an obligation to study its African residents

because they had become "such a large part of the country and its culture."[34]

While Rodrigues was convinced that the existence of African religions in Brazil was proof that these groups were actively resisting assimilation into the perceived superiority of a Europeanized model of Brazilian culture, he was sure that simultaneously, there had to be a certain degree of acculturation taking place. Rodrigues was confident that over time, these primitive African religions would disappear as the African-born population died off. He did, however, see a much quicker solution to this problem in the detailed study of African groups who colonized the nation as well as native-born blacks and multiracial groups known collectively as *mestiços.*[35] This type of comparative study, what twentieth-century researcher Edison Carneiro called the "Nina Rodrigues School," was the first of its kind. It demonstrated an attempt to identify definitive cultural survivals maintained by Africans living in Bahia by studying their culture in its "pure" African state.[36]

Using the works of Spix and Martius who maintained that the majority of Africans in Brazil were of "Bantu stock," Rodrigues easily identified Bantu cultural survivals in Bahia. However, it was the group Rodrigues initially called the "Sudanese" whom he felt possessed a superior and more fluid culture that maintained the most significant and consistent cultural survivals. He believed they were capable of being compared to those of ancient Rome and Greece.[37] Making use of published sources such as the now largely discredited travel accounts of the British naval officer Colonel Ellis, he soon began to make rather strong connections between the religious practices he observed in Bahia and those Ellis observed in Yorubaland in Nigeria.[38] Relying on his African-born informants, Rodrigues was also able to document the numerous African *nações* in and around Salvador but it was clear he saw the Yoruba as possessing the superior culture. He noted with frequency how even though aspects of Jeje religion had survived in Bahia they had borrowed heavily from Yoruba traditions and even worshipped several Yoruba *orixas.*[39] While documenting the existence of at least 12 African languages and 41 dialects spoken in Bahia he also observed that all of his subjects also spoke Yoruba, the language he claimed allowed the various African *nações* to more easily communicate with each other.[40]And in a final act of loyalty to his Yoruba companions, Rodrigues declared that Bantu culture and religion, once identified as being the most widespread of all African influences in Brazil, had all but disappeared.[41]

Rodrigues's goal was to explain why African customs were not disappearing as he thought they should. In the process, he left behind the only detailed account of many of these practices and the people who employed them but as João Reis has pointed out Rodrigues ignored completely or did not see the need to publish any historical analysis or narratives from his informants.[42] In addition while many have called his research methods into question, he is now largely credited with creating the impression that the Yoruba alone were the only organized form of "authentic" African ritual surviving in Bahia.[43] As he wrote in the 1890s, "The Nagô (Yoruba) blacks possess a true and already complex mythology explaining all of the natural elements . . . (and) . . . a highly elevated concept which in its highest form reveals its capacity for abstract religiosity."[44]

This emphasis placed on a "true" religion being practiced in its purest form situated the Yoruba in an exalted position when compared to their counterparts from other *nações* labeled as practitioners of black magic and superstition. Interestingly Graden notes that the editors of *O Alabama*, in their attack on the *Dendenzeiro* candomble, made it a point to emphasize that it was an Angolan temple and not one belonging to the more civilized and culturally sophisticated Yoruba tradition. In addition, as Graden points out, this predates Rodrigues's supposed creation of Yorubacentric thought among researchers by almost three decades, thus suggesting that this bias may reach farther back into the past than previously believed.[45]

While Rodrigues's major work remained unpublished for over two decades after his death in 1906, the impact it had on the study of African culture and communities in Bahia was immense. Entire generations of researchers from various disciplines frequently called on his initial publications. While many did, in fact, criticize his research methods as simplistic and accuse him of not attempting nearly enough critical analysis or interpretation of the information he collected, his methodology of using comparative studies and his firm belief that the study of African culture and religion held immense value for understanding modern Brazilian society, influenced countless scholars.[46]

Among the first to pick up on Rodrigues's work after his death was the Afro-Bahian abolitionist Manuel Querino. Once one of Rodrigues's initial informants, Querino soon became one of the first black writers to research, document, and defend the contribution of Africans to Brazilian society. His work, *A raça Africana e os seus costumes na Bahia*, was completed in 1916 and republished along with several other pieces in 1938, nearly 15 years after his own passing.[47]

Using similar methods, structures, and sources, as Rodrigues once did, Querino provided an outline of the role blacks played in the national formation of Brazil by focusing on their religious, culinary, and cultural legacies. Where Querino differed from Rodrigues and what may have inspired him to begin conducting his own research was his firm belief that the African influence on Brazilian national development was an intrinsically positive development. Rodrigues, on the other hand, saw the impact of African culture on the nation as something "that would always constitute one of the factors of our inferiority as a people."[48]

It was not until 1933 when the Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre published his widely influential work *Casa Grande e Senzala* that the nation's academics once again turned their attention to the "black problem" that had greatly concerned Rodrigues. While clearly emphasizing culture over race, Freyre shifted his focus, however, by suggesting that the solutions to these so-called problems lay not in studying African cultural survivals. Rather, Freyre suggested that it was the institution of slavery that held the key to unlocking these mysteries. Emphasizing the comparatively benign nature of Brazilian slavery, Freyre suggested that it was within the confines of the rural *fazendas* that Brazilian identity and culture were shaped through consistent and mostly respectful interactions between slaves and masters. Thus Freyre declared that Brazil, unlike the United States, for example, had evolved into what he labeled a "racial democracy" avoiding the racial strife and violence so common elsewhere.[49] However as the material and political conditions of Afro-Brazilians failed to improve as the twentieth century wore on, the notion of the "racial democracy" and its idealized version of Brazilian society was frequently called into question.[50]

By organizing the first Afro-Brazilian conference in 1934, Freyre did, however, give a "new style and flavor to Afro-Brazilian studies freeing it from academic or scientific elitism . . . devoid of any intellectual or scientific discipline and without social meaning beyond the facts."[51] In reality, this 1934 Recife Congress was an eclectic collection of interests with presentations ranging from "the Myths of *Xangô* and their degradation in Brazil" to one on the "Biotypological Study of normal and delinquent blacks and mulattos." Still others focused on musicology and theater along with the use of marijuana by blacks in Pernambuco. Freyre summed all of this up when he added that "the participation of illiterates, cooks, candomble priests alongside that of the doctors gave a new force to these studies."[52] Interestingly, as Romo has pointed out, the 1934 congress coincided

with the opening of Brazil's first university but there remained no humanities programs until 1942. As a result congresses such as this were made up largely of self-trained academics attempting to come together to develop standard fields of study and research. The upside, however, of such a setting, according to Romo, was "a disciplinary focus on culture (and) a more democratic means for discussions of the black contribution to Brazil."[53]

Freyre's conference, therefore, ushered in during the 1930s and 1940s a golden age of research into Brazil's African past and future as amateur and professional academics from the natural and social sciences, along with writers, poets, and artists, focused their attention on a variety of issues related to the Afro-Brazilian experience. It was within this wave of academic pursuits that Artur Ramos, who had moved to Bahia from Alagoas in 1921 to attend the medical college, became one of the leading researchers of his time.

Like Rodrigues, Ramos was also a student of forensic medicine and clinical psychology. Initially, he attempted to interpret African-based religious practices using psychoanalytical frameworks. African myth and ritual, Ramos believed, had become deeply ingrained into the Afro-Bahian collective unconscious where they were manifested within an Oedipal or narcissistic framework.[54] Soon, however, he abandoned this approach in favor of ethnography for he felt it was more appropriate for understanding and eventually integrating black culture into Brazilian life.

Ramos's first major ethnographic work, *As Culturas Negras no Novo Mundo*, published in 1937 (the same year of the Second Afro-Brazilian Congress) distinguished him from the earlier writings of Rodrigues in several ways. Ramos, for one, saw no value in studying races but rather felt that the study of cultures held more value in attempting to understand to what degree the process of acculturation was occurring within the black population. As he explicitly stated, so great were the differences between African cultures that there is "no such thing as an African man."[55] Ramos, who was well known for his antiracist stances, refuted most of the commonly held racial stereotypes of Afro-Brazilians as savage fetishists and adulterers. Instead, he preferred to view the situation through the lens of cultural relativity rather than the commonly accepted notion of inferior or superior cultures.

While criticizing the Yorubacentric views of Rodrigues, Ramos also expressed frustration with the motivations of other researchers who were engaged in what he felt were overtly political projects and were not therefore viewing African-based communities as human subjects. As Ramos put it, African and Afro-American studies should not be

taken as a passing fad to further personal political agendas but rather as permanent fixtures within the nation or "*material da casa*."[56]

Ramos, however, did embrace the comparative framework of Rodrigues and, hoping to add more depth to the subject, expanded upon it to examine African-based cultures in Cuba, Haiti, Guyana, and the Southern United States.[57] In doing so, he fell under some heavy criticism from his long-time friend and co-organizer of the 1937 Afro-Brazilian Congress, Edison Carneiro. Carneiro, a self-described Bahian-born mulatto, was a journalist by trade but published an immense body of research on the African-based communities of Brazil. Like his father, Souza Carneiro, who had also published an ethnographic work on certain aspects of African cultures in Brazil, he was critical of Ramos for his earlier psychoanalytical approach which he felt gave an impression that blacks were "sick and mentally deficient."[58] Furthermore, Carneiro often chided his friend Ramos for not doing enough to advance the works of Romero, Rodrigues, or Querino and called for others to join him in a reexamination of these earlier writings (Figure 4.1).

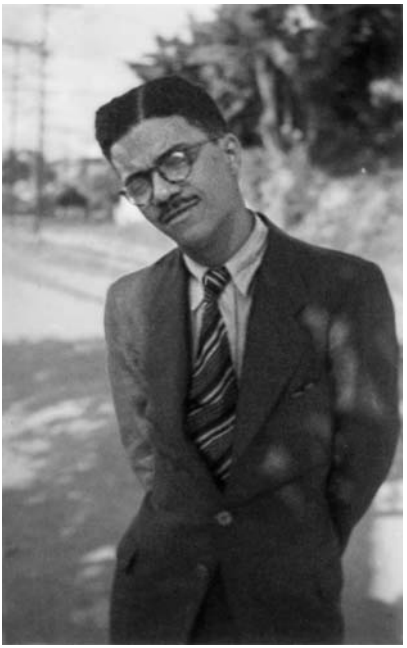

Figure 4.1 Edison Carneiro. Photo courtesy: Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archive, Ruth Landes Papers.

In the end, however, Carneiro recognized the difficulty in realizing his ambitions due to the fact that historical evidence, except for the time of slavery, was hard to come by. Imploring his contemporaries to view Afro-Bahians as human beings, "Brazilian in all aspects of their behavior" and not as outsiders, Carneiro stepped outside the boundaries of pure academic research to organize political campaigns to legally protect and preserve these African-based religions from extinction.[59]

The second part of this golden age in Afro-American studies and research was dominated by a growing number of foreign academics eager to study Freyre's racial democracy firsthand and compare it to their own societies. American sociologists and anthropologists such as Donald Pierson, Lorenzo Turner, E. Franklin Frazier, and Ruth Landes were deeply intrigued by Freyre's concepts and had many occasions to discuss them with him personally as he worked alongside Franz Boas at Columbia University in the 1930s. All would conduct sometimes-lengthy fieldwork in Bahia often making use of the same informants and research sites.

Pierson, in 1935 one of the first to arrive, was deeply influenced by Freyre's assertions, and in his work, *Negroes in Brazil* published in 1942, reiterated the benign nature of Brazilian slavery and noted his fascination with "Brazil's large black population with no race problem."[60]

While the candomble houses were not Pierson's primary concern, he did make note of them frequently and interviewed several prominent religious figures in the Yoruba-based communities. But he viewed their frequent use of Catholic imagery as reason not to see them as survivals of an African past. Since Pierson was not particularly interested in questions of culture preferring instead to focus on modern-day race relations, it should not be surprising that he reached such an ill-informed conclusion.

Two more American researchers, E. Franklin Frazier and Lorenzo Turner, followed Pierson's research. Both men published articles in national academic journals that relied heavily on the same principal informants as Pierson's but they led to very different conclusions.[61] Turner, a historian, documented the ongoing contact and exchanges that Brazilian ex-slaves had with Nigeria, while Frazier, a sociologist, was more interested in Afro-Bahian family structures. As L. Roland Matory has argued, in the process, black Americans added to the theory of Yoruba exceptionalism when it came to cultural purity and the overall sophistication of their culture.[62]

Both Turner and Frazier made frequent references to the rich historical legacies of the Yoruba kingdoms, their propensity toward

an urban existence, complex religious and family structures, and in the case of Bahia, the high levels of social, political, and economic power wielded by the *Mães de Santo* who ruled the Big Three Yoruba-based temples who, Frazier noted, were "regarded as the head of the community."[63]

It was these women in particular who became the focus of another American researcher, the anthropologist Ruth Landes. Much like her contemporaries, Landes, the child of Russian Jewish immigrants from New York, traveled to Bahia to examine the state of Brazilian race relations. Arriving in 1938, she noticed that the candomble centers had become the focus of attention for those researching in this field, and due to the foundation earlier writers had laid down, the Yoruba-based temples attracted the lion's share.

As a result, Landes became drawn to these houses and was fascinated by the power and independence women enjoyed within the confines of the terreiros. Her own work, *The City of Women*, which was published in 1947, focused primarily on *Gantois*, the same source utilized by Rodrigues, Querino, Ramos, and countless others. Now considered a classic example of an early ethnographic work focusing on race and gender, Landes fell under harsh criticism from Africanists who felt her lack of training in the field led to some outlandish conclusions about the nature of the culture she was examining. Landes was one of the first writers to describe candomble houses as entirely headed by women and noted that many of the male religious figures leading primarily non-Yoruba–based sites were either homosexual or transvestites.[64] While her personal guide and lover, Carneiro, defended her work, Artur Ramos, while acknowledging her genuine desire to truly understand the Afro-Bahian community, claimed Landes's conclusions were greatly exaggerated and her theories on matriarchy and homosexuality " would bring down regrettable confusion upon the honest and meticulously controlled studies on the character of the Negro in the New World."[65]

Carneiro responded to Ramos by suggesting Landes's work was on par with his own and that she was "more intelligent than either of us could imagine."[66] The harshest criticism she faced however came from the noted American anthropologist Melville Herskovits. Herskovits, whose influence dominated the second half of this golden age, was widely regarded as the preeminent expert in identifying African cultural survivals in the New World. His pioneering works on *Vodun* in Haiti and what were then called the Bush Negroes of Surinam had by that time become legendary for being

on the forefront to developing Afro-American culture as a unique field of study.[67]

Herskovits, in a review of Landes's work in the journal *American Anthropologist*, pointed to many of what he saw as major flaws in her work due to her lack of training in the Africanist field.[68] Herskovits, who relied more on the established comparative frameworks described earlier, had conducted lengthy fieldwork in West Africa, Haiti, Surinam, the Southern United States, and Brazil and had, according to Walter Jackson come "to see himself as an interpreter of Africa to Afro-Americans."[69] Herskovits clearly wanted to explore Africa to explain the cultural differences between blacks and whites while, as Sally Cole has pointed out, Landes studied Yoruba-based religion in Bahia "on its own terms."[70] In other words. Landes's lack of training in the field of African studies led her to believe she was indeed observing a uniquely Brazilian religion that while influenced heavily by African beliefs and customs, was a natural and complete part of the lives of her research subjects.

The beauty of Landes's interpretation of what she observed however is found in her conclusions about race and gender in Brazil through the lens of the Yoruba-based community of *Gantois*. There, she in fact observed a uniquely Afro-Bahian interpretation of nineteenth-century Yoruba family and religious structures as fully modern constructs for their time. Stephan Palmie, writing about Afro-Cuban religious and philosophical traditions, reached a similar conclusion suggesting that they are uniquely modern Caribbean expressions and not those of an ancient culture trying to survive within a western-oriented version of modernity.[71]

Thus Landes inadvertently stumbled into an interpretation of Afro-Bahian society that was several decades ahead of its time. The Big Women of the Big Three were expressing a version of Bahian modernity that employed Yoruba-based cultural and philosophical foundations, which were, in and of themselves, already modern and available to be employed in any multitude of changing contexts.

In the short term, however, it was Herskovits who exercised a heavier influence on the direction the study of these communities went. Drawn to Brazil because there was "no part of the New World where research into Afro-American culture has been carried out with greater intensity or continuity,"[72] Herskovits built upon the work of earlier researchers with an emphasis on cultural retentions for "if New World Negroes have met the impact of European culture without complete loss of ancestral traditions and behavior…there is little

reason to anticipate that Africans in Africa will not meet the far less massive attack on their way of life."[73]

In other words, Herskovits seemed to be turning the perspective of those like Rodrigues on its head by studying the interaction of European, African, and sometimes Indigenous cultures, to shed light on how a similar phenomenon might be operating in Africa itself. For example, Rodrigues writing in the nineteenth century was one of the first to observe and document a phenomenon many would later label syncretism.[74] With a keen eye, Rodrigues observed in *Gantois* not only iconographic works of art of the *orixas* but also a tendency to incorporate Catholic mythology and symbols into their own cosmology. Catholic saints such as *São Jorge*, the mythical dragon hunter, and the Yoruba *orixa* of the hunt, Oxossi, had become so deeply associated with each other that for some candomble participants they were in fact one and the same.[75]

Herskovits noted this same process in West Africa, Haiti, Cuba, and Brazil, making note of the long tradition of intertribal syncretism among West African groups. He then speculated that since similar patterns of religious adaptation had occurred in such diverse areas among similar ethnic groups it must mean that there existed "a psychological resilience as a deep rooted African tradition of adaptation . . . In Africa itself this suggests a study of intertribal acculturation which has tended to be overlooked."[76] Paul Lovejoy, who views them as "different population dispersals and re-groupings where influences not only have flowed reciprocally forwards and backwards from Africa to the Americas but also have circulated around the Atlantic World," best describes the influence of Herskovits on more modern studies of African diasporic communities.[77]

Returning to the early twentieth century however, another contemporary of Herskovits, the French sociologist Roger Bastide who defined his own work as "looking through the opposite end of the tube," praised Herskovits for recognizing that candomble be studied as a whole, not merely as a religion.[78] Bastide noted that the African-based religious communities had economic and sociological aspects that shaped and determined interactions between individuals and communities that could not be neglected if any study of them hoped to be complete. Bastide shared a belief with Herskovits that in Brazil, Portuguese culture was just as much an import as any African culture and surely must have undergone the same processes of reformation and reconstitution to meet the realities of a totally new environment. The argument fostered by both men therefore lends itself to a view of

European and African cultures as competing forms of modernity that could one day reach a certain level of peaceful coexistence.

By the mid 1940s, most of the North American scholars had returned home to focus on more pressing issues such as the Second World War and later the emerging Cold War with the Soviet Union. The political situation in Brazil had also grown tense during the self-declared and quasi-fascist *Estado Novo* regime (1937–1945) of Getulio Vargas, who grew increasing paranoid and authoritarian. By 1942, the government forced Carneiro, Ramos, and many others out of Bahia and to Rio de Janeiro where they could be more closely watched. Later Brazilian governments discouraged the kind of research that proved so promising in the past and no longer provided funding for such projects preferring instead a return to the study of slavery and not culture.[79]

Interest in the candomble houses of Bahia however did not fade entirely and continued to attract a steady albeit smaller flow of interested parties. The French photographer and historian Pierre Verger published an immense and groundbreaking body of work uncovering some of the early history of Yoruba-based communities in Bahia.

The ways in which the intellectual pursuits of academics and other researchers interacted with and was manipulated by the women of the Big Three, however, shaped the Yorubacentric interpretation of Afro-Bahian culture and proved vital in moving forward the vision they held for the survival and evolution of their religious traditions. Who exactly influenced who however in this regard does remain a topic of some debate. Beatriz Dantas first posited the theory that it was indeed academic researchers, particularly Rodrigues, motivated by a desire to impose a form of outside control over African-based religious sites, who created this notion of Yoruba superiority and purity. Stefania Capone, in an attempt to emphasize more the role of the Yoruba religious leadership, believes intellectuals of the day needing sources of information and guides into the world of the candombles had their views shaped by their subjects to suit their own agendas. J. Roland Matory also seems to agree with this idea, arguing for more emphasis on the deliberate actions of African peoples in shaping their own realities and cultural worldviews. Luis Pares, however, has maintained as was mentioned earlier that descriptions of *Gantois* in *O Alabama* as early as 1868 suggest this idea predated Rodrigues and therefore could not be credited to him.[80] However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were more immediate and pressing concerns than the desires of interested onlookers.

Once the violent campaigns of repression waged against all forms of African based-cultural expressions in Bahia became more aggressive, it was necessary for an equally aggressive yet more subtle form of resistance to emerge. One of the easiest and most obvious forms of self-preservation these communities employed was the relocation of temples to more remote locations on the outskirts of the city—far enough away from the city center to avoid detection yet close enough to be accessible to its membership and clients.

Ramos described the candomble temples of the 1930s as existing on the "inaccessible outskirts of the city."[81] Carneiro noted the same pattern as he identified the remote working-class bairros of *Rio Vermelho*, *Estrada da Liberdade*, *Fazenda Garcia*, *Brotas*, *Federação*, *Amaralina*, *Bate-Folha*, *São Caetano*, and *Cabaceiros da Ponte*.[82] In fact, a brief review of police records that Herskovits collected from 1939 to 1942 listing those candomble temples who, since the required date of 1937 had applied for police permits to conduct public rituals, revealed that the majority of them were in precisely the bairros identified by Carneiro three years earlier.[83]

And while some took this strategy even further by leaving Bahia altogether and migrating to places such as Rio de Janeiro, Cachoeira, Alagoas, and Recife, most remained in Salvador dispersing to far reaches of the city just as the Yoruba princes of legend had done in Africa.[84] This strategy, however, required a certain amount of economic prosperity, for no matter the time and place in the modern world, real estate rarely comes cheap.

The temple of *Opó Afonjá* founded in 1910 was one of those to employ this strategy when its founder, Mãe Aninha, purchased a plot of land in São Gonçalo do Retiro in the early 1900s. Donald Pierson who visited the site in 1935 described his trip to the temple where, "one takes a Calçada car out of the city, past orange groves and fields of tall grass, to the Matadouro, where he alights and begins to climb a steep winding road."[85] In fact, *Opó Afonjá* was so well concealed under the protection of the Salvadoran brush that popular legends make light of the futile attempts of the authorities to locate its front entrance.

Having found a semblance of security on the outskirts of the city, Mãe Aninha also refined and institutionalized there the once informal and often hidden practice of incorporating men into the religious hierarchy albeit in limited or auxiliary roles.

For joining Mãe Aninha at *Opó Afonjá* were not only her close-knit dissident following from *Engenho Velho* but also several powerful male religious figures. Some she knew from her involvement

with the Catholic brotherhoods, others from her increasing visibility in Yoruba-based religious circles. One such figure was Martiniano Eliseu do Bomfim who played a prominent role in the development of Yoruba-based religious ritual in Bahia and assisted others who mounted several legal defenses of those traditions in the face of the continuing campaigns of repression.

Bomfim, who did much to cement the image of Yoruba cultural superiority across the region, was one of the most widely sited sources on Afro-Bahian life during the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. He was interviewed by everybody from Rodrigues to Landes who were fascinated by his varied and complex life. In fact, by accommodating the curiosities of an entire generation of researchers, Bomfim showed that the women of the Big Three were not the only ones who could ensure that their works could be manipulated to serve political ends.

According to Julio Braga, Bomfim's life was most often used by academics and their informants to lend credence to the image of Yoruba cultural superiority and, in the process, the uniqueness of Mãe Aninha's newly founded temple and reputation as the site of the re-Africanization of Yoruba religion in Bahia.[86]

The creation narrative of *Engenho Velho* established the importance of personal connections to Africa in terms of individual and collective prestige and with constructing an image of "authenticity" in the eyes of the larger community. Long after the slave trade had ended, travel of persons to and from West Africa and particularly the city of Lagos continued unabated for decades to come. Matory, in his exhaustive work on the development of candomble, actually sees Bomfim as being a representative of a group of "English Professors of Brazil" who through their travels became deeply influenced by the emerging pan-Yoruba identity being constructed through the "Lagosian Renaissance." This movement was largely the creation of Lagos-based English-speaking communities made of repatriated slaves, journalists, writers, historians, linguists, and missionaries, who, in their desire to carve out a role for themselves in the emerging British colonial state of Nigeria and to stimulate interest in African customs, produced an enormous body of work focusing on Yoruba, rather than hometown identities. As Matory skillfully demonstrates, these ideas travelled along with their human hosts between Africa and Bahia. Therefore, the image of Yoruba cultural superiority was not based on the cultural memories of enslaved Africans. Rather, they were based on the aforementioned accounts brought to Bahia by educated and cosmopolitan Africans who began their own process of reshaping and

reinventing, rather than merely transmitting, a definition of what African cultures were.[87]

Again, Bomfim came to represent all of these vital connections, skillfully divulging and withholding key details of his life to meet his own ends. In May 1936, reflecting a softening of the media's treatment of candomble from earlier in the century, *O Estado da Bahia* described him as "dark and tall with a rounded and sweet face, eyes full of astuteness . . . He is now 77 years old but appears much younger . . . He is apparently very strong and of a wise spirit."[88]

Landes, who met Bomfim in 1939, described him as "a pure-blooded black and was fiercely proud of it." Also making mention of the prestige accorded to travelers like Bomfim within the Afro-Bahian community, she noted, "black freedmen strained every nerve to finance visits by themselves and their children to Nigeria . . . For Martiniano's world, Lagos was Mecca." She then continued: "But Martiniano returned to Bahia where his shrewd intellect, dominant personality and esoteric knowledge won recognition and sped him to fame . . . Eventually researchers sought him out for information and his name was made famous by . . . Dr. Nina Rodrigues."[89]

Significant here is not just the obvious prestige an African experience could bring to a particular individual but Landes's singling out of Nigeria and Lagos in particular as the preferred destination. Nigeria, of course, was home to Yorubaland itself while Lagos at the time was home to a significant community of repatriated former slaves from Brazil, Cuba, and Sierra Leone. Interestingly, Landes also noted that many of these returnees had become community leaders in Nigeria. Perhaps, they were either persons of some prestige before their captivity or they had acquired new skills while in bondage that assisted in their later rise to prominence. In either case, this is a reiteration of the notion that the Yoruba community of Bahia was comprised of, and led by, members of a socially elevated class as opposed to other African *naçõe*s who could not make the same claim (figure 4.2).

Bomfim certainly made good use of his personal photos as well, for not only did Landes have the privilege of viewing them but Turner, Frazier, and Pierson also mentioned seeing similar images while interviewing the elderly *babalawo*.[90] According to an interview given to Turner, his African-born father took Bomfim to Lagos in 1875 when he had just turned 14 years of age. He remained there for the next 11 years while completing his education alongside the sons of the King of Lagos, at the Faji School, a Presbyterian institution run by British missionaries.[91]

Figure 4.2 Liberated African slaves returning to Lagos in the late nineteenth century. Photo courtesy: Smithsonian Institution, Anacostia Community Museum, Lorenzo Turner Papers.

Speaking of his life in Bahia, Martiniano loved to emphasize his African ancestry and his parents' struggles for a life of freedom. Bomfim's father, Eliseu Oya Togum, was the son of an Egba warrior born in Abeokuta and brought clandestinely by slave smugglers to Bahia around 1842. Freed by government decree due to his illegal enslavement in 1852, he purchased the freedom of his wife, Piedade Majebassa, whom Dahomean raiders had also enslaved and shipped to Bahia, three years later.[92] Just four years after her own manumission, Majebassa gave birth to Martiniano, born free on October 16, 1859.[93]

While Bomfim's life in this regard was not extraordinary, his frequent visits to West Africa most likely were. Apparently, Bomfim's father used his voyages to West Africa to increase his social standing by maintaining commercial ties and importing coral, wool, and African textiles to sell in Salvador.[94]

What Bomfim was careful not to mention to every researcher, however, was the other purpose behind his frequent and lengthy African jaunts. He was also receiving rigid training in the exclusively male religious role of the *babalawo*, an order of high priests

dedicated to art of divination using the literary corpus known as *Ifa*. When Bomfim returned to Bahia in the 1880s, he was well on his way to completing his training. His deep knowledge and renowned skill as a diviner immortalized him in the religious rituals of Bahia's Ketu-inspired temples. In this regard, however, Bomfim was always deliberately vague. While openly acknowledging his formal education in Lagos, mastering both the Yoruba and English language, he was careful not to divulge too much information to outsiders who might bring the unwanted attention of the authorities upon him. Landes, in her visit with Bomfim, noted that his career as a diviner "was and is an illegal profession in Brazil and they sometimes come after him. His (creaky) stairs give him warning so he had time to prepare an explanation."[95]

The explanation Bomfim offered Landes when she did, in fact, reach the top of his stairs was consistent with his cautious nature. As Bomfim relayed to Landes, "They call me a *babalawo*, you know, a diviner. Such nonsense! All I can teach is languages. They blame me for things because I was a great friend of Dr. Nina (Rodrigues). Why should I be a *babalawo*? Just to get in trouble?"[96]

Landes was, no doubt, disappointed to hear such a claim for she had been informed by Carneiro of Bomfim's immense skill and years of training in Africa for "the bush around Lagos was to his people what Oxford and Cambridge are to the English."[97] Yet soon after the interview was over, Bomfim apparently had a change of heart or a desire to earn a quick day's pay. He not only showed Landes his private ritual space inside his apartment but also performed a ritual for her designed to win her father's approval for her decision to marry a mulatto man, no doubt her already married lover, Carneiro.[98]

Bomfim's guarded stance with Landes was actually quite common in candomble circles for at the time one could never be certain who was a genuine client or who was actually working for the police. There was also within candomble circles a belief in and high respect for the ability to maintain a certain level of discretion and secrecy, which Bomfim clearly demonstrated by initially claiming to be "just a black of low quality"[99] (figure 4.3).

It is unclear exactly when Bomfim and Mãe Aninha decided to collaborate on such a remarkable project but given their respective reputations and their previous experience serving together in a Catholic brotherhood, it was not surprising they were drawn to each other. Mãe Aninha had ambitions to re-create elements of an "authentic" Yoruba world she felt lacking at *Engenho Velho*. Having the support of a figure such as Bomfim gave her a decided advantage neither of the

Figure 4.3 Martiniano Do Bomfim. Photo courtesy: Smithsonisan Institution, Anacostia Community Museum, Lorenzo Turner Papers.

other two houses making up the Big Three could match. The two of them together would engage in some of the more serious efforts to gain official acceptance of their evolving traditions. For, as Scott Ikes has explained, "merely keeping the *terreiros* going was an act of cultural resistance to the dominant order. Insisting on the cultural and religious freedom to worship . . . was a radical act."[100]

Bomfim also played a leading role in Mãe Aninha's expanded use of male power as yet another defense mechanism. Having a temple in a secluded area might serve as an effective means of defense for a time but nothing could be more vital to self-preservation than having a powerful guardian angel to watch over you. Angels in the early twentieth century of Bahia took many forms but the most effective wore frock coats and silk hats while maneuvering through the corridors of power as comfortably as they did in their townhouses and country estates. The Yoruba women, who founded and led the Big Three temples, being no strangers to Bahia's pillars of power and status, began the process of employing and redefining a multilayered auxiliary religious role known as the *Ogan*.

The *Ogan* is a religious position allowing men to perform vital ritualistic functions. But there existed at the time a second class of *Ogans* whose title was more honorific than spiritual, and signaled their commitment toward the physical protection and financial support of the

temple to which they were attached. Through the strategic appointment of *Ogans* in positions of high social or political standing, the Big Three were able to muster the most effective form of self-defense best suited for Bahian political culture.

It is unclear how or where the practice of incorporating influential candomble devotees or clients into the hierarchy of the temples as *Ogans* actually began but by the twentieth century it had become a commonly accepted practice. Pares suggests it was a construct institutionalized by the Jeje temples in the nineteenth century, an idea shared by Mãe Stella de Azevedo Santos, the fourth leader of *Opó Afonjá*, who defined the origins of the term "*ogan*" as one "that we assimilated from the Jeje nation . . . that means father or the *orixa*."[101] The primary function of the *Ogans*, which could be viewed as yet another example of inter-*nação* assimilation, was to provide material and physical support for the temple just as they did for their own. Yet, as Mãe Stella was quick to point out, "within the axé (religion) we are civilly equal save for religious matters. It matters not your status outside."[102]

The implication here was clear. *Ogans* and the potential status they brought to the temple were vital to its survival, but they were based on the position they held in the outside world, a position that lost much of its significance once they entered the ritually sacred spaces. Power and status there were based primarily on access to closely guarded spiritual mysteries and were an example of the distinction Mãe Stella described.

On another level, this device surely offered more legitimacy to the leadership of each individual temple as the Big Women competed to attract the most influential class of *Ogans* possible. The symbolic power alone of having respected, wealthy, possibly light skinned, or other socially elevated figures kneeling and prostrating themselves before the power of the *orixa* and the black women who controlled access to them must have been immense.

Gantois, under the direction of Mãe Pulqueria during the latter half of the nineteenth century, was one of the first of the Big Three to effectively employ this practice when none other than Nina Rodrigues accepted initiation as an *Ogan*.[103] It should be noted, however, that Yoruba religious traditions were based first and foremost on the recognition that reciprocity governed all relations between man and *orixa*. Therefore, if one was to successfully navigate the often treacherous rivers of life, the assistance of the orixa was vital and could not be accessed without performing varied forms of ritual sacrifice. In the case of the *Ogan*, he was most likely, being an influential person,

pressured to accept this position using this commonly accepted logic. If the *Ogan* wished to receive the blessings living alongside the *orixa* could bring, or in the case of Nina Rodrigues needing vital sources of information for his own research agenda, then they must in turn pledge to protect the *orixa* and those who served them. For Rodrigues, the reciprocal relationship was most clear. His spiritual and financial commitment to the *orixa* and *Gantois* were vital in order to gain access to their closely guarded mysteries.

Gantois, however, not only received the financial support of Rodrigues but also the added benefit the publicity his work would garner for the temple. Clearly if one is the subject of this type of scientific inquiry, this, in and of itself, is an acknowledgment of the temple's authenticity and purity. A strategic partnership with researchers, *Gantois* had shown, is a part of what Capone identified as "a strategy to assert religious power, which is also political, in the complex universe of Afro-Brazilian religions."[104]

Rodrigues in his work *Animismo fetichista do negro bahiano* explained that the political functions of the *Ogan* came out of the political repression of the era that "forced them out of necessity to procure the protection of the strong and powerful which would guarantee them the tolerance of the police. To these protectors . . . are given in repayment the honor of the title of *Ogans*."[105] The description put forth by Rodrigues demonstrates not only how consistent the use of the *Ogan* was with both Yoruba and Bahian political culture but also the careful and deliberate manner in which it was employed. Rodrigues continued: "The most recent and rigorous police prohibitions are undone before the enchantments that the resources and the diligence of the *ogans* put in motion . . . and the greatest political influences will seek out their greatest protectors. I know of a Senator and a local police chief [who] have been made . . . *Ogans* and fathers of the temple."[106]

What is interesting about the use of the phrase "the greatest political influences will seek out their greatest protectors," is that it was unclear exactly who was playing which role in the arrangement. At any given moment either party could assume either role, for it might in fact be the *Ogan* who needed protection in the form of a spiritual guide or in the case of Carneiro, in the 1930s' safe haven from the grips of Getulio Vargas' secret police.[107]

In reality, the *Ogans* served as loyal and effective protectors of their temples by misdirecting the police, assisting them in maneuvering through the red tape of government regulatory bodies, and giving financial assistance. Carneiro, who at times also served as an *Ogan* in

Gantois, described his role to Ruth Landes as one of "giving protection to the temple in the form of money and prestige." In 1938, he also warned his good friend Artur Ramos that the temple would soon be approaching him for help in paying for the construction of new *barracão*, the sacred ritual dance space of the house.[108]

Other researchers also served as *Ogans* or offered their prestige in helping the temples secure police approval for public ritual as Melville Herskovits did for both *Opó Afonjá* and *Engenho Velho* in 1942.[109] The most extensive network of academics and regional celebrities organized under one roof for this purpose however was constructed by Mãe Aninha and Martiniano do Bomfim when in the late 1930s they recreated at the temple the Twelve Ministers of *Xangô*, or the *Obas de Xangô*, named for the deified former *Alafin* who had by then become one of the more popular *orixa* worshipped in New World.[110] Martiniano do Bomfim described the *Obas de Xangô* as, "ancient kings, princes or chiefs of the territories conquered through the courage of *Xangô*... (who) would not let the memory of this brave hero be extinguished... This candomble (*Opó Afonjá*) erected in honor of *Xangô*, is the only one in Bahia and for that matter Brazil to carry out this (tradition)."[111] Some of those who served as *Obas de Xangô* such as the writers Antonio Olinto and Jorge Amado, along with the famed artists and academics Vivaldo da Costa Lima, Carybe, and Dorival Caymni, gave some idea of the level of prestige associated with *Opó Afonjá* and Mãe Aninha and their elevated class of *Ogans*.

Mãe Aninha and Bomfim's efforts served them well on many levels. Aside from the ability to claim a more complete and authentic Yoruba-based world than even *Engenho Velho* could offer, it also went a long way in attracting an even higher class of *Ogans* who added to the prestige of *Opó Afonjá*. This was nothing short of a spiritual coup. By claiming to be the living links to an African past, it increased the visibility of the temple at the expense of their rivals and placed it squarely at the center of attention when it came to academics, and the general public. Speaking to Donald Pierson in 1936, Mãe Aninha staked her claim when she said, "I have revived much of the African tradition which even *Engenho Velho* has forgotten. Do they have a ceremony for the twelve ministers of *Xangô*? No! But I have."[112]

Again, it is useful to underscore the very complex situation that this war of the saints had become. Often these conflicts were viewed as attempts of a marginalized or persecuted religious tradition to defend and maintain themselves as a viable cultural alternative to Catholicism or white supremacist societies. But what Mãe Aninha made clear through this action was that her primary competition

for political and spiritual power came not only from a Europeanized version of Bahian culture but rather from other African-based religions, including others sharing her own. Indeed just as the Big Men of Yorubaland competed for dependents to increase their prestige and political influence, so too were these reconstructed Yoruba societies in Bahia competing for potential devotees. The larger and more prestigious a temple's following, the more secure their future became, either in the form of financial prosperity or political protection (figure 4.4).

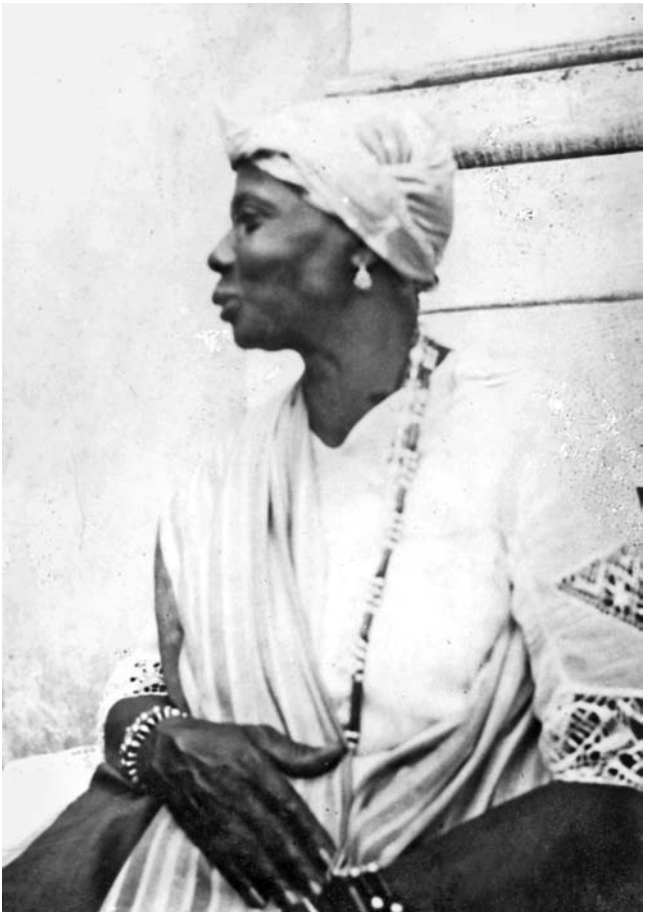

Figure 4.4 Mãe Aninha. Photo courtesy: Smithsonian Institution, Anacostia Community Museum, Lorenzo Turner Papers.

In the case of *Opó Afonjá,* Mãe Aninha's strategies were a resounding success. Not only did this temple become the largest and most revered during the 1920s and 1930s, but Mãe Aninha's personal influence and celebrity continued to expand as well. Often it was she who was given credit for meeting personally with Getulio Vargas in November 1937 in an attempt to have the legal restrictions on drumming relaxed. According to Julio Braga and confirmed by Pai Agenor, the meeting was arranged by two of Mãe Aninha's loyal *Ogans*, Jorge Manuel da Rocha, then a supervisor in the Ministry of Labor, and Osvaldo Aranha, a high-ranking member of the Vargas regime itself. The result of the meeting was Vargas' Decree 1202, which while still requiring a license from local authorities did allow public *candomble* ritual and drumming to resume.[113] And while police persecution included far more serious problems than a mere prohibition on the use of drums, rarely did the authorities from that point on bother the Big Three. Despite the national celebrity status and reputation figures as regal and renowned as Mãe Aninha had however, it was after all the political connections of the *Ogan*s that made her meeting with Vargas possible and kept the police at bay, for in reality there existed a symbiotic relationship between the two groups. As elite and influential men sought the protection, spiritual benefits, and prestige Mãe Aninha alone possessed, so too did she seek access to the power the *Ogans* held over the material world of Bahia.

The temple's political gains and influential *Ogans* had indeed protected it well from the type of violence and imprisonment endured by smaller, less influential, and primarily male-headed temple communities. These less fortunate groups however would be forced to adopt much more overt forms of resistance as this war of the saints continued.

Chapter 5

The Reassertion of Male Participation in the Candomble Priesthood

After a yearlong battle with several undefined illnesses, *Iyá Oba Biyi*, as Mãe Aninha was known inside the temple walls, was aware her time on this earth was running short. Gathering the temple leadership to her side, she made preparations for her transformation and passage into the realm of the ancestors carefully arranging the clothes in which she wished to be buried.[1] One day, after her passing on January 3, 1938, her body was transported by car to the church of Our Lady of the Rosary in *Pelourinho*, the centuries-old home to the African *nações* of Salvador. Located near the old whipping post, it stood as constant reminder of the brutal force with which Bahia was formed. Nearly three thousand mourners attended her funeral while thousands more lined the streets for a final glimpse of the Yoruba queen born of Grunci parents, who had done perhaps more than any other of her era to faithfully preserve and reinvent a true center of African spiritual power in the New World.

Others across the nation read accounts of her burial in *O Estado da Bahia*, which dedicated five columns and two photographs to the event.[2] As Edison Carneiro and the author Alvaro McDowell eulogized her in memorable fashion, Mãe Aninha was laid to rest in the *Quinta dos Lazaros* cemetery. Both Yoruba and Catholic ritual observances reflected her unending association with no less than three Catholic brotherhoods and, of course, her own Yoruba-based temple. Even in death, she represented a coherent whole made up of both worlds without conflict or contradiction.

But just as the status of the Yoruba *agbo ile* was measured against the power, authority, and reputation of their founders, so too were the reconstructed religious compounds of Bahia. Maintaining its

position of reverence and authority after a figure as legendary as Mãe Aninha had passed indeed proved challenging for *Opó Afonjá*. Religious ritual often required a temple be closed for a period of years following the death of its leader as well and in terms of initiating new members and caring for its large clientele, this placed it at a distinct disadvantage in relation to its rivals. Martiniano do Bomfim, who disassociated with the temple in yet another dispute over succession and still clearly mourning the loss of his dear friend, told Ruth Landes, "I miss her now, I guess all of Bahia does. I don't care to step into any of the other temples though they invite me. None of them do things correctly as she did . . . I think many of them are faking."[3]

Before Mãe Aninha's passing, however, two new trends were emerging within the world of the candomble communities. Growing in confidence, the women of the Big Three began the process of using more traditional legal methods to preserve their institutions. In the meantime, newer and more often male-led candomble houses proliferated across the city and often required direct and more risky strategies of self-preservation.

Those who were not as fortunate as the Big Three in attracting an effective network of *ogans* or successfully challenging the Catholic faith often felt the brunt of police violence and the humiliation of seeing their sacred spaces desecrated. Many of them now came to see candomble as being a life of great personal sacrifice in a very physical sense. More often than not these houses were rigidly monitored, their leadership jailed, and religious icons destroyed or confiscated. Their overwhelmingly male leadership clearly became the victims of a continuing legacy of slavery that viewed black men as a more serious threat to the existing social order. In 1937 an initiate of one such victim repeated these words of his dying *pai-de-santo* for the *O Estado da Bahia*: "I carry with me a tremendous guilt that I have never known the harrowing of the police. Nor have I known the inside of a jail cell which in order for *a pai-de-santo* to be a true *pai-de-santo* he must know."[4]

Those who did know the inside of these jail cells surely wished they had not as imprisonment often led to a serious disruption of their religious calendars. Others tried hard to avoid being caught. As Herskovits observed in 1942, "a little before the police came . . . one player put on his coat and left, he wasn't going to stay where there was trouble."[5] Herskovits himself was sorely disappointed when he tried to visit *pai-de-santo* Manoel Soares Natividade or *Neve Branca* as he found the police had closed the temple down.[6]

Other male-headed temples soon developed another strategy of claiming to rely purely on the supernatural for protection. The Angolan-based temple of the priest Nicacio was said to have caused the possession of several police agents by Angolan deities while they were attempting to arrest him.[7] Yet another devotee that Herskovits encountered at the *Bate Folha* temple recalled that his *pai-de-santo* became possessed during a ritual and "threw *acaça* at the feet of the mounted police who turned back and all that night wandered about the neighborhood and couldn't find the place."[8] Still others wistfully claimed the old African born *pais-de-santo* could defy the laws of physics and pass through locked jail cells in the middle of the night.[9] And while the explanations for their survival may seem beyond belief to those of a more skeptical nature, they nonetheless in their persistence, demonstrate a strong belief in the power of African-based religions to protect their devotees in the face of supposedly insurmountable obstacles.

The matriarchy of the Big Three, however, remained free from this type of overt violence and supervision as they continuously utilized newer and more creative forms of asserting their independence from and cooperation with the secular powers attempting to govern their earthly existence. As Kim Butler points out, by the late 1920s the leadership at *Gantois* and *Opó Afonjá* had begun to reorganize their temples as secular institutions known as civil entities.[10] Both groups eventually filed papers of incorporation with the state publically identifying the leadership of the temple and their named positions within the civil society. The new status released the temple hierarchy from personal liability issues and allowed them to carry on commercial and real estate transactions and to provide vital social services for the surrounding community.[11]

Once again the employment of an elevated class of *Ogans* was of enormous assistance in guiding paperwork and legal documents through an increasingly complex maze of government bureaucracy and red tape rapidly developing in twentieth-century Bahia. According to Butler, this neater division of labor allowed the Big Three to protect "the role of women as the principal authorities on religious matters, with public relations delegated specifically to men."[12]

Against this backdrop, the Afro-Bahian researcher and self- proclaimed communist Edison Carneiro organized the Second Afro-Brazilian Congress with a much different agenda than Gilberto Freyre's 1934 Congress. While building upon the academic nature of the first Congress, Carneiro also sought the participation as experts rather than subjects, of a wide array of Afro-Bahian and candomble

leaders, including Mãe Aninha and Bomfim.[13] In other words, hoping to engender a wider acceptance of African culture as part of Brazil's national character, this congress brought together under one roof all those Ickes has identified as the main "protagonists involved in the process of reevaluating African-Bahian cultural practices: the government, the practitioners, their middle class allies including regional, national and international scholars."[14]As its main purpose, however, the Congress announced the creation of what would become known as the *União das Seitas Afro-Brasileiras* or the Union of Afro-Brazilian Sects designed to unite the multitude of candomble leaders under a single banner to launch a legal defense of their religious traditions.

The 1930s nearly everywhere was a time of great uncertainty and political turmoil. In Brazil, the decade witnessed the collapse of the decades-old power sharing arrangement between the oligarchic elites of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. In its place emerged a coalition of progressive military officers and marginalized elites who eventually brought Getulio Vargas to power in a 1930 coup d'état. Vargas ruled Brazil for nearly two decades, serving as provisional president in the aftermath of the 1930 coup, elected president from 1934–1937, quasi-fascist dictator during the self-proclaimed Estado Novo regime from 1937–1945 and once more as an elected leader from 1951–1954.

Initially, the *Getulista* regime undertook many reforms as progressive elements in his coalition pressured him to pursue projects of industrial development and improving the lives of the urban poor. The creation of mass politics soon followed as middle-class organizations and organized labor were incorporated into the state apparatus. Access to power therefore shifted away from the traditional coffee, cattle, and mining oligarchies. Instead, Vargas carefully constructed a highly centralized and more nationally focused political system primarily concerned with the urban centers. He thus created a new class of political power brokers eager to win favor with the Vargas machine.

This new type of emerging populist politics caused the authorities to relax official stances toward candomble as some came to view the temples' tremendous influence over many urban dwellers as a source of potential political allies and votes in future electoral contests. As Ickes has also demonstrated, this process led to a fair number of middle-class Afro-Bahians filling positions of leadership or patronage. Some no doubt came from the candomble communities and formed a vital link between these two increasingly significant segments of political life.[15] By 1934, the Brazilian constitution even came to include full equality under the law for all. And by the 1937 *Estado Novo* years,

the government incorporated candomble, which they once viewed as a breeding ground and source of protection for communist elements, into a newly united national culture. A culture many also hoped would bring Bahia back to the center of national politics.

While candomble temples were still required to register with government authorities, they were no longer viewed as a public health concern and were placed under the authority of the newly instituted *Policia de Costumes*.[16] It was here where the now mythic meeting between Mãe Aninha and Vargas took place opening a new era of political and cultural openness that could include officially sanctioned public acceptance for some candomble traditions.

The Second Afro-Brazilian Congress, however, set to begin in January 1937, was not without its detractors. Initially expressing distaste for Carneiro's communist leanings, Gilberto Freyre refused to participate. But he was also disturbed with the direction which the Congress took, claiming it was "preoccupied with the picturesque and artistic side of the subject," while his own 1934 Congress was "a much more extensive one and included a . . . profitable section of social studies, research and scientific works."[17]

Carneiro, who did not respond to these criticisms until 1940, was also scrutinized by Freyre for accepting a small subsidy from the state government to cover some travel expenses for participants. Such an act he felt, subverted the participants' independence so necessary for free academic thought and legitimacy. These two academic giants saw their relationship rapidly deteriorate from that point on, causing Carneiro to castigate a young Ruth Landes for corresponding with Freyre whom he called 'untrustworthy" and someone who "never proves anything and is an exploiter of national ignorance."[18]

Widely promoted on a national scale, the congress represented a tremendous opportunity for all those involved. For Carneiro and his intellectual contemporaries, it was a unique opportunity to demonstrate the dignity and value of Afro-Bahian culture and the high level of academic scholarship being produced around it. Government officials viewed the congress as an opportunity to garner popular support. For those candomble leaders participating in the congress, it represented a golden opportunity for self-promotion and to gain political advantage over age-old rivals. Busloads of researchers including Carneiro, Pierson, and Herskovits arrived at candomble houses such as *Gantois* for staged demonstrations of drumming and dancing while Mãe Aninha and Bomfim unveiled publicly the aforementioned 12 ministers of *Xangô*. Other non-Yoruba–based temples, now expanding rapidly in defiance of the orthodoxy of the Big Three,

also received a fair amount of attention as an emerging class of male religious figures such as João da Pedra Preta, Bernardino, Falefá, and Procopio welcomed the interruption of police persecution the congress ushered in.

What made this event unique, however, was its overtly political nature culminating in some of the first organized responses to the oppression many had been enduring. Pierson, a participant in the congress, noted that Bahian blacks and their struggle for racial equality was taking on "some character of class struggle in the Marxian sense."[19] Carneiro, expressing his own developing political consciousness noted that "the black has been and continues to be, a being most apart, almost an animal permitted by the authorities merely to have access to the streets and to labor for the whites. Nothing more."[20] During the congress itself, a man identified by Pierson only as a "Bahian *preto*" told the audience: "The Afro Brazilian Congress ought to remind the black man that he is selected for and preferred in, the lower occupations. The . . . Congress ought to ask the black man how long he wants to be a slave."[21]

Interestingly, although the political leanings of the congress culminated in the founding of the Union of Afro-Brazilian Sects, it also alienated the most powerful and influential candomble leaders of Bahia and led the Big Three to lose the shaky trust they had once placed in Carneiro.[22] For while smaller temples, particularly the non-Yoruba–based ones, identified with the political messages, the far more prestigious Big Three did not endure quite the same level of repression or overt racism. By virtue of the economic resources secured by their respective leadership and through the efforts of their loyal *Ogans*, the women of the Big Three in fact constituted a rather socially elevated class within the Afro-Bahian community and beyond. To a certain extent, they had bent the political realities of Bahia to their will and came out on top of a rather rigid social hierarchy that they had a vested interest in maintaining. So while the matriarchs of the Big Three might have seen the need for increased religious freedom, they took no interest in class struggle, collective action, or social protest movements. Forming political alliances with those they and the state perceived as charlatans, pagans, or communists would produce little of value in their constant promotion of their own interests. In their relatively cloistered world, assisted by *Ogans* and having a certain degree of financial independence the Big Women already enjoyed relative freedom, respect, and power—power that was beginning to produce concrete political victories within the *Getulista* populist structure. Joining forces with those attempting to

operate outside or possibly in conflict with the official state apparatus was far too great a risk to take on.

And so while the Big Women surely benefited from the emphasis the congress placed on the purity and authenticity of Yoruba-based religious traditions, they largely, though never entirely, avoided being directly associated with the *União*.

In writing to Artur Ramos, Carneiro described the *União* as "an African Council of Bahia which will remain charged with overseeing African religions, taking over from the police this task."[23] This undertaking therefore was intended to create a type of regulatory body designed for two purposes: (1) to mount a legal defense of African religious traditions based on constitutional provisions, and (2) to exercise authority over these traditions and eliminate the practices most likely to draw the attention of the authorities. Interestingly, Capone views this action as an attempt by academics to remove the candombles from police oversight and place them under more scientifically oriented institutions. Capone thus believes that the rather high level of cooperation of the part of candomble leaders was recognition of the power intellectuals could wield in assigning legitimacy to their religious traditions.[24]While the *União* never clearly outlined how exactly this type of oversight was to be carried out, it remains the most far reaching and interesting of their demands for religious autonomy through popularly accepted images of legitimacy and authenticity. Pierson, for example, described the *União* as "combatting the sorcery and quackery which are perhaps the principal obstacles in the way of their (legal rights) attainment . . . (and one) charged with the special responsibility of eliminating unorthodox practices."[25]

Writing again to Ramos in July, six months after the congress was held, Carneiro made mention of the *União*'s coming to the attention of then Governor of the state, Juarcy Magalhães.[26] Magalhães, an admirer of Ramos's work and a figure known to be sympathetic to the plight of candomble practitioners was rumored to be a personal friend of one of the few nationally known male religious leaders, Manoel Bernardino da Paixão or Bernardino do *Bate-Folha*. Some claimed he was in fact an *Ogan* of *Bate-Folha*, a well-known Angolan-inspired temple in Salvador.[27] Whatever his personal relation to candomble, Magalhães was receptive to the creation of the *União*, and in July, 1937, sent an emissary to attend its official opening and to record some of its initial demands. Addressing the governor directly, the *União* released a resolution proclaiming that African religion, "has a right to exist as an expression of the highest sentiment of human dignity . . . (and that) the religious freedom of black people is one of

the most essential conditions which must be met for the establishment of social justice."[28] The resolution then continued, "It is only the religion of blacks which in a position of clear inferiority, is directly dependent for the exercise of its social functions on law enforcement authorities of the state . . . we bring this request . . . that full recognition be given to the *majority* (emphasis added) of African sects of this state and that you consent to them the right to govern themselves."[29]

In other words, for Carneiro the driving force behind the congress and the *União's* resolution was nothing short of full religious freedom and self-governance for those the academic community has recognized as pure and legitimate. Comprising initially 67 candomble houses, the majority of whom were from non-Yoruba–based traditions and male headed, the *União* became the topic of a series of articles in *O Estado da Bahia*, the same newspaper that once led a media campaign designed to stamp out African religions in Bahia.[30] Over several weeks in August 1937, however, their perspective had clearly shifted as Bomfim was described as "the leading representative of African culture in Brazil."[31] Future articles noted the connection to candomble houses of high-level state officials and student, labor and political organizations such as the Hotel Worker's Union, the Student Democratic Union, and the League to Combat Racism and Anti-Semitism.

After September, however, the *União* gradually disintegrated, falling victim to infighting and the failure to attract the support of the Big Three. In addition, the newly proclaimed *Estado Novo* regime began to outlaw political parties operating outside official government channels. Simultaneously, it increased oversight and repression of those suspected of leftist leanings, including many candomble temples that, according to a military commander Ruth Landes encountered in 1938, "were accused of being nests of communist propaganda".[32] Even Magalhães once viewed as a sympathetic source of political support fell out of favor with the *Estado Novo* elite for his failure to approve its creation. As a result, he was driven from office.

Carneiro, who continued to anger state authorities by assisting in organizing a strike of public utilities workers and openly expressing sympathies for the Brazilian Communist Party, soon realized that his association with the *União* contributed to its ultimate demise. In 1938, attempting to make light of his situation, Carneiro told Landes that the secret police had been following her since her arrival: "You are friendly with the wrong people; you must not be seen with blacks or university men . . . you'll end up in jail with us next year!"[33]

The failure of the *União* left the men of the candomble world back at square one struggling for legitimacy and freedom from persecution in what surely felt like shark infested waters.

Meanwhile, on top of a steep hill in the *Federação* district of Salvador, a rather unimposing collection of white stone structures was about to once again become the center of the Yoruba-inspired world of Bahia. As the drums of *Opó Afonjá* fell silent in the wake of Mãe Aninha's death, those of *Gantois* raised their voices, calling for *Oxossi*, *orixa* of the hunt and mythical king of Ketu, to return to his home in the New World. Yet while his children had clearly not forgotten his sacred rhythms and praise names, it was a daughter of *Oxum*, *orixa* of sweet water and feminine power, who emerged as one of the preeminent spiritual leaders of the twentieth century. For those men seeking entry into the prestige of the Big Three, this became a pivotal moment. Yet for those still attempting to maintain non-Yoruba–based traditions, a new set of challenges emerged.

Maria Escolastica da Conceição Nazaré, or simply Mãe Menininha, was the sole inheritor of *Gantois* founded in 1849 by her great-grandmother, Maria Julia da Conceição Nazaré or Tia Julia. Dedicated to what its founders claimed was the second Ketu temple in Bahia, *Gantois* emerged as a legitimate alternative to *Engenho Velho*. Hoping to avoid the conflict that precipitated her own departure from *Engenho Velho*, in her own temple Tia Julia restricted succession to female blood relatives, thus limiting the number of potential candidates for leadership and increasing the potential for amicable solutions to what could be volatile political disputes.[34]

Such was the case when sometime around 1906, upon the death of Tia Julia at the age of 92, her daughter Pulqueria assumed control over the temple with little controversy. This tradition allowed for a second transfer of power to Mãe Menininha in 1922, when, after the death of Pulqueria, she assumed the mantle of power at only 28 years of age. Mãe Menininha's rise to power however was not completely without controversy. As Melville Herskovits recorded in 1942, due to her young age, only a minority of the temple's devotees supported her candidacy despite Pulqueria personally preparing her for the task. The opponents preferred Alexandria, a more experienced priestess[35] (figure 5.1).

However, Mãe Menininha, being a legal heir to the property the temple was housed on, and a direct descendant of the temple's founders could not be passed over. For a period of four years, the temple remained in flux with 47 of its 50 members either leaving with

Figure 5.1 Manoel, *Ogan* of *Gantois* standing in front of temple, 1938. Photo courtesy: Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archive, Ruth Landes Papers.

Alexandria to found a new temple or simply taking their spiritual possessions home and avoiding the situation altogether.

By the end of the 1920s, however, Mãe Menininha consolidated control over *Gantois*, founded the civil society of *São Jorge*, and by the time of Mãe Aninha's death, became one of the last living links to the founding generation of the Big Three.

One of the last of Mãe Menininha's initiates into the religion described her as "to Brazil, the actual personification of the goddess *Oxum*. Her entire life was open to everyone who came to her door. Always inviting, comforting and generous, her room was a boat that we boarded to greet a living queen."[36] Ruth Landes, who met her four decades earlier, seemed less impressed, describing her as "five feet tall, fat and dark, with kinky hair and a large tooth conspicuously missing in the front of her mouth . . . (and being) proud of her dainty hands and feet which had not a single blemish because she had not been obliged to do hard work." Years later, however, Landes added, "I felt dignity in her, diffident at the moment yet pervasive, accustomed to authority."[37]

Being the great-granddaughter of the temple's founder Tia Julia who claimed descent from the "royal family lineage of Egba Alake" of the Yoruba city of Abeokuta, Mãe Menininha was indeed accustomed to authority—an authority, which at the time of Landes's arrival in

1938, was about to become part of the collective consciousness of an entire city.[38] Mãe Menininha wasted no time in making Landes aware of this by describing her predecessor Pulqueria as "a fiery crusader in her time (who) had wrenched protection for her people from the police . . . (and) who had the support of her young friend, Eugenia Ana dos Santos, later known as Mãe Aninha."[39]

Her shrewd positioning of Mãe Aninha, the most well-known candomble figure of the era, to a foreign researcher as a "young friend" of her more powerful aunt again exemplifies the intense competition among the Big Three for prestige and followers. By the late 1930s, however, few could match Mãe Menininha's charisma and power. She herself noted: "All Bahia knows us, all Brazil knows us. At ceremonies the *terreiro* is so crowded you would think the entire city had turned out. They like to watch us because they know we are genuine."[40] Landes was obviously impressed by the credentials of such a powerful woman and while noticing a portrait of Pulqueria hanging just above her host could not help but wax poetic exclaiming, "Obviously she (Pulqueria) was a wealthy woman, who had never known menial or slave labor."[41] This was a notion Mãe Menininha was quick to dismiss when she replied, "Often I wonder where I can get the strength to go on with it and whether I have the right to burden my daughters with it . . . I am a slave of my people, two hundred of them who depend on me absolutely!"[42]

What Landes was astutely making note of was not the fact that these women because of their elevated status were averse to hard physical labor, but rather that an elite class of women, long disassociated from slavery and its legacies of marginality, were creating an alternative vision of an African society in a Bahian context completely dominated by female power. Surely, no one familiar with the religion, including Landes herself, could dispute the arduous and backbreaking labor associated with conducting proper ritual. This sweet matriarchy, as Landes described it, was after all built upon the foundation of the Brazilian slave system. What evolved out of the efforts of generations of Yoruba women and their descendants however was an elevated class of revered, politically savvy, financially secure women who, while not being as quite as anti-male as once believed, made little effort to combat the impression fostered by intellectuals, artists, and writers that the highest levels of the priesthood were reserved only for women.

Many such as Carneiro and Bastide noted that there had always been far more men than women practicing and leading African-based religions across Brazil. In fact, men headed 37 of the original 67 temples that joined the *União*.[43] The historian João Reis, describing the

development of nineteenth-century candomble, observed through a review of police and newspaper accounts: "The proportion of men among leaders (61%) is exactly the same as that of men within the African born slave population between 1811–1860 except for the last ten years. This evidence may indicate that gender bias was not an important factor in the formation of religious leadership."[44]

While this might have been true in the early stages of its development, particularly in non-Yoruba–based traditions, by the end of that century women had come to dominate at least the largest and most prestigious of the candomble temples. By the time these traditions had captured the imagination of an entire generation of researchers, many had come to believe that men were completely absent or excluded from not only positions of leadership but also full initiation into the religion itself. The fact that these same researchers were also fostering an image of Yoruba cultural and spiritual superiority compared to other African-based traditions only lent more credence to the notion that the higher levels of priestly power in the more authentic religious traditions were reserved exclusively for women.

Some have tried to explain the evolution of the role of women in candomble in economic terms. The initiation process, for one, is very lengthy and requires extended periods of isolation within the temple that could last for months. Melville Herskovits concluded therefore: "It is less difficult to release a woman from her accustomed routine than for a man to relinquish his work and pay that is needed for the support of a family."[45] Pai Agenor supported this notion when he wrote: "In the old days *pais-de-santo* worked, they couldn't live only off of the candomble . . . the women had pensions or trays of candies and *acarajes* to sell."[46] Again both made reference to the legacy of urban slavery in Salvador leaving women with more flexible and reliable sources of income that allowed for the reorganization of personal priorities and the financial resources necessary to maintain such complex institutions. Black men always under careful surveillance by the authorities or anxious elites were often kept out of skilled professions and in a state of chronic economic instability rendering a great deal of them incapable of an undertaking as vast and time consuming as operating a large temple.

With that in mind, Carneiro claimed the rise of female dominance over candomble came with the founding of *Engenho Velho* in the 1830s, a claim also supported by Pierre Verger.[47] In describing the role of women in the development of Bahian candomble, Verger built upon a notion shared by Vivaldo da Costa Lima in 1977 when he posited that *Iyá Nassô*, the legendary founder of *Engenho Velho* actually

referred not to an individual's name but rather an honorific title held by the third of eight religious figures charged with protecting the *Alafin* of Oyo.[48] More specifically, *Iyá Nassô* was charged with the cultivation and protection of *Xangô* the principal deity of Oyo and therefore the *Alafin* himself. Verger concluded that it is possible therefore that during the course of the slave trade one such priestess holding this title was transported to Bahia, eventually manumitted, and became part of the group of women who created *Engenho Velho.*

According to this theory then the religious models upon which Bahian candomble were based reflected the structure and organization of that found inside palaces of the *Alafin*, which in the case of the cult of *Xangô*, a woman controlled.[49] As to why the Yoruba traditions of Bahia claimed their origins in Ketu and not Oyo, Verger later observed, "We should not forget that this refers to a vassal state of Oyo. Where they speak the same language, Ketu became a symbol of the reunion of the diverse Yoruba nations."[50] These women therefore were simultaneously preserving and recreating in a new context, that which had been a source of significant prestige and power for them in Oyo. As Kim Butler has noted, "an elderly black woman of limited means, whose social structures would be circumscribed by most Brazilian standards, could enter (or found) a *terreiro* and become a queen."[51]

In addition, Yoruba religion like many traditional African faiths shares several common characteristics that Carneiro outlined in 1948 as being possession, human characteristics of divinities, divination, dance, and drumming.[52] Conservatively, it can be said that by the early twentieth century, and perhaps even earlier, women in the Big Three houses had come to dominate at least three of these vital activities: possession, divination, and dance. Since the personal characteristics of the *orixa* are not normally subject to change, this would leave drumming as one of the few necessary components of religious practice to men. However, as the female leadership of the Big Three noted, the religion could not be faithfully observed without the role that men played. But, they had adopted a more auxiliary function without direct access to the mysteries of the *orixa* and spiritual balance. Possession, divination, and dance were the vehicles through which the *orixa* communicated with humanity. By dominating access to these three areas, the women of the Big Three were in effect creating an elite class with extraordinary power.

So great was this dominance that those researchers whose work helped solidify an image of Yoruba superiority were completely taken in by its allure. Manuel Querino, in his *Costumes Africanos no Brasil*,

wrote that only women were allowed to "*olhar com buzios*" making reference to the Yoruba practice of divination using cowrie shells.[53] Artur Ramos, several decades later, noted that possession was a form of "psychological hysteria that prefers women,"[54] while Ruth Landes made note of a more explicit example describing a sign affixed to the wall of *Engenho Velho* that read: "This notice begs gentlemen to observe the greatest respect. Their sex is prohibited from dancing among the women celebrating the rites of this temple."[55] Observations such as these make clear that at the Big Three anyway; the power of women had clearly risen to a then incontestable level. Because the Big Three were also the model for African authenticity in Bahia from which all those seeking acceptance must prove linear descent, it had by then become increasingly challenging for men to make such claims within the Yoruba-based traditions.

Yet, despite the obstacles in their paths, men did continue to become initiates of numerous African-based religions and operate as spiritual leaders of independent temples most of whom described themselves as Ketu or Yoruba based. The ways in which they accomplished such a feat, however, varied greatly.

Some like the legendary Martiniano do Bomfim acquired their spiritual knowledge independently through extensive and direct contact with Africa, thus becoming part of an elite class of practitioners. J. Roland Matory noted, as Verger had much earlier, that during the nineteenth century, Afro-Bahians made frequent voyages to the Gulf of Guinea. In fact, according to Matory, between 1820 and 1899, some eight thousand Afro-Brazilians travelled between Salvador and Lagos, many of them multiple times. This meant that for every three leaving for Lagos, two were returning to Salvador.[56]

Included in this group were not only the founders of *Engenho Velho* and Bomfim but also another male figure now part of candomble legend, Rodolfo Martins de Andrade or Bamboxê Obitikô. Little is known of Bamboxê's actual life or how he came to arrive in Salvador; yet his name has been preserved through the *oriki* and myth as a founder of Bahian candomble. Some have claimed he was originally a slave whose freedom was secured by Marcelina Obatossi of *Engenho Velho* while others claimed the same group of women brought him to Bahia as a free man sometime in the 1830s.[57] What is known of Bamboxê is that he worked very closely within the structure of the temple as a *babalawo.* While not an official part of the leadership structure reserved exclusively for women, Bamboxê did participate in many of their rituals and often assisted in the initiation rites for new members including the eventual founder of *Opó Afonjá*, Mãe

Aninha.[58] It is believed he died sometime near the turn of the century while assisting in a religious obligation in the city of Recife.

Slightly more is known about the life of one of Bamboxê's close male relatives Felisberto Sowzer, known as Benzinho, who also served for years as part of Salvador's Afro-Bahian elite as one of the last-known *babalawos* of that era.[59] Sowzer, whose experience more closely resembled that of Bomfim's, also made several trips to Lagos in his lifetime, belonged to several prominent Catholic brotherhoods, and even joined a Masonic lodge. Kim Butler also noted an unsuccessful lawsuit Sowzer filed against the infamous police chief Pedro Azevedo Gordilho when Sowzer's wife was accused of being a sorceress.[60]

Benzinho, like Bomfim, took such pride in his knowledge of both Yoruba and English that it has been suggested that he anglicized his name from the Portuguese "Sousa."[61] Having acquired his skills in Africa independently from the Big Three temples allowed him to circumvent their monopoly over perceived African authenticity.

While Benzinho's presence at religious ritual in the Big Three temples was common, given his status as a blood relative of Bamboxê and a practicing *babalawo* of which there were very few known to be in Bahia, the matriarchy of the houses tended to view him as an auxiliary figure.[62] And while he and others with such expertise lent more credibility and a more complete image of authenticity to their ritual, thus giving them a "competitive edge," they were nonetheless unessential for the day-to-day operation of religious sites. Again, over time, priestesses assumed the role of diviners. Rather by using a different and not as detailed technique using cowrie shells and making reference to Yoruba proverbs to interpret the advice of the *orixa*, women marginalized the men's participation. *Babalawos* continued to be consulted if they were available on a freelance basis or to resolve a particularly contentious internal temple issue, but they were not incorporated into the leadership hierarchies of the Big Three nor was there any concerted effort to train new initiates as the older ones died off.[63]

During the early twentieth century, increasing government restrictions designed to encourage European immigration severely curtailed opportunities for men such as Bomfim, Bamboxê, and Benzinho to hone their craft in Nigeria. For those men who still felt the calling to enter into an African-based priesthood or those who simply wanted a share of the positions of power jealously guarded by female power, a much more precarious path lay ahead. Viewed by the police as charlatans and purveyors of false medicine and by a few in their own communities as sexual deviants, it was several decades before many

in Bahian society embraced male priests as anything more than the dregs of society.

The question therefore arises, if access to religious training and initiation in Africa was constricted by either economic or political factors, where was it that men acquired the skills necessary to become competent and respected leaders? The answer lies in one of two sources. Either they could seek initiation into one of the non-Yoruba traditions such as Jeje, Angola, or *Caboclo* nations, or they could seek out women from the Big Three temples willing to initiate them. And while joining a non-Yoruba tradition could result in a loss of status and seeking the help of a woman from the Big Three a cause of great concern within those temples, there was no shortage of men willing to pursue either option.[64]

When addressing just this question, Melville Herskovits went straight to the source of female dominance, *Engenho Velho*, where one temple member explained, "They make no male *feitos* (initiates). They do at other casas but not there . . . You can't have confidence in men, they're not serious."[65] By again positing the image of *Engenho Velho* against their rivals, a claim to legitimacy was made by insisting that unlike others who have diluted tradition by initiating men, they held steadfast to the true traditions of strict female control.[66] *Engenho Velho*, it should be noted, really had no need to truly compete with others for prestige as their status as the founding Yoruba-based religious site in Salvador guaranteed its stature. Even though it might have lacked the political clout of an *Opó Afonjá* or *Gantois*, it was the source from which all others must show a direct line of descent.

Several prominent *Engenho Velho* members, however, sometimes initiated or trained men in the religion, but these rituals took place at outside locations. Thus some men could legitimately claim connection to the traditions begun at *Engenho Velho* though they lacked official ties or obligations to the temple itself.

Gantois and *Opó Afonjá* also kept the established model of restricting men to the traditional auxiliary roles as *Ogans* but soon began to consider the initiation of others into the priesthood after they left the temple for independent lives. In order to protect themselves from accusations of inauthenticity or of diluting tradition, they too kept the initiation of men outside the temple grounds although Herskovits noted that there was a separate space within *Opó Afonjá* where such rituals did indeed take place.[67]

In the early 1930s, *Gantois* began to alter its position on this matter when Mãe Menininha began to reconsider the open initiation of

men fully and openly into the priesthood.[68] Even so, the initiation of men remained controversial as it did deviate from established beliefs that men were a detriment to the religion. Male power, it seemed, would always be limited by tradition and kept permanently subservient to that of women.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, a certain number of male priests reacting against the rigid orthodoxy of the Big Three began to branch out into Salvador's poor and underserved communities. They established independent Yoruba-based temples or sought initiation into non-Yoruba temples. However, being that the association with Yoruba-based traditions and authenticity was firmly established, these temples still found themselves forced to follow the same basic organizational structure as the Big Three minus the gender bias.

These traditions were not really new as they often predated Yoruba religious practice in Salvador. However, they were, in a sense, reinvented as a counterweight to the seemingly oppressive, conservative Big Three. While never coming close to the levels of prestige the Big Women enjoyed in terms of political or economic clout, these smaller houses reflected a still burgeoning demand for the services of African-based religious traditions and demonstrated how deeply ingrained they were into the fabric of Bahian life. *Bahia de Todos os Santos*, the Bay of All Saints, was truly living up to its name as a dizzying array of spiritual options remained viable supported by a free market of religious faiths engaged in a battle for survival of Darwinian proportions.

According to Carneiro, of the 67 original members of the *União*, 15 identified themselves as Angolan, 15 more as Caboclo, eight Jeje, four Ijexa, three Congo, and the remaining using designations such as African, Dahomean, Angola-Congo, Congo-Caboclo, and even one as Malê.[69] Herskovits's collection of applications made to local authorities for licenses to hold rituals from 1939 to 1942 made note of at least 53 Caboclo, 28 Angola, three Jeje, five Ijexa, and dozens of other houses not identified by religious affiliation.[70] By 1980, Luiz Barbosa had identified over 1,920 temples in Salvador (a marked increase over the 100 Carneiro identified in the 1930s), with some 350 identifying as Angola, 271 Caboclo, 14 Ijexa, and four Jeje.[71] In spite of the dramatic increase in houses identified by non-Yoruba designations, the overwhelming majority still referred to themselves as Ketu meaning Yoruba-based temples. Yet this trend clearly reflects that from the 1920s through the 1980s there existed an expanding and continuous reaction against the perceived orthodoxy of the Big

Three and their public insistence that men be excluded from positions of power.

One of the more rapidly growing and harshly criticized non-Yoruba tradition was a fusion of Kardecian Spiritism, Native American imagery, and Candomble organizational structure known as *Caboclo.* Carneiro, writing in the 1930s, defined *Caboclo* as a mixture of Bantu and Native American traditions with many Yoruba elements assimilated into them.[72] Julio Braga later defined it in a similar way but noted the influences of Kardecian Spiritism with its use of the white table and the channeling of different classes of spirits to offer counsel to the living.[73] It is unclear exactly when this tradition developed in its modern form but the old sage Bomfim claimed that Narinha of *Gantois* established the first *Caboclo* house sometime in the early twentieth century. Upon her death, Sylvanna, another priestess, took the mantle of power and began the process of initiating a new class of devotees who expanded the tradition across the city.[74]

By the time Carneiro became interested, the male-led houses had proliferated so rapidly that many from the Big Three and their intellectual allies created a backlash against these modern day blasphemers. Mãe Aninha exclaimed once with great pride, "There's nothing in my candomble of this abominable mixture which these upstart places practice today…Why they know absolutely nothing about the way it's done in Africa!"[75] Making reference to one of the better-known *Caboclo* priests of the era, João da Pedra Preta, another devotee chimed in, "He came here from the *sertão* and started a candomble. Picked up a little Gege (Jeje) a little Nago, a little Congo, a little Indian stuff and so on. A disgraceful mixture!"[76]

Even Carneiro, who spent nearly his entire adult life trying to valorize Afro-Bahian culture, could not bring himself to recognize deviations from Yoruba-based orthodoxies. As he explained to Ruth Landes, "By the high standards of Yoruba tradition, the caboclos are blasphemous because they are ignorant and undisciplined, because they have created new gods at will and because they welcome men into their mysteries."[77] Landes herself added, "Their most radical departure from Nago tradition is that men may become caboclo cult heads."[78]

The underlying critique of the newly formed Caboclo tradition was clear. Yoruba culture in Bahia was superior because it was more authentically African and most importantly the level of authenticity was at least partially measured by the power women held over men in the control of spiritual mysteries. The criticism of João da Pedra Preta, himself being from the *sertão*, also reflected a view of Yoruba

superiority found in their urbanized and therefore more culturally sophisticated traditions. Remember, it was within Salvador where these traditions were upheld with greater success by a class of women known for their shrewd urban business acumen.

The male-dominated *Caboclo,* Angola, and Jeje traditions, therefore, found themselves attacked on multiple fronts, persecuted by the police, and ridiculed by the Yorubacentric class of researchers and their more prestigious female counterparts. Strangely enough, all of this occurred during the campaign of the *União* in defense of religious freedom and Afro-Bahian traditions. In the sheltering confines of Salvador's working-class *bairros*, however, the *Caboclos* quickly gained a reputation for getting rapid and inexpensive results for their clients as opposed to the Big Three's more rigid and pricey protocol-driven practices.

On one of his visits to a *Caboclo* house, Herskovits noted: "The two things that came out most clearly are that the caboclos are esteemed for their knowledge of leaves and because their cult involves simple rites, (is) less expensive (and with) less mystification."[79] In fact, he found several *Caboclo* priests and devotees who defended their tradition in much the same way. A woman identified as Marie who, after being told she could be initiated into the service of one of the Yoruba deities, opted for a *Caboclo* house instead. She explained her decision this way: "You can understand what the words mean. It was alright to sing in *Nagô* (Yoruba) in old times because the people understood what was sung. Now the younger people prefer to sing the words they understand."[80]

By the 1930s, clearly, a certain segment of a younger generation of Bahians had become interested in practicing African religious traditions in a more open, modern, less secretive way and with much quicker spiritual outcomes. As the famed *Caboclo* priest Joãozinho relayed to Herskovits, "In seven days the person can go ahead and worship her santo. No mystery that you can't penetrate, no long seclusion."[81] Again reflecting on the new cultural mores of Bahian youth in the 1930s, Joãozinho added, "What I don't see and understand, I don't value." And from yet another perspective, a *caboclo* priest named Pedro offered this explanation of the tradition's appeal for him, "It's a fact that Caboclos like men more."[82]

Despite their appeal to those segments of the Bahian population looking for African-based traditions that were quicker, cheaper, and more comprehensible, the *Caboclo* priesthood and, in fact, most non-Yoruba–based temples were still compelled to justify their traditions through a Yoruba cultural framework. In the 1930s, the famed

Caboclo priestess Sabina described her tradition by explaining, "We worship the Yoruba gods first in our service because we cannot set them aside; but then we worship the spirits because they were the original owners of the land."[83] What is not clear from this description however is what exactly Sabina meant when she said they were unable to set the *orixa* of the Yoruba aside. It seems that the *orixa* had become part of the Afro-Bahian population's entire collective subconscious and were now completely inseparable from all African-based religious traditions. In any case, Sabina obviously employed the long-standing tradition of using a foreign visitor and writer, Ruth Landes in this case, to advance the spiritual authority of her chosen religious traditions.

In addition, by adopting Native American spirit guides into their pantheon, the *Caboclo* were also responding to some powerful cultural trends of their day. First, the governing authorities recognized Kardecian Spiritism (a form of communicating with the dead with origins in France) as a more acceptable practice. Second, within the emerging popular culture and collective imagination of Brazil, there existed a powerful mythological connection to the image of the noble savage of a simpler and more ancient past. And just as each candomble temple tried to outdo the other by claiming older, more ancient roots, so too did the *Caboclos* attempt to foster an image of adhering to the oldest of all Brazilian traditions. After all, who could understand their nation and its culture better? African deities they would claim, were just as much of an import as the Catholic faith.

Still other male practitioners of African-based faiths claimed their houses followed an Angolan, Congo, or Jeje model with each making a claim to legitimacy based on their largely predating the arrival of Yoruba traditions. Herskovits, in particular, seemed most interested in exploring survivals of non-Yoruba traditions and often expressed frustration with his Yoruba-obsessed colleagues. He made a note to himself in his field log that the Jeje gods in Brazil had "become blurred in form and function and (their) sense of place has been lost." Trying to explain the deeper legacies the Yoruba traditions left behind he noted it could possibly be explained by "continuing contacts with Lagos as against none with Dahomey. But why have all the Brazilian students overlooked this material? Because they don't know what to look for?"[84]

The first male priest to attract Herskovits's attention in an attempt to answer this question was Procopio Xavier de Sousa, also known as Procopio de *Ogun*, who headed a small temple on the outskirts of

the city called *Ogunja*. Herskovits hoped he had found an actual Jeje priest for Procopio claimed to have a Jeje mother. However, he identified his house as Ketu, leaving Herskovits to privately conclude, "it is evident that his own interests do not lie in the direction of being *a pai-de-santo*."[85]

What led Herskovits to believe that Procopio "had changed himself to Ketu" he did not say, but his conclusion that Procopio no longer desired to be a priest was questionable. For one, given the immense obstacles and danger involved in being a male candomble leader it seems unimaginable that anyone would assume this risk without great self-motivation. In addition, according to Pai Agenor, a contemporary of Procopio, he was one of the most persecuted candomble figures of the 1920s and 1930s. Under constant police surveillance, Procopio often publicly defended his spiritual path telling Pai Agenor that "as long as he was alive he would continue to worship . . ."[86] Clearly, Procopio's past involvement with the police had left him deeply suspicious of outsiders and just as Bomfim did in his initial meeting with Landes, he deflected attention away from himself and directed Herskovits to other Jeje temples.

Interestingly, Procopio also took the time to tell this well-known researcher that "things are changing and . . . that *Gantois, Engenho Velho* and his casa were the only good ones," and the venerable *babalawo* Bomfim was his cousin. Once again a male priest felt compelled to attach himself to the "only good" houses left and to Bomfim.[87] He had thus in two sentences made clear to the foreign researcher his spiritual and genealogical credibility.

One of the houses Herskovits found, which self-identified as Jeje, was *Engenho Velho da Cima*, headed by a male priest, Vidal. Though he declared his house was also Ketu, Herskovits noted, "his talk was all of his Gege affiliation."[88] In establishing his own credibility, however, Vidal wasted no time informing his guest that Mãe Aninha herself had initiated him into the religion inside the temple walls of *Opó Afonjá*. His rival, Procopio, in a later conversation with Herskovits, said, Vidal was actually initiated by a man named Andre.[89] When Herskovits eventually visited Opó Afonjá, the new leader of the temple, Mãe Senhora verified Vidal's claim even showing the room in which he was initiated.[90] Once again, however, attachment to female power, more specifically that of the Big Three, was the most effective way to legitimize one's self in the eyes of outsiders, particularly academics who could memorialize such an image. Reflecting later on his visit with Vidal, Herskovits commented how, "his experience refutes the current belief that only women are initiated."[91]

While Herskovits never indicated whether he successfully encountered the "pure" Jeje house he longed to find, his hopes were dashed by another priest named Pedro who "says he is part Jeje . . . but whatever knowledge his has of Africans it certainly is not . . . ."[92] Here Herskovits apparently stumbled upon exactly the phenomenon under discussion. Male religious leaders, finding it challenging to compete with the power of the Big Women, took to redefining themselves as something other than Yoruba. Yet, as Herskovits and others have noted, these men did so while incorporating Angolan, Jeje, or *Caboclo* elements into a Yoruba-based organizational model in the hopes of eventually establishing their own temples, lineages, and prestige. His quest having been frustrated by the widespread assimilation of Yoruba traditions into everything Afro-Bahian, Herskovits lamented, "Vidal wanted to know if the Jeje still exist in Africa."[93]

Despite their attempts to justify their existence to the candomble community and the constant flow of researchers moving throughout the city, it was several decades before male leaders gained the acceptance they so clearly craved. Police raids continued unabated for years to come resulting in most of the well-known male religious figures spending time in jail or worse. Procopio became a favorite target of then police chief Pedro Azevedo Gordilho resulting in the confiscation or destruction of many of his sacred icons. Manoel Bernardinho da Paixão of the Angola temple *Bate Folha* mentioned several times how he was routinely questioned and beaten by police agents.[94] João da Pedra Preta was even deported from the city of Rio de Janeiro when he was rumored to have gone there with the intent of opening a new temple.[95] It should be clear at this point why Carneiro's efforts to establish the *União* (which all of these men eventually joined) with its goal of collective action in defense of religious freedom eventually failed. Its membership made up of smaller, male-led temples simply lacked the stability, influence and cultural acceptance of the Big Three.

Yet as frightening and dangerous as constant police persecution could be, most male religious leaders became quite adept at developing varied forms of self-preservation. The attacks waged upon them by the more orthodox elements within the candomble community, however, proved much more difficult to overcome. The most unusual attack came not on the quality or good intentions of their work but rather something much more personal and more vital to defend—their masculinity.

In what generated perhaps the greatest controversy of her career, in 1947, nearly a decade after her fieldwork in Bahia came to an

abrupt end, Ruth Landes published *The City of Women*. In it, Landes recorded for the ages what she viewed as a uniquely female dominated Afro-Brazilian religion based on remodeled Yoruba traditions. She made frequent mention of what she viewed as the matriarchal nature of Afro-Brazilian ritual life and the immense personal freedom the women of the candomble houses were able to exercise in comparison to those women living outside the tradition.

In fact, Landes made it a point to note how few of the women inside candomble communities bothered to get married or express any romantic interest in men at all. "A serious priestess is supposed to be above interest in sex and the famous mothers discipline themselves in this respect," she wrote while visiting *Gantois*. And while attempting to explain why the men of these temples seemed to actually depend on women for their survival, she said, "stability is provided by the black women . . . And the women have everything; they have the temples, the religion, the priestly offices, the bearing and raising of children . . . If the temples did not welcome the men, they would be left permanently to the streets."[96] For Landes, Mãe Menininha was a perfect example of this. She had indeed claimed to have rescued her common law husband from the police thus stabilizing his life. However, she felt no need to formalize their ties through secular state controlled mechanisms as "under the laws of this Latin Catholic country a wife submits entirely to the authority of the husband. How incompatible this is with the beliefs and organizations of Candomble!"[97]

Herskovits noted a similar practice, pointing out that even those legally married couples within the candomble have the power dynamic of their relationship altered for "once a wife sets foot in the candomble house, he is no longer her husband . . . In their own house she is his wife. In candomble she is nothing to him."[98] Taking the point further, Herskovits also explained how the female power of the temples even superseded any claim of husbandly authority over his wife for "if something serious happens at home . . . the husband will come to the *roça* (temple) to speak not to his wife but to the *mãe de santo*."[99]

Landes's theories about the men of candomble first appeared in two articles published in 1940, titled "Fetish Worship in Brazil" in the *Journal of American Folklore* and "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality" appearing in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. In her first article, Landes described Bahia as "a Negro Rome"[100] where the women of candomble were "trained to rule independently (and the women have) developed into a type of matriarch that is not only unique in modern times but is anachronistic in patriarchal Brazil."[101] In an unpublished work written in 1939, she added,

"There is nothing in West Africa to parallel the sweet matriarchate of Bahia."[102] In her second article using her Brazilian fieldwork, Landes explored the nature of male participation in African-based religions as one where "they want one thing, for which the candomble provides the widest opportunities, they want to be women."[103]

Interestingly, it was most likely Carneiro who initially suggested this theory to Landes during her visit to Bahia when he described the fundamental element of *orixa* possession as "the most sensational job of the women who are priestesses of a temple . . . But no upright man will himself be ridden by a god unless he doesn't care about losing his manhood." Carneiro later continued, "Here's the loophole. Some men do let themselves be ridden and they become priests with the women; but they are known to be homosexuals. In the temple they put on the skirts and mannerisms of the women and they dance like women. Sometimes they are much better looking than the women."[104]

This lengthy excerpt makes clear exactly how women were able to justify or at least come to be perceived as having a biological claim over one of the most fundamental elements of African-based religions. Clearly, Western notions of sexuality and gender placed women in the position of being mounted or ridden whether by men or in this case by supernatural beings.[105] By controlling direct access to the divine, the women of Bahia turned what should have been a position of sexual or social submissiveness into a position of power over men.

Carneiro later linked this form of weakness to the generally male-headed non-Yoruba traditions when he wrote in the *Journal of American Folklore*: "In the candombles that are not Nagô, the chief authority almost always takes a tyrannical form that results from the laxity of hierarchy and discipline typical of these cults." Later he added, "From this disorder in authority stem sexual disorders at ceremonial and other times which change the candomble into a house of rendezvous and the ceremonies into orgies . . . (for) . . . From this poverty of mythology and dogma of the non-Nago cult rises the laxness of hierarchy which in turn allows for fathers like Pedro, Juiaba and others, all celebrated drunkards, homosexuals and magicians."[106]

Carneiro helped advance this theory further by sending copies of his field notes documenting his encounters with several leading male religious figures to Landes, then back home in the United States. Speaking of João da Pedra Preta, he wrote: "He confessed to me that he never had any desire for a woman, (and that) . . . He dresses as a woman for Carnaval . . . while he has a group of six or seven (male) lovers." Carneiro described the figure of Procopio as one who would "dress as a woman . . . to give the impression he is fine and delicate,"

while the aforementioned Vidal "surrounds himself with pretty women to attract men."[107]

These ideas soon drew much criticism from the intellectual community, and it was Landes who received the bulk of some brutal and at times slanderous attacks. Carneiro, however, even while attempting to offer support for Landes's ideas, would see his reputation largely untarnished.[108]

In 1948, Herskovits was the first to respond in a review of *The City of Women* in the journal *American Anthropologist*. Accusing Landes of being "ill prepared" for the type of research she had done and knowing "so little of the African background . . . that she had no perspective," Herskovits added, "This same factor was the cause for the false perspective on the role of men and women in the culture that gives this book its misleading title." He claimed that Landes failed to realize the importance of men in African religious traditions and as a result, "over stresses the homosexuality of male priests. There are many orthodox as well as caboclo priests in Bahia who have no tendency towards inversion."[109]

Arthur Ramos joined in support of Herskovits's attack on Landes by claiming that her accounts of the female dominance over candomble were exaggerated and her theories on the homosexuality of male priests generalized accounts of individuals. Her works, he added, "will bring lamentable confusions onto all careful and honest controlled investigations into the personality of the Negro in the New World."[110]

Pierre Verger also chimed into the debate giving a subheading to one of his articles, which read, "Strange Theories from an American Anthropologist,"[111] while Roger Bastide added his own critique of Landes by supposing that "she gives us a feminine vision of the candomble which reflects the spirit of feminist confrontation now in vogue in the United States." Bastide continued, "Taking the fact that many candombles are headed by 'mães de santo' and not 'pais' she maintains the entire cult is under the control of women and under these conditions the only way for an ambitious man to arrive at the point of being part of the legitimate priesthood is to . . . become a woman."[112]

Landes for her part appeared largely unaware of some of the heaviest criticisms being waged against her in Brazil and was indeed defended by Carneiro in his 1964 essay appearing in *Ladinos and Crioulos* under the heading "A falsehood of Artur Ramos." He offered that "based on that specific case and point in time," her interpretations were correct.[113] Although in earlier works, he agreed with Landes,

at this moment, he did not mention that he might have, at that same point in time, also shared the same beliefs or that he contributed his field notes to her work. And while Carneiro had his own problems to deal with having been deported from Bahia and struggling to earn a living as a journalist and translator in Rio de Janeiro, Landes was being subjected to the worst kind of character assassination.

From the beginning, Landes, who worked under the direction of Frans Olbrech and Franz Boas at Columbia University, felt that the more influential and famous Herskovits constantly undermined her work. She claimed that "Herskovits proposed that I study with him; he said no one at Columbia was equipped. I refused. He then informed Boas that he would block my application to the Social Science Research Council for funds. His view was that Negro affairs in Anthropology, around the globe, belonged to him."[114] Later Landes learned in a 40-page letter written to her employer that, "condemnation of my gender was raised in the outrageous manner recorded by Melville Herskovits and Arthur Ramos lasting years . . . These men wrote at length also to Gunnar Mydral for whom I was working that I did my research by selling my sexual services to Black informants in Brazil . . . When I confronted Herskovits in 1949 at an Anthropology meeting in New York City, and told him my name, he fled. But I was kept out of jobs for years despite my published books and articles."[115] Mydral, who showed Herskovits's accusations to Landes, dismissed his attempts at tarnishing her reputation by remarking to her "that I must be very important for these bedfellows to inspire such efforts."[116]

Over time, however, Landes's writings came to be well received and viewed as a classic work of ethnography and a pioneering example of the then emerging methodology of participant observation. So much had the ideas of many regarding Landes changed by July 1950 that Verger wrote to her asking for help with collecting a series of articles on candomble for an edited volume of essays he was publishing. He informed her that "the author of *City of Women* must be among them."[117] Even if at one point Verger believed her theories to be "strange," the fact that he made such an effort to secure an article from her demonstrates the influence her work actually held.

In the interim, however, the battle for the souls of the faithful in Bahia was still being waged. By 1937, the male-dominated *União* made its first attempts at collective action. Many male priests such as Bernardinho, Procopio, and Cyriaco appeared in national headlines with their exploits, and all the newspapers in Rio and Salvador covered the marriage of João de Pedra Preta with flattering interviews and photos.[118] The popularity now being enjoyed by some of these

temples and their male leadership altered the reality of candomble, as the older generation knew it to be. Now facing a source of competition once overlooked as trivial, the Big Three had to adapt to the changing nature of candomble and its increasing popularity across the nation or risk stagnation or even worse, the loss of status and political influence.

Chapter 6

The Popularization of Candomble in the Mid- to Late Twentieth Century

There is an ancient Yoruba myth described in the *Ifa* corpus that speaks of *Oxala* being unjustly imprisoned after being mistaken for a madman. Patiently he endured his captivity as the days, months, and years passed until the kingdom holding him prisoner began to experience unexpected droughts, famine, and agricultural calamity. The King consulted *Ifa* for an explanation. It was revealed that the source of this misfortune was indeed their unjust imprisonment of *Oxala*, which caused an imbalance in the workings of the universe. Surely an *orixa* as powerful as *Oxala* could have secured his own release but that was not the nature of this overly patient and, at times, docile deity. So he waited until such time that the people themselves recognized their mistakes and most importantly learned how to preserve and maintain the gifts they always had but failed to acknowledge. In much the same way, those who preserved his name and all the *orixa* far from their ancestral homeland had endured the same injustices and emerged stronger and more resolute for it. Finally, as the mid-twentieth century approached, the time arrived when the traditions they so faithfully protected were seen through a different lens.

Some temples, like that of *Opó Afonjá* under the leadership of Mãe Senhora since 1942, relied on older strategies to maintain or in this case, recapture their status as the most authentic representation of Yoruba religious thought in Bahia. As Paulina Alberto pointed out in her discussion of black intellectual activism in Brazil, Mãe Senhora quickly formed a close attachment to Pierre Verger, who had only recently arrived in Bahia. She used his reputation to publicize the preservation of the institutions and traditions institutionalized at the

temple by Mãe Aninha and to forge new and fresh contacts with elements of Yoruba social and political power in Nigeria and Benin.[1] Thus she not only preserved their status in Salvador but also reaffirmed the prestige of *Opó Afonjá* across national and international lines. Mãe Senhora had indeed used Verger as what she called "her messenger." In this way, she secured honorific titles and ceremonial icons for use at the temple and added to their established image of authenticity employing again this older strategy, which, in actuality, might have outlived its usefulness. As Alberto also noted, at this point the idea of African authenticity alone no longer fascinated Brazil's academic landscape.[2] This new attitude also seemed to be shared by many in the candomble world who, according to Capone, now viewed Brazil and particularly Bahia as the place where authentic African traditions have been preserved. Africa was now merely an interesting distraction and no longer the required pilgrimage site for the reenergizing of authentic practice.[3]

Clearly, the ideal vision of Brazil as a multiracial and heavily African-based society had matured to the point where a direct connection to Africa was no longer the only litmus test required. What emerged instead was the importance of a candomble's ability to integrate into more modern and "mainstream" forms of Brazilian life. The Big Three therefore no longer needed to constantly jockey for position as the most "African" for they had already established that. What was needed now was to make African traditions available to a much wider audience for whom "Brazilianess" was far more attractive than "Africaness."

Mãe Menininha of *Gantois* publicly recognized as the last living member of the most powerful generation of female candomble leaders took the lead in this change.

According to Pai Agenor, Mãe Menininha became the first leader of a Big Three temple to publicly initiate men into the priesthood and prepare them for possession by the *orixa*. Her first initiate was a man named Queroga whom she welcomed into the temple not long after assuming power.[4] Openly granting men such access made it easier for them to claim spiritual descent from one of the Big Three, thus ensuring some sense of "purity" for the religion. And since the women of the Big Three clearly could do nothing to prevent the large number of men now branching out into the city and forming their own temples, this strategy at least allowed them to continue some semblance of discipline in and control over this dispersal. This arrangement seemed on the surface to be of a mutually beneficial nature. While the female leadership of the Big Three still assumed the role of a Big Woman, the

male initiates achieved a level of religious autonomy enclosed within an image of popularly accepted Yoruba-based authenticity.

However, with each new house that opened under its own auspices, the Big Three lost a certain amount of influence and social power from their collective grasp. Herskovits inadvertently made note of this concern when recording the dilemma being faced by a woman named Zeze, the wife of his principal informant who happened to be an *Ogan* at *Gantois*. According to Herskovits, Zeze had been told through divination that she was to seek initiation as a priestess and open her own temple. If she did not, her health would rapidly deteriorate. Claiming she had already experienced two bouts of temporary blindness and a major operation to correct chronic swelling in her legs, Zeze became desperate. Mãe Menininha, however, she claimed, for some reason refused to instruct her in the mysteries of the faith. In the rapidly altering power structure of early twentieth-century candomble politics, Zeze was faced with two options. She could obey the wishes of her spiritual guide Mãe Menininha or break ties with her and acquire the necessary knowledge elsewhere, most likely from one of the newer and faster male-led, non-Yoruba–based houses.

Eventually, Zeze chose the latter under the tutelage of the previously mentioned Joãozinho. However, in keeping with the Yoruba framework in which she was raised, Zeze agreed to keep her *caboclo* rituals in a separate physical space from her Yoruba-based traditions. In other words, what Zeze had done was representative of many of the newer male-led temples. She adopted a non-Yoruba tradition but never abandoned the Yoruba traditions upon which the perception of legitimacy was based. From the point of view of the older and more powerful Big Three, this practice clearly represented a breakdown of tradition and authority that could not be tolerated. But since they were indeed powerless to prevent it, they sought to contain it by relying on older strategies of accommodation and cooption of the same cultural alternatives once used in opposition to their power.

For example, just as they had done a century ago when faced with Catholic intransigence, the Yoruba-based temples incorporated elements of *Caboclo* practices into their own traditions. And again just as they had adopted some of the imagery and language of the Catholic faith into their own in a rather compartmentalized fashion, so they did the same with the *Caboclo*.

Visiting *Engenho Velho*, Herskovits noticed that while the temple was in his words, "only Queito (Ketu)," they "dance for all the gods that come in from the street . . . So that here in the oldest of all *roças* that may dance for an Angola or Caboclo god as well as for a Jeje."[5]

Once again the fluid and flexible nature of Yoruba traditions allowed for a claim of Ketu purity while at the same time granting recognition to the popularity and existence of other deities. They always claimed to do so however within a strictly Yoruba cosmological framework.

What is interesting as well is the manner in which some at *Engenho Velho* described the non-Yoruba traditions. Angola, *Caboclo*, and even Jeje gods might be respected but they were remembered as those "that come in from the street." This clearly implied a social ranking of some sort indicating that the *orixa* came from a higher, more pure place and were therefore housed and fed inside the temple where they were maintained with dignity and great care. The gods of others simply did not measure up and therefore were forced to wander in unannounced and unkempt. They were drawn to but not entirely accepted by the more sophisticated and appealing Yoruba-based temples.

Herskovits, for his part, correctly recognized the phenomenon he was witnessing but failed to place it in its proper context. Rather, he opted for a more diasporic viewpoint, writing, "It is a nice commentary on the attitude towards *santos* of other seitas or nações . . . and on how the primary psychological mechanism which in Africa made for the diffusion of deities, carried over here."[6] Again, Herskovits, much more interested in identifying so called survivals of African cultural traditions in the New World failed, or deliberately chose, not to recognize the uniquely Brazilian context in which they were being employed. In other words, they were not purely unconscious actions based on collective or even subconscious cultural survivals but rather a deliberate political strategy used to preserve status and power through an Afro-Bahian version of a Yoruba ethnic identity. And what Herskovits's theoretical rigidity did not permit him to see, Landes's lack of perspective, as he correctly put it, served her well allowing her to view these traditions for what they had become—an evolving Afro-Bahian spirituality that while possessing certain unique characteristics such as her beloved matriarchy, were still part of contemporary Brazilian life. While Landes often feared that modernizing pressures might fundamentally alter candomble, she did nonetheless view it as a living, breathing entity.

These changes in the structure and traditions of the Yoruba-based houses did not go unnoticed by some of their more revered figures. Bomfim, making note of the rapid proliferation of the newer, male-led *Caboclo* houses, said, with the knowing sigh of a man whose time was slipping by, "Times have changed . . . They are crowding the old Africans out . . . I don't feel as if I belong anymore." When it was

suggested that he might be able to teach the younger generation how things were supposed to be done he quickly retorted, "I'm going to give up the Candomble . . . They are all pretenders!"[7]

Commenting on some of the changes even at the Big Three temples, Bomfim seemed equally fatalistic: "I don't care to step into any of the other temples even though they invited me . . . I do not believe that they really know how to speak to the gods and bring them down to dance . . . I think many of them are faking . . . "[8] Later, he even extended his criticism to *Engenho Velho* itself when he told Landes and Carneiro, "They garble things . . . Take Maximiana, (Tia Massi, then head of the temple) . . . she gets everything wrong."[9] When asked his opinion of Mãe Menininha, by then the most powerful of the Big Women in Salvador, Bomfim was equally dissatisfied. "I don't believe much in these young women who run the terreiros nowadays," he said.[10]

The elderly priestess Maria Bada reflected much the same sentiment when she told Donald Pierson that "the candomble isn't what it used to be."[11] Pierson, in Bahia at roughly the same time as Landes, also shrewdly observed the views of the era held by most of these traditionalists when he added, "Indicative of the disintegrating state of the fetish world is the continuous and, at times, acute jealousy among the leaders and members of its more orthodox centers. In a given seita one hears much critical gossip regarding the practice of some other center. It is accused of forsaking the 'true' African tradition and of inadequately interpreting mystical experiences. As the number of Africans decreases, competition between the seitas for their allegiance is naturally increasing." Just as Bomfim had done in his previous conversations with Landes, Pierson added, "Among the Negroes who still identify themselves with the cult, the past tends to be romanticized and the prestige of the 'old Africans' . . . constantly enhanced."[12]

While Pierson may have crossed over into the melodramatic when he viewed the candomble world as disintegrating, he was clearly referring to a widely held perception about the rapid changes just described. The candomble world however was not on the verge of collapse but rather it was merely in flux as it adjusted to a new generation of devotees raised in a rapidly modernizing western society. Their world was one whose values, mores, and expectations out of life and spiritual devotion were not the same as they had been just a mere three or four decades before. While *Engenho Velho* stagnated as it rested on its laurels as the founding temple of the Big Three and *Opó Afonjá* was still in a process of redefining itself under relatively

new leadership, *Gantois* under Mãe Menininha emerged as the driving force behind this new vision for African-based spirituality. By the 1940s, still under the direction of the same powerful female energy that had long ago served as its guide and protector, the vision of its leader of a more open, less secretive, and popularly accepted religious tradition started to bear fruit.

One of the first steps Mãe Menininha took toward this new vision was in fact a refinement of one taken long ago. She made *Gantois* open and herself personally available to the steady flow of researchers and academics and moved toward the full initiation and acceptance of men into the Ketu priesthood. Mãe Menininha did so, however, in a more aggressive and culturally sophisticated manner by no longer relying only on the *Ogans* but on her own charisma and flare for the dramatic. The emerging mass media and popular culture of the mid- to late twentieth century became her vehicle for change as a new wave of celebrity clients picked up her banner brining a tsunami of notoriety crashing down on the temple doors. And while it came with a fair amount of criticism from her rivals, this strategy proved quite effective in forcing political authorities and the public at large to fully recognize the immense appeal and popularity these traditions now held worldwide.

A well-known New York City–based artist initiated into the priesthood in the mid-1980s by Mãe Menininha herself best summed this up when he wrote, "In time she converted her adversaries into allies and brought candomble to such a level of respect as a spiritual and cultural institution that it has become one of Brazil's greatest treasures . . . (she) invoked and nurtured the creative powers of many artists, writers and scholars. Many of Brazil's foremost performing artists including Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, Maria Bethania and Caetano Veloso created music in her honor . . . I was a personal witness to the pilgrimage of people who came from all over the world to seek her support and blessing."[13] Matory used a similar explanation for the celebrity of Mãe Menininha but placed it in the context of a wider fascination with the racialized stereotype of the *Mãe Preta*, a figure similar to the Black Mammy in North American culture. Claiming producers of popular culture were seduced by her charms, an image of her emerged as "the sweet, maternal nursemaid . . . who awaited the visits of her high-class children in an enormous house spotlessly clean with . . . lots of food and entertainment and always a kind word. Politicians were said to *pedir colo dela*, to ask to be held on her lap." He then concluded, "She was equally maternal to blacks and whites"[14] (figure 6.1).

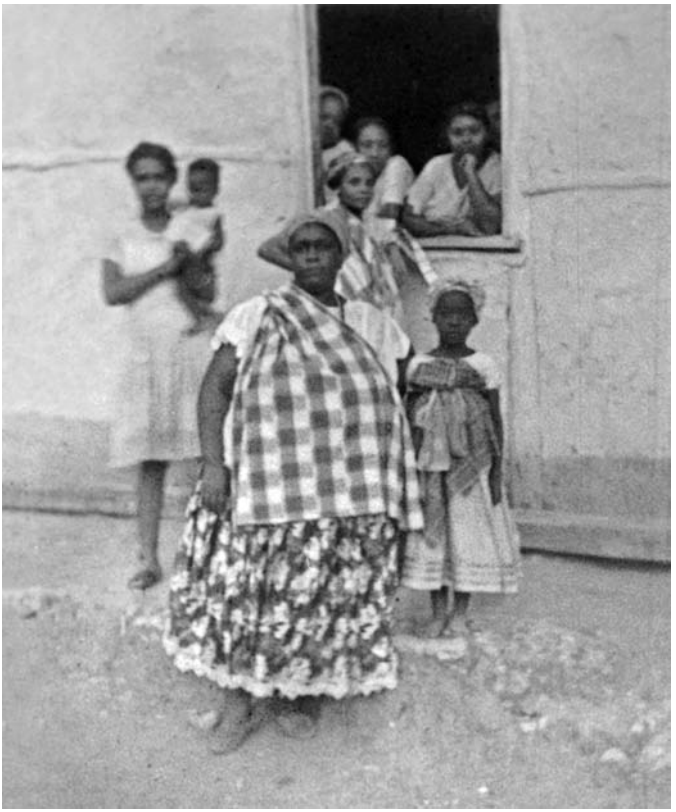

Figure 6.1 Mãe Menininha standing in front of women and children of *Gantois.* Photo courtesy: Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archive, Ruth Landes Papers.

But before this vision could become a reality, there was still the matter of the historical legacy of attempted governmental oversight and inter-temple rivalries to deal with. Mãe Menininha did her utmost to keep these competitive instincts under control by routinely visiting the other Big Three temples, joining them for ritual and public ceremonies or to pay respects at funeral rites for high-ranking members. She was thus able to avoid much of the public criticism from her competitors that was once commonplace.[15]

Male initiates saw their acceptance into the faith increase as Mãe Menininha not only prepared them for full membership into the priesthood but also allowed men to dance with women during public

ritual, something unthinkable just two decades earlier. The federal and state authorities, however, were slightly slower in reacting.

As previously noted, police oversight and control over African-based religious sites was always a challenge to candombles' religious autonomy and freedom of expression. Although police attempts at outlawing or destroying these traditions had largely failed, in Brazil, there still existed a fading amount of resistance toward the granting of full religious freedom. However, there remained an influential class of people who were vocal in their commitment to granting these rights.

By 1939, the Vargas administration had not only decreed that state and municipal governments were no longer allowed to impede the open practice of religion, but he famously passed control over candomble communities to what was he believed was a less intrusive and more respectful *Delegacia de Jogos e Costumes.* Although this agency attempted no direct oversight of African religious traditions, they still required that all such religious communities register with the state and apply for a permit if they wished to use drumming during their ritual calendar. Since drumming is used in virtually every public spiritual practice in which they engaged, this ruling required each temple to apply for a permit each time they wished to worship.

As in the past, however, the Big Three still being a more prestigious and politically connected group rarely bothered to comply with these regulations and their *Ogans* made sure they normally would not have to. In fact, in the eyes of many candomble participants, applying for such permits had come to be seen as a sign of weakness or proof of one's inauthentic practices. Yet even some inside the Big Three had to, on occasion, reluctantly submit.

While in Salvador, Herskovits collected what he claimed was a complete listing of all the temples applying for ritual permits from January 1939 to April 1942, when he left the country. According to his collection, out of a total of 801 permits issued to cover over 1,116 public rituals, only 53 belonged to any of the Big Three. And if applying for such a permit was any indication of status, then out of the Big Three it appears that *Engenho Velho* carried the least influence, for it accounted for 32 of the 53 aforementioned permits. *Opó Afonjá*, which was still riding the wave of influence built up by its revered founders and *Ogans*, took out the least with ten while *Gantois* applied for just 11.[16] Given the size of these temples, there were certainly significantly more rituals in a year than the numbers of permits for which they applied.

As the place where it all began, so to speak, *Engenho Velho* still held a place of reverence in the candomble world as Ife did in Yorubaland, yet that power had become by then, more symbolic than real.

But just before Mãe Menininha began her own independent course of action, another attempt at collective action was organized. This time it was done with the cooperation of governmental authority. In 1946, the Bahian Federation of Afro-Brazilian Cults replaced the old and largely ineffective *União*.[17] Eventually, in March 1960, the Federation was officially granted the status of a Public Utility, but in its earlier incarnation it was formed to assume oversight over the candomble community from the *Delegacia de Jogos e Costumes*. The government's intent in such a move was to create an independent regulatory body similar to that envisioned by the now defunct *União*. For example, the Federation demanded the authority to regulate candomble practices and root out the charlatans just as the *União* once did and defined an agreed upon set of ethics and standardized practices. The Federation, however, suffered the same fate as the *União*. Due to a lack of government resources and most importantly any enthusiastic support from the leadership of any of the Big Three, it was largely ignored until it become impotent.[18]

By the 1950s, however, largely through Mãe Menininha's cultural strategy, hardened attitudes began to crumble under the weight of increasing international acceptance of candomble. Soon the authorities removed the once required permits and in their place simply requested that temples publicly announce and follow an annual ritual calendar of their own creation.[19] While this regulation remained on the books through the mid-1970s, it was rarely, if ever, enforced.

Also during the late 1950s and continuing through the military dictatorship installed in 1964, Bahia emerged as one of the nation's leading international tourist destinations. No doubt, the romantic and exotic images of candomble now incorporated into Brazilian popular culture were the driving force behind such interest. While the first attempts at promoting Brazil as a popular tourist destination actually began in the late 1930s, it expanded greatly in the early 1950s with a newly imposed tax to support the development of the industry.[20] A series of government officials now incorporating tourism into their formal economic development strategies hoped to capitalize on the wider range of African cultural traditions of Bahia. Later, when building upon the military government's adoption of Freyre's racial democracy concept as official state ideology in the mid-1960s, the Department of Tourism issued brochures promoting the Angolan martial art of *capoeira*, the wide availability of West African culinary

delights and, of course, candomble. Many Department of Tourism functionaries even formed close personal relationships with some of the leading temples in Salvador and occasionally redirected government funds to assist in the upkeep and daily operations of the sites. Sometimes, they even secured employment for temple members in the department.[21]

Returning to Brazil in 1968 to continue the work her husband pioneered earlier in the century, Frances Herskovits recorded in her diary that while visiting the smaller but well-respected Ketu temple of *Alaketu*, "I knew the hotels arranged for busloads to candomble (but I) thought only the less orthodox houses permitted this, but (I now) learned that even Engenho Velho receives them and this is why. No more licenses to pay and they can use drums . . . So, the price of the God of turismo (is) full access to public rites . . . "[22] Tourism, it seemed, was now being used to as a new form of political clout that even for *Engenho Velho* had declined significantly in the recent past.

In addition, Russell Hamilton writing on public attitudes toward candomble in the mid-twentieth century identified what he thought were four classes of participants. The first class were full initiates into the faith for "whom candomble continues to be a viable religion."[23] The second class was those who sought out the supernatural powers of the religion for assistance with a specific problem but for whom it is not a true religious faith. The often overlapping third and fourth classes, however, were often the most influential in bringing openness to the religion through the mechanisms of popular culture.

Hamilton defined the third group as coming from "those artists and intellectuals who participate in a semi-administrative, semi-religious capacity and lend their social prestige to the sects," or, in other words, the *Ogans* or friends of the temple. The fourth group, of which Hamilton might have considered himself a member, were those "doing serious research on candomble." These two groups together comprised an elite class whose "studies go beyond the objectivity of their scholarly disciplines to a reverent respect for the Afro-Brazilian religion," and who made up "what we might term a school of Afro-Bahian art."[24] They had, by the 1960s, been joined by a wave of Brazilian writers and musicians such as Jorge Amado and Caetano Veloso to name just two that helped create the international interest in candomble, particularly in Salvador. Not only did these works of art and popular culture lead to the boom in tourism dollars that quickly became an integral part of the local economy but they also actually made it counterproductive for any future governments to attempt to repress or control candomble practices.

In 1966, Carneiro wrote to Ruth Landes of his pleasure that "candombles are now truly free to exercise their religious practices and . . . are flourishing everywhere . . . The interest we had in them is now general . . . (and even) in Rio de Janeiro they have taken the beaches for themselves on New Year's Eve to propitiate *Yemanja*."[25] Later he concluded, "It is true that the beliefs and practices of Candomble . . . are becoming folklore . . . But it is true also that writers, poets, artists, tourist agencies, municipal and state governments, and so on, are making the best of Negro traditions . . . or of what they think they are."[26]

And while the transition from being a remnant of a dark and barbaric past to picturesque folkloric expression undoubtedly brought a level of acceptance and stability unknown to most in the candomble community, there were also those who had their doubts about this new approach. Frances Herskovits noted, "The attitude toward the *candomble* is much changed. To belong is now in fashion . . . (but for some) *candomble* has become like a night club."[27] Hamilton as well made note of a prominent Bahian sculptor who left the religion because, "the influence of outsiders will cause Candomble to lose those hermetic qualities and conservatism necessary for its survival as a religion." To drive the point home, he described an instance where, to the shock and horror of the older generation of devotees, "a group of tourists arrived unexpectedly at a terreiro and requested an 'exhibition' of Candomble." Another time, "some visiting psychiatrists arranged for a Candomble ceremony to be held at one of the most respectable sect houses."[28]

And just as those of Mãe Aninha and Bomfim's generation viewed the changes of the 1930s as leading to the inevitable end of the world as they knew it, so too did this rapid inclusion of candomble into Brazilian national culture and vice versa cause a similar reaction three decades later. Yet culture as we know constantly reinvents itself to meet the realities of an ever-changing world. Yoruba culture, and the Afro-Bahian incarnation of it, was not only any exception to this rule but was in fact an active agent in bringing about such changes. In addition, the women of the Big Three in particular had done this in such a way that their political power and prestige in relation to both a Christian and Eurocentric elite and other African-based traditions, eventually led to the complete acceptance and recognition of their legitimacy and superiority, for better or worse, as a religious faith.

In 1972, Mãe Menininha's preparations for the fiftieth anniversary celebration of her ascension to leadership over the temple initiation into the priesthood lead to a cavalcade of both national and international

attention for *Gantois.* The *Jornal do Brasil* announced the event with a banner headline that read, "Bahia celebrates the golden jubilee of Menininha, its most famous Mãe de Santo."[29] The paper was sure to note the presence of such celebrities as Jorge Amado, Pierre Verger, and Dorival Caymni, as well as the then governor of Bahia, Antonio Carlos Magalhães, and the mayor of Salvador, Cleriston Andrade, both of whom presented the revered leader with a bronze plaque honoring her service "to the Orixas and to the people of Bahia." And in a reflection of the prestige now held by *Gantois*, Mãe Menininha declared that her temple "is a Ketu nation and in addition the only one to maintain the purity of the Nagô tradition."[30]

An even larger story the following week described Mãe Menininha and *Gantois* in glowing terms, a far cry from the vicious attacks launched against candomble figures just a few decades earlier. The article came complete with an ample supply of smiling photographs. Famed novelist Jorge Amado, himself an *Ogan* at the rival temple of *Opó Afonjá*, summed up the prestige Mãe Menininha now enjoyed when he described her as "one of the most pure and authentic things in all of Bahia and a living patrimony of the State."[31]

Writing to Mãe Menininha that same year, Ruth Landes also offered congratulations on her fiftieth anniversary by reminding her, "In those years just before the World War, you wondered if you would live to see your daughters grown and the *casa Gantois* flourish. Now you have your answers."[32] Taking full advantage of the public attention given to Mãe Menininha, Carneiro wrote to Landes, "She appeared vindicating (as always) her direct inheritance from the old candomble of Barroquinha (Engenho Velho) which as you know is the first. Meaning that Gantois and not Engenho Velho has the oldest axé . . . " and that by August 1972 she had also been declared an honorary citizen of Rio de Janeiro.[33] In addition to several international press crews calling on her for interviews, Mãe Menininha received great attention as a central figure in the newly translated version of Ruth Landes's *The City of Women*, which was published in Brazil in October.

It seemed therefore that Mãe Menininha had reached a level of celebrity and recognition surpassing that of even the legendary Mãe Aninha who lived at a time when candomble was still struggling for popular acceptance and before the advent of mass media. Indeed, the infusion of candomble imagery and values into mainstream Brazilian culture made this possible. It appeared that the image of Brazil and Bahia, in particular, so feared by the progressive intellectuals of the early twentieth century, had come to pass. But far from causing the

world to view Brazil in horror as a nation of a barbaric, savage, and inglorious past, candomble imagery created and disseminated by Mãe Menininha's devotees in particular was precisely what was making Brazilian culture so appealing to the rest of the world, albeit in a romantic, exotic manner. Ironically, African cultural influences had finally come to be seen by the rest of the world (and an increasing number of Brazilians accepted it) as what their nation actually was. One tradeoff for this newfound stability however was described by Ickes, when he wrote, "Politicians, their appointees, even members of the military and economic elite, editors and journalists took control of the meanings of African-Bahian practices to construct a new notion of what 'Bahia' actually meant."[34]

Things finally came full circle on January 15, 1976, during one of the more public and popular annual candomble rituals. On that day, the steps of the famed Cathedral of *Nosso Senhor do Bomfim*, long associated with the oldest of the *orixas*, *Oxala*, were washed by its devotees in a Yoruba-derived ritual once banned by the Catholic Church. Then, Governor Roberto Santos announced the passage of law 25.095, which decreed "the societies which practice the Afro-Brazilian cults, as a public expression of the religions which they profess, can henceforth exercise their cult, independent of registrations, payment of fees or procurement of licenses."[35] Conspicuously absent from the ceremonies, however, were representatives from *Gantois* or *Opó Afonjá* who had never bothered to comply with the now overturned laws anyway. Their absence and lack of participation in any of the public commemorations of the passage of the law spoke volumes as to the true nature of power and prestige in Bahian society. Governor Santos's predecessor, it should be remembered, was very careful not to miss making an appearance at *Gantois* to pay homage to Mãe Menininha and publicly acknowledge her influence. Yet she felt no such pressure to return the gesture to the new governor on this occasion. Strangely, the credit for the passage of this law was largely given to the Federation of Afro-Brazilian Cults, a largely ignored and powerless institution.

In fact, what Mãe Menininha made clear through her actions was that while elected officials and other political power brokers might have had a certain degree of temporal power within which even she must operate, they stopped at her temple doors. In actuality, candomble, while regulated in the past by state authority, was never controlled by state authority. There was no need therefore to participate in a self-congratulatory ceremony designed to give the impression that state authorities were somehow bestowing onto the

candomble leadership something for which they should be grateful. As their history has shown, they needed no such permission in the first place.

With the removal of government oversight or interference, the Big Three's prestige for being able to freely function at the expense of their less orthodox brethren largely disappeared. Hence, the leadership of the Big Three had to once again find a way to reestablish their claims of status over the general candomble community and assert a new style of leadership. In late July and early August of 1983, joined by the leaders of two other temples they accepted as legitimate, the women of the Big Three did just that, releasing a series of public letters addressed to "the public and people of Candomble."[36] Once again portraying themselves as the only pure practitioners of an ancient faith, they publicly rejected any notion of what was previously called syncretism, "since it was created by slavery to which our ancestors were subjected." They also claimed that those who participated in what they defined as syncretic practices were doing so out of "ignorance and fear . . . (and were) looking for the acceptance of political and religious authorities."[37]

In a fascinating assertion of their cultural superiority and historic role as the self- appointed guardians of all things African, the letter continued,

> We do not want to make a revolution, we are not politicians, we are religious people and so our attitude is to distinguish, explain, differentiate what enriches ourselves what has to do with our people, our traditions . . . Finally, we reaffirm our position of last July, leaving it clear that political pressures have no effect over ourselves, (nor do), pressures from the press, consumerism, money from anywhere, as what is important to us is not personal profit, the satisfying of the immature and desire for fame but the maintenance of our religion, in all of its purity and truth, something that unfortunately in this city, this country has been more and more threatened by economic, cultural, political, artistic and intellectual power. . . . During slavery, syncretism was necessary for our survival, but now in its public manifestations . . . it degrades ourselves as a religion, [making it] possible [that it can] be seen as something exotic, folklore, tourism. We hope our grandchildren can be proud to belong to the religion of their ancestors, of being black, Negro, and bring Africa back to them, not slavery . . .
>
> We hear that in Bahia we have four thousand terreiros; quantity does not express anything in terms of religious foundations, in spite of having some meaning in terms of popularity . . .
>
> We leave it clear that our religious thought cannot be expressed through the Federation of African Cults or any other . . . entity, nor by

> politicians, Ogans, Obas or *anyone besides the ones who signed this letter* [emphasis mine.][38]

What this lengthy excerpt makes perfectly clear was the continuous and ongoing struggle for the power and prestige associated with leadership over the candomble world. Leadership was constantly being contested by competing temples, other African-based traditions, men and women, and ultimately, governmental agencies and political figures. The strategies the Big Three employed over the years were both highly successful and at the same time symbiotic in nature. Yoruba-based temples needed public acceptance and political power to survive. Intellectuals, artists, writers, and government agencies needed the Yoruba-based temples to provide access to their mysteries upon which they wished to base their careers, creative works, or plans for economic development.

However, once legal recognition of their full religious freedom assured their survival, many of these relationships became cumbersome and unnecessary. That is precisely why these women made it a point to emphasize that their religious thoughts could not be legitimately expressed by anyone but themselves. This was indeed a true departure from the days when these groups were seemingly the only ones who claimed to be publicly expressing "their" religious thought. Nowhere else will one find such a clear and overt example of this overriding goal of all the survival strategies the Big Three employed since the nineteenth century. That meant absolute control, freedom, and autonomy that clearly recognized the inherent superiority of Yoruba-based religious traditions as the female leadership of the Big Three interpreted and maintained them. None of this, however, precluded the Big Three temples (and others) from encouraging the dedication of government resources for the rebuilding of temples, funding of social service projects, and the redevelopment of historic Afro-Bahian *bairros* and sites. By 1985, for example, the Brazilian government convinced UNESCO to declare the *Pelourinho* district a World Heritage Site resulting in a $40,000,000 budget toward its renovation. Ironically, as Anadelia Romo has noted, many Afro-Bahian families found themselves displaced from their homes so that "black history could be turned into a commodity."[39]

On August 13, 1986, the last of the direct living links to the founding generation of the Big Three temples passed into *orun*, or the world of the ancestors. The death of Mãe Menininha certainly did not come as a complete surprise considering her advanced age of 92, but the significance of it was not lost on all those who recognized

her lasting impact on the image and progression of candomble in the twentieth century. No less than the venerable paper of record, the *New York Times* news service reported on the national mourning her passing touched off describing her as "the most revered woman in Brazil" and remarking that "the question of who will succeed the influential priestess has been a constant topic in Salvador, the mecca of Candomble and it seemed to arouse far more interest than the campaigns for state or congressional elections now reverberating through the narrow colonial streets."[40] Tens of thousands lined those streets as a fire truck carried her coffin through the city that came of age around the world with her. Several cabinet ministers, the governor, and countless public officials viewed her body lying in state during the municipally declared days of mourning. Later, a postage stamp bearing her likeness was issued to commemorate a life well lived. It reflected how inseparable her identity had become from that of the nation itself.

In 1989, and with much less fanfare as Julio Braga described, the state government of Bahia added article 275 to the Bahian state constitution. This stated that the government would:

> I) Catalog restore and protect the documents, works and others of artistic and cultural value, the monuments, fountains, flora and archaeological sites associated with Afro-Brazilian religion, which can be identified to be of concern to the temples and the Federation of Afro-Brazilian Cults;
>
> II) Prohibit from the bodies charged with the promotion of tourism, associated with the state, the exposition, commercial exploitation, moving or prejudicial sale of the symbols, expressions, music, dance, instruments, attire, clothing and cuisine, strictly associated with the Afro-Brazilian religion;
>
> III) Guarantee the proportional participation of representatives from the Afro-Brazilian religions, along with representation of all other religions in commissions, councils and other bodies which come to be created, as well as in events and promotions of a religious nature;
>
> (And)
>
> IV) Promote an adequate number of programs of instruction in the disciplines of geography, history, communications and expression, social studies and artistic education as to the Afro-Brazilian historical reality, which will be officially established in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, grades.[41]

Reflecting upon her death for the *Folha de Sao Paulo*, Antonio Riseiro, famed poet and author, closed his article, as we will this brief discussion, noting, "Today the outpouring of love and publicity over the death of the guardian of the axé of Bahia, in contrast to the death of the Mãe de Santo Aninha is quite revealing. The Candomble has ingrained itself into the social texture of Brazil. And this perhaps will be very good for the nation."[42]

Notes

Introduction

1. Literally "Father of (the) Saint," a phrase used in Brazil for a male priest of African-based religions. Mãe de Santo, "Mother of (the) Saint" would be used for a priestess.
2. Translates to "nation," a term used in Brazil to refer to specific African ethnic or religious identities.
3. This roughly translates to "house or home of the Yoruba," *Nagô* being the term used traditionally in Brazil for the Yoruba people.
4. "MPF recorre de decisão da Justiça que não reconhece umbanda e candomblé como religiões." *Globo*, May 20, 2014.

Chapter 1

1. A set of ritual rhythms played in a set order to open and close certain Yoruba-based religious ceremonies.
2. A primary goal of many Yoruba-based ritual is possession of humans by the *orixa* for purposes of communication and interaction with them. A person who has become possessed is sometimes referred to as a *cavalho* or a horse that is then ridden by the *orixa*.
3. See Stuart Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), Ch. 1. See also E. Bradford Burns, *A History of Brazil* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1980), p. 30.
4. Burns, pp. 28–70. See also John Hemmings, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians, 1500–1760* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977).
5. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, pp. 36–43 For more on the development of contact and commerce between Africans and Europeans as well as the decision to use African slave labor in the New World, see John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World 1400–1680* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992) and John Vogt, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast, 1469–1682* (Athens, Georgia, 1979).
6. Burns, *A History of Brazil*, p. 49.

7. Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, p. 118. For estimates on the numbers of Africans imported into Brazil, see Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1969) and David Eltis and David Richardson, "West Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: New Evidence of Long-Run Trends," *Slavery and Abolition* 18.1 (1997): 16–35 For more on ethnic clustering among enslaved African populations in the New World, see Gwendolyn Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana* (Louisiana University Press, Baton Rouge, 1992).
8. See Pierre Verger, *O Fumo Da Bahia e o Trafico dos Escravos Do Golfo de Benin*. Publicações do Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais, No. 6, Salvador, 1966.
9. See Robin Law, "The Evolution of the Brazilian Community in Ouidah," in Kristin Mann and Edna Bay, *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (Frank Cass, London, 2001), p. 22.
10. Edison Carneiro, *Ladinos e Crioulos* (Editora Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1964).
11. Verger, *O Fumo da Bahia*, p. 8.
12. For a good representation of life on a rural plantation, see Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants and Rebels* (University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1992) and Stanley Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee Country 1850–1900* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1985).
13. See Katia Mattoso, *Bahia: A Cidade de Salvador e Seu Mercado no Seculo 19* (HUCITEC, São Paulo, 1978).
14. Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil 1550–1888* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1999), p. 145.
15. Ibid., pp. 122–123.
16. Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1998), p. 189.
17. Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil* (Editora Universidade de Brasilia. Brasilia, 1988).
18. Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil*, p. 24.
19. Conde da Ponte in Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, pp. 156–157.
20. Ibid., p. 102; and Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil*, p. 124.
21. John Turnbull in Pierre Verger, *Noticias da Bahia-1850* (Corrupio, Salvador, p. 64).
22. Rodrigues, for example, could identify over 41 African languages still spoken, which were often used as a barometer of African ethnicity as late as the mid-nineteenth century. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, Ch. 5.
23. D. Sebastião Monteiro da Vide in Robert Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1983), p. 155.

24. Rodrigues documented one such case as late as 1899, 11 years after the abolition of slavery where Catholic missionaries from Nigeria were holding fund-raising events and masses in Yoruba. See Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 132.
25. Butler, p. 189.
26. Ibid., pp. 190–191.
27. Luis Nicolau Pares, *The Formation of Candomble: Vodun History and Ritual in Brazil* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2013).
28. Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil*, p. 126.
29. Roger Bastide, *The African Religions of Brazil* (John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1978), p. 162.
30. Melville Herskovits, *Dahomey* (New York, 1938); and *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 1990).
31. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 253.
32. Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil*, p. 124.
33. Bastide, *African Religions of Brazil*, p. 142.
34. Ibid., p. 158.
35. A. J. R. Russell-Wood, "Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil: A Study in Collective Behavior," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 54.4 (1974): 567–602.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Interestingly Elizabeth Kiddy in her study on brotherhoods in Minas Gerais noted that there they tended not to be organized along ethnic lines. See Elizabeth Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary: Memory and History in Minas Gerais, Brazil* (Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 2005). Even in Salvador, some scholars such as Luis Nicolau Pares claimed that due to interethnic marriages among Africans and other social factors, the brotherhoods were not as ethnically restrictive as once thought. See Luis Nicolau Pares, *The Formation of Candomble: Vodun History and Ritual in Brazil* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2013).
39. Verger, *Noticias da Bahia-1850*, p. 65.
40. Ibid.
41. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 150.
42. Russell-Wood, "Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil."
43. Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil*, pp. 129–130. See also João Jose Reis, *Death is a Festival: Funeral Rites and Rebellion in Nineteenth Century Brazil* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2003).
44. Russell-Wood, "Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil."
45. Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil*, p. 130.

46. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, pp. 148–150.
47. Ibid., pp. 156–158.
48. Russell-Wood, "Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil."
49. Bastide, *African Religions of Brazil*, p. 397.
50. Russell-Wood, "Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil."
51. João Jose Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1993), p. 6.
52. Ibid., pp. 5–13.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. See ibid. See also Alberto da Costa e Silva, "Buying and Selling Korans in 19th Century Rio de Janeiro," in Mann and Bay, eds., *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, p. 83. Interestingly, during my last stay in Bahia, an elder of a candomble temple spoke to me at great length as to how powerful and intelligent the old Muslims were and they even, he assured me, knew how to play the piano.
56. Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil*, p. 104.
57. Ibid., p. 101.
58. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, pp. 43–44.
59. Ibid., p. 46.
60. Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil*, p. 44.
61. Ibid., pp. 44–45.
62. Conde dos Arcos in Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 156.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., p. 46.
65. Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil*, p. 49.
66. Ibid., pp. 21–40.
67. Ibid., p. 193.
68. Ibid., Ch. 8.
69. Ibid., Ch. 11.
70. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 189.
71. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 61.
72. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 191.
73. Artur Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro* (Companhia Editora Nacional, São Paulo, 1940), p. 89.

Chapter 2

1. Pierre Verger, *O Fumo da Bahia e o Trafico dos Escravos Do Golfo de Benin* (Publicações do Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais, No. 6, Salvador, 1966), p. 8.
2. Miguel Calmon in Luiz Vianna Filho, *O Negro Na Bahia* (Coleção Documento Brasileiro, Sao Paulo, 1946). The term "*Nagô*" was often

used instead of Yoruba, a term not created until the nineteenth century. Most agree it comes from the word "Anagô," used by Dahomean slave traders as a derisive term meaning "dirty" or "unkempt." See Luis Nicolau Pares, "The Nagôization Process in Bahian Candomble," in Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs (eds), *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2004).

3. See Andrew Apter, "The Historiography of Yoruba Myth and Ritual," *History in Africa* 14 (1987), 1–25.
4. See P. C. Lloyd, *The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1971); and Robert Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba* (Methuen , London, 1969).
5. For more on the archeological evidence under discussion, see T. Shaw, *Nigeria: Its Archeology and Early History* (Thames and Hudson, London. 1978); T. Shaw and S. G. H. Daniels, "Excavations at Iwo Eleru," *West African Journal of Archeology* 14 (1984); F. Willet, "A Terra-Cotta Head from Old Oyo, Western Nigeria" *MAN* 59 (1959): 180–181; F. Willet, "Investigations at Old Oyo, 1956–57: An Interim Report," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2.1 (1961): 59–77; F. Willet, "A Survey of Recent Results in the Radiocarbon Chronology of Western and Northern Africa," *Journal of African History* 12 (1971): 339–370; D Calvorcoressi and M. David, "New Survey of Radiocarbon and Thermoluminescence Dates for West Africa," *Journal of African History* 20 (1979): 1–20. For a use of the king list methodology based on oral traditions, see Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire C. 1600-1836: A West African Imperialism in the era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977); and for an interesting use of linguistic evidence, see R. P. Armstrong. *The Affecting Presence: An Essay in Humanistic Anthropology* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1971).
6. For more on the Yoruba concept of Olodumare, see E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (Wazobia, New York, 1994).
7. Several versions of this creation myth can be found in S. G. Crowther, *A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language* (Seeleys, London, 1852); S. Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1897/1921); H. U. Beier, "Before Oduduwa," *Odu* 3 (1957): 25–32; M. Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria* (Faber and Faber, London 1962); M. A. Fabunmi, *Ife Shrines* (University of Ife Press, Ile-Ife, 1969); S. O. Biobaku (ed.), *Sources of Yoruba History* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973); and E. A. Kenyo, *Origin of the Progenitor of the Yoruba Race* (Yoruba Historical Research, Lagos, 1951). Interestingly, Samuel Johnson in *The History of the Yoruba* recorded several oral histories claiming the origins of the Yoruba in Mecca (p. 3) while Kenyo recorded others claiming Yoruba origins in Arabia or Egypt (pp. 9–10).

8. Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba*, pp. 3–4; and Kenyo, *Origin of the Progenitor*, pp. 12–15.
9. Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, Ch. 2.
10. Ibid., Ch. 1; Lloyd, *The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms*, Ch. 1; and "Sacred Kingship and Government among the Yoruba," *Africa* 30.3 (1960).
11. Henry Drewal, John Pemberton III, and Rowland Abiodun, *Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought* (Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1989).
12. For more on the Yoruba concept of identity, see T. A. Awoniyi, "The New World Yoruba," *Nigeria* 134–135 (1981): 104–107; Law, *The Oyo Empire*; and J. D. Y. Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890s-1970s* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983).
13. Karin Barber, *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow: Oriki, Women and the Past in a Yoruba Town* (Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC, 1991), p. 183.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Interestingly, a similar pattern had also developed in colonial and postcolonial Brazil whereby the power of a certain individual came to be measured by the number of people living on their land or who were in some way attached to them and to whom they would in theory give unquestioned loyalty. See Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth Century Brazil* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990); and Eul-Soo Pang, *Bahia in the First Brazilian Republic: Coronelismo and Oligarchies, 1889-1934*(University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1979).
17. Paul Lovejoy (ed.), *The Ideology of Slavery in Africa* (Sage, London, 1981, p. 1).
18. Ibid., Ch. 1.
19. Ibid.
20. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (eds), *Slavery in Africa* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1979), pp. 17–32.
21. For examples of this debate, see J. D. Fage. "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History." *Journal of African History* 10.3 (1969); Paul Lovejoy, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature." *Journal of African History* 30 (1989); and David Eltis and David Richardson (eds), *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Frank Cass, London, 1997).
22. Lovejoy, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade."
23. Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, pp. 22–26.
24. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 23.
25. Patrick Manning, *Slavery, Colonialism and Economic Growth in Dahomey, 1640-1960* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge,

1982); Law, *The Oyo Empire* and "The Atlantic Slave Trade in Yoruba Historiography," in Toyin Falola, *Yoruba Historiography* (University of Wisconsin System, Madison, 1991), p. 123.
26. Law, *The Oyo Empire*.
27. Fage, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History."
28. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 46.
29. Law, *The Oyo Empire*, p. 34.
30. Smith, *The Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, p. 18.
31. Law, *The Oyo Empire*.
32. Law, "The Constitutional Troubles of Oyo in the 18th Century," *Journal of African History* 12.1 (1971).
33. Peter Morton-Williams, "The Yoruba Ogboni Cult in Oyo," *Africa* 30. 4 (1960).
34. Apter, "The Historiography of Yoruba Myth and Ritual."
35. Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, p. 37.
36. Law, *The Oyo Empire*.
37. See Law, "The Oyo-Dahomey Wars, 1726–1823: A Military Analysis," in Toyin Falola and Robin Law (eds), *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Nigeria* (University of Wisconsin African Studies Program, Madison, 1992).
38. Eltis and Richardson, "West Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade."
39. For more on the many ways revenues were generated aside from tribute, see Falola, "The Yoruba Toll System: Its Operation and Abolition," *Journal of African History* 30 (1989).
40. Lloyd, *The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms*, Ch. 2. See also Law, "The Constitutional Troubles of Oyo in the 18th Century."
41. Falola, "Warfare and Trade Relations between Ibadan and the Ijebu in the 19th Century," in Falola and Law, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Nigeria*.
42. Donna Maier, "Studies in Pre-Colonial African War and Peace," in Falola and Law, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Nigeria*.
43. For more on Islam in Yorubaland, see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (Longman, London, 1948), Ch. 6; and Mahdi Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in West African History* (Oxford University Press Nigeria, Ibadan, 1978).
44. Hiskett. *The Development of Islam*, Ch. 1.
45. Ibid., Ch. 5.
46. Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, p. 96.
47. Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, Ch. 10.
48. Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in West African History*, Ch. 4; and Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, Ch. 10.
49. A. D. H. Bivar, "The Wathiqat Ahl Al-Sudan: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad," *Journal of African History* 11.2 (1961): 235–243.
50. Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, Ch. 10.

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., Ch. 11.
53. Law, "The Constitutional Troubles of Oyo in the 18th Century."
54. Law mentions how nine successive Alafins were forced to commit suicide by the *Oyo Mesi* resulting in a protracted period of instability and a military coup that he felt initiated the collapse of Oyo.
55. I. A. Akinjogbin, "The Prelude to the Yoruba Wars of the Nineteenth Century," *ODU* 1.2 (1965): 24–26, and "A Chronology of Yoruba History," *ODU* (Second Series) 2.2 (1966). Law, however, has the death of Abiodun in 1796. Law, "The Constitutional Troubles of Oyo in the 18th Century."
56. Akinjogbin, "A Chronology of Yoruba History 1789–1840."
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Smith, *The Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, pp. 113–114.
60. Ibid.
61. Dare Oguntomisin, "Warfare and Military Alliances in Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century," in Falola and Law, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Nigeria*.
62. Ibid.
63. Akinjogbin, "A Chronology of Yoruba History 1789–1840," *ODU* (Second Series) 2.2.
64. Ibid. For more on the role of the Brazilian slave-trading community in the Dahomean coup that brought Ghezo to power and thus liberated them from Oyo domination, see Law. "The Evolution of the Brazilian Community in Ouidah," in Mann and Bay, eds, *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (Frank Cass, London, 2001), p. 25.
65. Lloyd, *The Political Development of Yoruba Kingdoms*, Ch. 4.
66. Smith, *The Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, p. 121 and Ch. 11.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Akinjogbin, "A Chronology of Yoruba History: 1789-1840."
70. Oguntomisin in Falola and Law, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Nigeria*.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Smith, *The Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, p. 175.
75. Law, "The Atlantic Slave Trade in Yoruba Historiography," in Falola, *Yoruba Historiography*.
76. Law, "The Evolution of the Brazilian Community in Ouidah," in Mann and Bay, *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, p. 26; and Edna Bay, "Protection, Political Exile and the Atlantic Slave Trade: History and Collective Memory in Dahomey," in ibid., p. 42.

77. Pierre Verger, *Trade Relations between the Bight of Benin and Bahia from the 17th to 19th Century* (Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1976).
78. Mann and Bay, *Rethinking the African Diaspora*," p. 5.
79. J. Roland Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2005).
80. Apter, "The Historiography of Yoruba Myth and Ritual."
81. Ibid.

Chapter 3

1. Pierre Verge, *O Fumo da Bahia e o Trafico dos Escravos Do Golfo de Benin* (Publicações do Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais, No. 6, Salvador), 1966.
2. João Jose Reis and Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian, "Nagô and Mina: The Yoruba Diaspora in Brazil," in Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs (eds), *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2004), p.80.
3. Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil* (Editora Universidade de Brasilia, Brasilia, 1988).
4. Roger Bastide, *The African Religions of Brazil* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1978), p. 120. For a detailed account of Chacha and his community, see Robin Law, "The Evolution of the Brazilian Slave Community in Ouidah," in Kristin Mann and Edna Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (Frank Cass, London, 2001). See also Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving "Port" 1727–1892* (Ohio University Press, Athens, 2004).
5. Fayette Wiberly, "The Expansion of Afro-Bahian Religious Practices in Nineteenth Century Cachoeira," in Hendrick Kraay (ed.), *Afro-Brazilian Culture and Politics: Bahia 1790s–1990s* (M. E. Sharpe, London, 1998), p. 76.
6. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 125.
7. Verger, *O Fumo da Bahia*, p. 136, and Verger, *Noticias da Bahia-1850* (Corrupio, Salvador, 1981). See also J. Roland Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2005).
8. Verger, "A Contribuição Especial Das Mulheres Ao Candomble Do Brasil," in *Artigos: Tomo I.* Corrupio Edições, São Paulo, 1992.
9. Luis Nicolau Pares, *The Formation of Candomble: Vodun History and Ritual in Brazil* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2013).

10. Verger, *Noticias da Bahia-1850*, p. 65.
11. Ibid.
12. Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1998).
13. Waldeir Freitas Oliveira and Vivaldo da Costa Lima, *Cartas da Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos* (Editora Corrupio, São Paulo, 1987), p. 55.
14. Edison Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia* (Edições de Ouro, Rio de Janeiro, 1948), p. 63.
15. Verger, "Orixas da Bahia," in Carybe, *Iconografia dos Deuses Africanos no Candomble da Bahia* (Universidade Federal da Bahia/Raizes, São Paulo, 1980).
16. Vivaldo da Costa Lima, "Nações de Candomble," in *Encontro de Nações de Candomble* (Universidade Federal da Bahia/Ianama, Salvador, 1984), pp. 23–34.
17. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 191.
18. Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1994), p. 41; and E. Franklin Frazier, "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil," *American Sociological Review* 7.4 (August 1942): p. 473.
19. Verger, "Orixas da Bahia."
20. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, pp. 191, 201.
21. Stefania Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomble* (Duke University Press, Durham, 2010), p. 14.
22. Verger, "Orixas da Bahia."
23. Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia*, p. 63.
24. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 194.
25. Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia*, p. 63.
26. Ibid.
27. Oliveira and Costa Lima, *Cartas de Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos*, p. 54.
28. Deoscoredes Maximiliano Dos Santos, *Historia de um Terreiro Nagô* (Carthago e Forte Editoras, São Paulo, 1994), p. 10. This work by famed Bahian sculptor and high-ranking member of the *Opó Afonjá* temple, known more commonly as Mestre Didi, is one of the few historical accounts of a Big Three temple written by one of its members and is a good example of a recent trend in the literature surrounding candomble.
29. Diogenes Reboucas Filho, *Pai Agenor* (Editora Corrupio, São Paulo, 1998).
30. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 157.
31. Ibid. In 1926, long after her public involvement with *Engenho Velho* began, she actually became a board member of this brotherhood.

32. Ibid, p. 96. Additional properties aside from the temple grounds were recorded by Ruth Landes. See Ruth Landes Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Box 23.
33. Dos Santos, *Historia de um Terreiro Nagô*, p. 10. See also Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 194.
34. Maria Stella de Azevedo Santos, *Meu Tempo E Agora* (Projecto Centrhu, Curitiba, 1995), Ch. 1.
35. Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia*, p. 63.
36. Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil*, p. 13.
37. Karin Barber, *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow: Oriki, Women and the Past in a Yoruba Town* (Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC, 1991).
38. Henry Drewal, "Preface," in *Geledé* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1983).
39. Ibid., Ch. 1.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. See Barber, *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow*, Ch. 6; and Funso Afolayan, "Women and Warfare in Yorubaland during the Nineteenth Century," and T. M. Llesanmi, "The Yoruba Worldview on Women and Warfare," in Toyin Falola and Robin Law (eds), *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Nigeria*, University of Wisconsin African Studies Program, Madison, 1992.
43. Barber, *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow*, Ch. 8.
44. Ibid., p. 276.
45. Afolayan, "Women and Warfare," in Falola and Law, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Nigeria*.
46. Ibid.
47. Vivaldo da Costa Lima, "A Familia de Santo nos Candombles Jêje-Nagôs da Bahia: Um Estudo de Relações Intra-Grupais," Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador 1977.
48. See Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*; and João Jose Reis and Mamigomiam, "Nagô and Mina: *The Yoruba Diaspora in Brazil*, p. 81.
49. Joseph Murphy, *Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1994), p. 44.
50. Butler, "Africa in the Reinvention of 19th Century Afro-Bahian Identity," in Mann and Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, p. 144.
51. Pares also makes note of this in a historical context suggesting that the fluidity with which individuals are able to move between temples or competing religious traditions suggests that these communities are far from "being mutually exclusive entities." See Pares, *The Formation of Candomble*, p. 68.

52. Rachel Harding, *A Refuge in Thunder: Candomble and Alternative Spaces of Blackness* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2000), pp.72–74. For more estimates on male leadership of candomble houses, see Pares, *The Formation of Candomble*, pp. 96–97; and João Jose Reis, "Candomble in Nineteenth Century Bahia: Priests, Followers, Clients," in Mann and Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, pp. 116–134.
53. The *ogan* is an auxiliary role held by men in candomble temples that operates under two tiers; it is a religious role and a more honorific title, and is described later.
54. Landes, "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 35 (1940): 386–387. For Melville Herskovits's responses, see "Review of The City of Women," *American Anthropologist* 50.1 (Jan–March 1948).
55. See Wande Abimbola, "The Ifa Divination System," *Nigeria Magazine* 122/123 (1977): 35–76; and J. D. Y. Peel, "The Pastor and the Babalawo: The Interaction of Religions in Nineteenth Century Yorubaland," *Africa* 60 (1990): 338–369.

Chapter 4

1. See Paul Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip and Gods: Transformations in Brazilian Candomble* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002), p. 81.
2. Ibid., p. 82.
3. Ibid.
4. Julio Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço: Repressão e Resistencia nos Candombles da Bahia* (Editora da Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, 1995), p. 105. Stefania Capone interestingly noted a similar process in Rio de Janeiro. See Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomble* (Duke University Press, Durham, 2010), p. 70.
5. Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip and Gods*, p. 83.
6. Ibid., p. 90.
7. *Jornal de Noticias*, May 22, 1897, in Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil* (Fundação Universidade de Brasilia, Brasilia, 1988). Rodrigues reprinted many newspaper accounts in their entirety from the nineteenth century regarding candomble and is one of the more widely cited sources on the subject.
8. *Diario de Noticias*, October 5, 1896, in Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 239.
9. For more on the notion that religious freedom protections were not intended to apply to African-based religions, see Joao Jose Reis and Eduardo Silva, *Negociação e Conflito: A Resistencia Negra no Brasil Escravista* (Companhia das Letras, São Paulo, 1989).
10. *Diario da Bahia*, December 12, 1896, in Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 240.

11. The newspaper itself was published from 1863 to 1883 and again from 1887 to 1890. See Dale Graden, "So Much Superstition among These People! Candomble and the Dilemmas of Afro-Bahian Intellectuals, 1864–1871," in Hendrick Kraay (ed.), *Afro-Brazilian Culture and Politics: Bahia, 1790s to 1990s* (M. E. Sharpe, London, 1998), p. 57.
12. Graden, "So Much Superstition," in Kraay, *Afro-Brazilian Culture and Politics*, p. 59.
13. See Pares, *The Formation of Candomble: Vodun History and Ritual in Brazil* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2013), p. 102.
14. Ibid., p. 60.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 63.
17. Ibid., p. 62.
18. Roger Bastide, The African Religions of Brazil (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1978), p. 302.
19. *A Tarde*, August 20, 1928, in Artur Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro* (Companhia Editora Nacional, São Paulo, 1940), p. 138.
20. *Diario da Bahia*, January 10, 1929, in Artur Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro*, p. 139.
21. *A Tarde*, August 20, 1928, in Artur Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro*, p. 138.
22. Ibid., p. 139.
23. *Diario da Bahia*, January 10, 1929, in ibid., p. 139.
24. Ibid.
25. *A Noite*, May 26, 1925, in Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 158.
26. Ibid
27. Ibid.
28. Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1994), p. 131.
29. For more on immigration to Brazil, see George Reid Andrews, *Black and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil 1888–1988* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1991).
30. See Thomas Skidmore, *Black and White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Duke University Press, Durham, 1993).
31. Silvio Romero, "A poesia popular no Brasil," in *Revista Brasileira, 1879, tomo I*, p. 99.
32. Ibid.
33. Nina Rodrigues, *O animismo fetichista dos negros bahiano* (Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1935). For more on the early career of Rodrigues, see Anadelia A. Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum: Race, Reform and Tradition in Bahia* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2010).
34. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, pp. 6–7.
35. Ibid.
36. Edison Carneiro, *Ladinos e Crioulos* (Editora Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1964), p. 103.

37. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 129.
38. Ibid., Ch. 7.
39. Ibid., Ch. 8. Pares, in his work on Jeje religious traditions in Brazil, posits that they were the group who were the most significant in the institutionalization of candomble temples and whose hegemonic influence lasted into the 1870s. See Pares, *The Formation of Candomble*.
40. Ibid., pp. 121–152.
41. Ibid., p. 117.
42. Joao Jose Reis, "Candomble in 19th Century Bahia: Priests, Followers, Clients,"in Kristin Mann and Edna Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Creation of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (Frank Cass, London, 2001), p. 117.
43. Whether Rodrigues created this perception or was manipulated into it by his plethora of Yoruba-based informants at *Gantois* is still a matter of scholarly contention. For more, see Beatriz Gois Dantas, *Vovó Nagô, papai branco* (Edições Graal, Rio de Janeiro, 1988); Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum*; Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil*; and J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005).
44. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 216.
45. See Graden, "So Much Superstition," in Kraay (ed.), *Afro-Brazilian Culture and Politics*, p. 69. For more on the concept of Yoruba cultural purity in Brazil, see also Beatriz Gois Dantas, *Vovo Nagô*.
46. Carneiro, *Ladinos e Crioulos*, p. 110.
47. Manuel Querino, *Costumes Africanos no Brasil* (Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, 1988).
48. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 7.
49. Gilberto Freyre, *The Master and the Slaves* (*Casa Grande e Senzala*), trans. Samuel Putnam, 2nd English edition revised (Alfred Knopf, New York, 1978).
50. See, for example, Florestan Fernandes, *O negro no mundo dos brancos* (Difel, Sao Paulo, 1972) and *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes*, 2 vols. (Dominus, São Paulo, 1965). See also Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo*.
51. Papers from the 1934 Conference were published in two volumes. See E. Roquette Pinto (ed.), *Estudos Afro-Brasileiros* (Editora Limitada, Rio de Janeiro, 1935); and Gilberto Freyre, *Novos Estudos Afro-Brasileiros* (Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1937).
52. Ibid., p. 239.
53. Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum*, p. 52.
54. See Bastide, *The African Religions of Brazil*, p. 21.
55. Artur Ramos, *As Culturas Negras no Novo Mundo* (Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1937), p. 75.

56. Ibid., "Preface."
57. Ibid.
58. Carneiro, *Ladinos e Crioulos*, p. 103.
59. Ibid.
60. Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1942), p. xix.
61. Lorenzo Turner, "Some Contacts of Brazilian ex-slaves with Nigeria, West Africa," *Journal of Negro History* 27.1 (January 1942): pp. 52–62; and E. Franklin Frazier, "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil," *American Sociological Review* 7.4 (August 1942): pp. 469–474.
62. See Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*..
63. Frazier, "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil," p. 472.
64. Landes, "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 35 (1940): 386–397.
65. Artur Ramos, *A Aculturação Negra no Brasil* (Companhia Editora Nacional, São Paulo, 1942), p. 190.
66. Letter from Edison Carneiro to Artur Ramos, October 28, 1938, in Waldir Freitas Oliveira and Vivaldo da Costa Lima (eds), *Cartas de Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos de 4 de Janeiro de 1936 a 6 de Dezembro de 1938* (Editora Corrupio, São Paulo, 1987), p. 180.
67. See Melville Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1937) and Melville Herskovits and Frances Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1937).
68. Melville Herskovits, "Review of the City of Women," *American Anthropologist* 50.1 (Jan–March 1948).
69. Walter Jackson, "Melville Herskovits and the Search for Afro-American Culture," in George Stocking (ed.), *Malinowski Rivers, Benedict and Others: Essays on Culture and Personality. History of Anthropology*, vol. 4., pp. 95–126.
70. Sally Cole, "Ruth Landes in Brazil: Writing, Race and Gender in 1930s American Anthropology," in Landes, *The City of Women*, p. xxi.
71. See Stephan Palmie, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Duke University Press, Durham, 2002).
72. Melville Herskovits, "The Social Organization of Candomble" (1955) in Frances Herskovits (ed.), *The New World Negro* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1966).
73. Melville Herskovits, "The Contributions of Afroamerican Studies to Africanist Research" (1948), in Frances Herskovits (ed.), *The New World Negro*, p. 12.
74. Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, p. 117.
75. Ibid., p. 253.
76. Herskovits, "The Contributions of Afroamerican Studies," p. 12.

77. Paul Lovejoy, "Shifting Paradigms in the Study of the African Diaspora and of Atlantic History and Culture," in Mann and Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, p. 16.
78. Bastide, *The African Religions of Brazil*, p. xvi.
79. UNESCO did, however, fund various research projects in order to revive interest in the cultural impacts on American societies. See Roger Bastide, "Race Relations in Brazil," *UNESCO International Social Science Bulletin*, 9 .8–9 (August–September 1952). For a critical analysis of UNESCO's goals, see Carneiro, "Os Estudos Brasileiros do Negro," in Carneiro, *Ladinos e Crioulos*, p. 105. Two of the major works published by UNESCO-funded scholars are Charles Wagley (ed.), *Race and Class in Rural Brazil* (Paris, 1952); and Florestan Fernandes, *Relações racias entre negros e brancos em São Paulo* (São Paulo, 1955). See also Marcos Chor Maio and Ricardo Ventura (eds), *Raça, Ciência e Sociedade no Brasil* (CCBB, Rio de Janeiro, 1966).
80. See Dantas, *Vovó Nagô e papai branco*; Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil*; Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*; and Pares, *The Formation of Candomble*.
81. Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro*, p. 57.
82. Carneiro, *Religões Negras* (Civilização Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro, 1936), p. 63.
83. Box 23, Folder 155, Melville Herskovits Papers Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
84. Roger Bastide, *Estudos Afro-Brasileiros* (Editora Perspectiva, São Paulo, 1973), p. 165.
85. Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 292.
86. Julio Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço: Repressão e Resistencia nos Candombles da Bahia* (Editora da Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, 1995).
87. Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*, pp. 46–64.
88. O Estado da Bahia, May 14, 1936, in Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 150.
89. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 23.
90. Turner, "Some Contacts of Brazilian Ex-slaves," p. 59.
91. Ibid. p. 62.
92. Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 241.
93. Turner, "Some Contacts of Brazilian ex-slaves," p. 62.
94. Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 241.
95. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 26.
96. Ibid., p. 28.
97. Ibid., p. 22.
98. Box 23, Ruth Landes Papers, National Anthropological Archive, Washington, DC.
99. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 32.

100. Scott Ikes, *African-Brazilian Culture and Regional Identity in Bahia, Brazil* (University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2013), p. 54.
101. Maria Stella de Azevedo Santos, *Meu Tempo e Agora* (Projecto Centrhu, Curitiba, 1995). Interestingly, Mãe Stella notes the term "*Ogan*" was incorporated from another African group the Jeje, neighbors of the Yoruba in West Africa, again reflecting the tendency for cultures from this region to be highly flexible and willing to adapt or even adopt cultural elements from each other and incorporate them into their respective organizational structures. See also Pares, *The Formation of Candomble*, pp. 93–94.
102. Ibid.
103. Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 63.
104. Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil*, p. 28.
105. Rodrigues, *O Animismo fetichista do negro bahiano*, p. 70.
106. Ibid., p. 62.
107. Box 23, Landes Papers.
108. Letter from Edison Carneiro to Artur Ramos, November 14, 1938, in Oliveira and Costa Lima (eds), *Cartas a Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos*, p. 183.
109. Box 19, Folders 117 and 121, Herskovits Papers.
110. Matory viewed this act not as the reestablishment of an ancient African institution but rather part of the aforementioned Lagos-based literary movement that Martiniano was clearly influenced by and a part of. See Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*, p. 126.
111. Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 47.
112. Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 293.
113. See Braga, *Na Gamela de Feitiço*, p. 178; and Diogenes Reboucas Filho, *Pai Agenor* (Editora Corrupio, São Paulo, 1998). Braga also mentions a version of the story where Mãe Menininha of *Gantois* influenced the decision to end the ban on drumming by refusing to perform a ritual for the wife of a high-ranking military officer until she convinced her husband to assist them. See Ickes, *African-Brazilian Culture and Regional Identity in Bahia, Brazil* (University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2013), p. 64, for a description of her role in also reestablishing and legally protecting several other forms of Yoruba religious public ritual.

Chapter 5

1. Deoscoredes Maximiliano Dos Santos, *Historia de um Terreiro Nagó* (Carthago e Forte Editoras. São Paulo, 1994).
2. For a reprinting of these articles plus Edison Carneiro's eulogy, see *Ladinos and Crioulos* (Editora Civilização Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro, 1964), p. 107.

3. Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1994), p. 28. See also Box 19, Folder 117, Herskovits Papers.
4. Waldir Oliveria Freitas and Vivaldo da Costa Lima, *Cartas de Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos de 4 de Janeiro a 6 de dezembro de 1938* (Editora Corrupio, São Paulo, 1987), p. 43.
5. Box 19, Folder 116, Book IV, Herskovits Papers.
6. Ibid.
7. Box 18, Folder 110, Book C1, Herskovits Papers.
8. Box 19, Folder 121, Book C, Herskovits Papers.
9. Box 18, Folder 111, Book C, Herskovits Papers.
10. Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1998, p. 205).
11. Ibid., p. 206.
12. Ibid.
13. The papers presented at the 1937 conference were published by Edison Carneiro and Aydano do Couto Ferraz in *O Negro no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1940).
14. Scott Ickes, *African-Brazilian Culture and Regional Identity in Bahia, Brazil* (University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2013, p. 67).
15. For a more detailed description of how Vargas functionaries constructed these partnerships and how it led to an increased acceptance of candomble, see Ickes, *African-Bahian Culture*.
16. Paul Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip and Gods: Transformations in Brazilian Candomble* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 95).
17. Gilberto Freyre in Julio Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço: Repressão e Resistencia nos Candombles da Bahia* (Editora da Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, 1995), p. 77.
18. Letter from Carneiro to Landes, September 18, 1939, Box 4, Landes Papers.
19. Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1942), p. 222.
20. Carneiro, in Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*.
21. Ibid., p. 233.
22. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 72.
23. Letter from Carneiro to Ramos, July 15, 1937, in Oliveira and Lima, *Cartas a Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos*, p. 152.
24. Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil*, p. 183.
25. Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 278.
26. Letter from Carneiro to Ramos, July 19, 1937, in Oliveria and Lima, *Cartas as Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos*, p. 152.
27. Ibid., p. 153.
28. Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 166.

29. Ibid.
30. Edison Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia* (Edições do Ouro, Rio de Janeiro, 1937), p. 128. See also Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 170, for a list of those serving on the Executive Commission and other elected bodies of the União. Out of 26 names, only three were easily identifiable as being female.
31. *O Estado da Bahia*, August 4, 1937, in Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, pp. 169–171, which contains a complete list of the articles.
32. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 61.
33. Ibid.
34. Box 19, Folder 123, Book E. Herskovits Papers.
35. Box 19, Folder 119, Herskovits Papers. According to Herskovits, Alexandria operated her temple for close to 20 years but it closed after her death. Interestingly, her onetime rival Mãe Menininha continued to care for the temple's spiritual possessions for many years after its closing.
36. Manuel Vega, "Mãe Menininha," in Joseph Murphy and Mei-Mei Sanford (eds), *Oşun across the Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2001), p. 79.
37. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 79
38. Vega in Murphy and Sanford (eds), *Oşun across the Waters*, p. 84.
39. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 81.
40. Ibid., p. 80
41. Ibid., p. 82.
42. Ibid.
43. Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia*, p. 128; and Roger Bastide. *The African Religions of Brazil* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1978).
44. João Jose Reis, "Candomble in19th Century Bahia: Priests, Followers, Clients," in Kristin Mann and Edna Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (Frank Cass, London, 2001), p. 120.
45. Frances Herskovits (ed.), *The New World Negro* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1966), p. 322. See also Melville Herskovits. "Some Economic Aspects of the Afrobahian Candomble," in Frances Herskovits (ed.), *The New World Negro.*
46. Luiz Vianna Filho, *Pai Agenor* (Editora Corrupio, São Paulo, 1998).
47. Carneiro, "The Structure of African Cults in Bahia," *Journal of American Folklore* 53 (1940): p. 272; and Pierre Verger, "A Contribuição das Mulheres Ao Candomble do Brasil" in *Artigos, Tomo I* (Corrupios, São Paulo, 1992).
48. Vivaldo da Costa Lima, "A Familia de Santo nos Candombles Jeje-Nagôs da Bahia."

49. Verger, "A Contribuição Especial das Mulheres as Candomble do Brasil," p. 113.
50. Ibid., p. 119.
51. Butler, "Africa in the Re-Invention of 19th Century Afro-Bahian Identity," in Mann and Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, p. 150.
52. Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia*, p. 24.
53. Manuel Querino, *Costumes Africanos No Brasil* (Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, 1988), p. 41.
54. Artur Ramos, *A Acculturação Negro No Brasil* (Companhia Editora Nacional, São Paulo, 1942), p. 151.
55. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 52.
56. J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2005). In addition, a review of customs records and passport registries in the state archive yielded similar results including some reviews of similar records from England.
57. See Box 55, Brazil Diary, 1968. Herskovits Papers for a version of this story recorded by Frances Herskovits from Vivaldo da Costa Lima's interview with the head of *Opó Afonjá* in 1968. Yet another version of this story was relayed to me by one of Bamboxê's descendants, a well-known *pai-de-santo* in Bahia. According to him, the founders of Engenho Velho brought Bamboxê to Bahia as a free man in the 1830s after their stay in Africa.
58. Dos Santos, *Historia de um Terreiro Nago*, p. 9. Kim Butler, however, has claimed that it was a close male relative of Bamboxê, Felisberto Sowzer or Benzinho, who participated in her initiation. See *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 204.
59. Bamboxê's descendant, the grandson of Benzinho, claimed that Sowzer was, in fact, the son of Bamboxê though I have been unable to confirm this elsewhere.
60. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, p. 204.
61. Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*, p. 46. Interestingly, Benzinho's grandson claims this original name was, in fact, Sowzer, and that his Portuguese-speaking descendants changed the spelling to the more common Sousa. As Sousa is a very common Portuguese surname, it is most likely Matory's version that is correct.
62. Box 23, Landes Papers.
63. Pai Agenor, who died in 2004 at the age of 97, was widely believed to be the last living Brazilian *babalawo*. Interestingly, there are many Nigerian *babalawos* who tour Brazil several times a year offering their services to various temples, a phenomenon I witnessed several times.
64. Box 22, Folder 134, Herskovits Papers. Herskovits was very quick to realize that there were many male initiates though most temples denied their existence. An *ogan* at *Gantois* admitted privately to

Herskovits that men were initiated but not permitted to dance or become possessed by the *orixa* thus giving the impression that they were all *ogans*. This theory is confirmed by Pai Agenor. See Filho, *Pai Agenor*, p. 76.

65. Box 22, Folder 135, Herskovits Papers.
66. Given that there were, and still are, no shortage of men associated with this temple, it is highly unlikely this was actually true. It remains interesting, however, that it was a widely accepted premise.
67. Box 19, Folder 124, Herskovits Papers.
68. Filho, *Pai Agenor*, p. 73.
69. Carneiro, *Candombles da Bahia*, p. 58.
70. Box 23, Folder 155, Herskovits Papers.
71. Luiz Sergio Barbosa, "A Federação Baiana do Culto Afro-Brasileiro," in Braga (ed.), *Encontro de Nações de Candomble* (Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais, Salvador, 1984), p. 71.
72. Carneiro, *Negros Bantus* (Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1937), p. 27.
73. Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 96. For more on Spiritism in Brazil, see David J. Hess, *Samba in the Night: Spiritism in Brazil* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1994).
74. Carneiro, *Negros Bantus*, p. 30.
75. Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 277.
76. Ibid., p. 276.
77. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 37.
78. Landes, "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 35 (1940): 392.
79. Box 22, Folder 138, Herskovits Papers.
80. Box 19, Folder 114, Book I, Herskovits Papers. Interestingly, this reflects one of the more common criticisms one hears even today of the Yoruba-based temples in Salvador. They seem more concerned with tradition and orthodoxy than with transmitting a complete understanding of the deeper or even literal meanings behind their rituals. In other words, the hierarchies of the Big Three had a vested interest in maintaining their positions of power and prestige by retaining the deeper meanings of their ritual language as knowledge earned only through years of dedicated service, and this position still holds sway.
81. Box 22, Folder 139, Herskovits Papers.
82. Box 19, Folder 124, Herskovits Papers.
83. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 176.
84. Box 19, Folder 114, Herskovits Papers. See also "The Panan, an Afrobahian Religious Rite of Transition," in Frances Herskovits, *The New World Negro*, p. 218. There Herskovits defines the Jeje as being "the most orthodox in an African sense and the Ketu the most numerous," thus reflecting his own bias toward the group he studied extensively in West Africa.

85. Box 19, Folder 114, Herskovits Papers.
86. Filho, *Pai Agenor*, p. 28.
87. Box 19, Folder 116, Herskovits Papers.
88. Box 19, Folder 114, Herskovits Papers.
89. Box 19, Folder 116, Herskovits Papers.
90. Box 19, Folder 117, Herskovits Papers.
91. Box 19, Folder 114, Herskovits Papers.
92. Box 22, Folder 136, Herskovits Papers.
93. Box 19, Folder 114, Herskovits Papers.
94. Box 19, Folder 121, Herskovits Papers.
95. Letter from Edison Carneiro to Ruth Landes, March 14, 1946, Box 4, Landes Papers.
96. Landes, *The City of Women*, pp. 146–147.
97. Ibid., p. 148. For an analysis on black marriage rates in Brazil in general, see Butler. *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won*, pp. 135–136.
98. Box 19, Folder 122, Herskovits Papers.
99. Ibid.
100. Landes, "Fetish Worship in Brazil," *Journal of American Folklore* 53.210 (1940): 261.
101. Ibid., p. 268.
102. Landes, "The Ethos of the Negro in the New World," p. 7.
103. Landes, "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality," p. 394.
104. Landes, *The City of Women*, p. 37.
105. Matory, in critiquing this notion, suggested that what Carneiro and others who shared this belief had expressed was a misunderstanding or a reinterpretation of West African metaphors such as being "ridden" through the lens of Brazilian gender constructs. For more, see Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*, p. 212.
106. Carneiro, "The Structure of African Cults in Bahia," pp. 275–276.
107. Box 4, Landes Papers.
108. Landes's theories remain a subject of interest and debate. For example, J. Roland Matory, writing in 2005, described Landes as being part of class of researchers who "identify in distant societies ideal models for the destruction of western sexism." He later claims it was virtually Landes alone who created the myth of female exclusivity or domination over the Yoruba-based candomble priesthood by deliberately ignoring the large number of male priests and deliberately misquoting or misrepresenting the words of male practitioners such as Martiniano do Bomfim. Matory sees the influence of Landes in the writings of Carneiro even though it seems though their correspondence that they shared these ideas and helped each other refine them. Interestingly, Matory, as do many researchers including myself, prefers to examine the agency and self-determinative actions of Africans and Afro-Brazilians in the development of *candomble* traditions and political actions. It seems that to credit Landes as

being the sole creator of the theory of female domination while giving little credit to Landes's subjects who clearly would benefit from such a portrayal is not giving enough credit to the agency of her Afro-Bahian informants. For more, see Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*, pp. 190–200.

109. Herskovits, "A Review of the City of Women," *American Anthropologist* 50.1 (1948): 234
110. Ramos, *A Acculturação Negro No Brasil*, p. 190.
111. Verger, "A Contribuição Especial das Mulheres as Candomble do Brasil," p. 10.
112. Roger Bastide in Verger, "A Contribuição Especial das Mulheres as Candomble do Brasil", pp. 110–111.
113. Carneiro, *Ladinos e Crioulos*, p. 233.
114. Box 12, Landes Papers. Landes, "Afro-Brazilian Cults and New World Racism," Unpublished paper, p. 5.
115. Box 1, Landes Papers. Biography written for George Park.
116. Box 4, Landes Papers. Letter from Ruth Landes to D. W. Southern, March 4, 1983.
117. Box 8, Landes Papers. Letter from Pierre Verger to Ruth Landes, July 22, 1950.
118. Box 4, Landes Papers. Letter from Edison Carneiro to Ruth Landes, March 14, 1946.

Chapter 6

1. Scott Ickes described Verger's intellectual motivation as coming from a desire to bring African and African diaspora communities toward a closer and more unified cultural relationship based on mutual understanding. He also interestingly claimed that Tia Massi, head of *Engenho Velho,* had attempted to initiate Verger as an *ogan* of that temple first but Mãe Senhora outmaneuvered her and won him over. Yet another example of the enduring competition for prestige among the Big Three and the long-term strategy of linking researchers to their temples to benefit in this case not only from the prestige involved of being the subject of inquiry but also the transnational linkages he could facilitate with African Yoruba religious leadership. See Scott Ickes, *African-Brazilian Culture and Regional Identity in Bahia, Brazil* (University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2013).
2. Paulina Laura Alberto, *Black Intellectuals in Twentieth Century Brazil* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2011).
3. Stefania Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomble* (Duke University Press, Durham, 2010).
4. Diogenes Reboucas Filho, *Pai Agenor* (Editora Corrupio, São Paulo, 1998).
5. Box 19, Folder 114, Herskovits Papers.

6. Box 19, Folder 123, Herskovits Papers.
7. Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1994), pp. 30–31.
8. Ibid., p. 28.
9. Ibid., p. 31.
10. Ibid., p. 32.
11. Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1942), p. 313.
12. Ibid., p. 316.
13. Manuel Vega, "Mãe Menininha," in Joseph Murphy and Mei-Mei Sanford (eds), *Oşun across the Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2001).
14. J. Roland Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2005), pp. 202–203.
15. Both Landes and Herskovits, for example, noted her attendance at funeral rites for high-ranking members of *Opó Afonjá*.
16. Box 23, Folder 155, Herskovits Papers.
17. Luiz Barbosa, "A Federação Baiana do Culto Afro-Brasileiro," in Julio Braga (ed.), *Encontro de Nações de Candomble* (Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais, Salvador, 1984), p. 70.
18. For the official resolution outlining the goals of the Federação, see Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço: Repressão e Resistencia nos Candombles da Bahia* (Editora Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, 1995).
19. Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 26.
20. For more on the development of the tourist industry in Bahia, see Anadelia A. Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum: Race, Reform and Tradition in Bahia* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2010).
21. Box 63, Folder 640, Herskovits Papers. Russell Hamilton, "Attitudes towards Candomble in Bahia," Unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Continuities and Discontinuities in Afro-American Societies and Cultures, April 2–4, 1970.
22. Box 55, Brazil Diary 1968, Herskovits Papers.
23. Box 63, Folder 640, Herskovits Papers. Russell Hamilton, "Attitudes towards Candomble in Bahia," p. 12.
24. Ibid., p. 13.
25. Box 4, Landes Papers. Letter from Edison Carneiro to Ruth Landes, February 2, 1966.
26. Ibid.
27. Box 55, Brazil Diary 1968, Herskovits Papers.
28. Box 63, Folder 640, Herskovits Papers. Russell Hamilton, "Attitudes towards Candomble in Bahia," pp. 16–17.
29. *Jornal do Brasil*, February 19, 1972.
30. Ibid.

31. *Jornal do Brasil*, February 26, 1972.
32. Box 8, Landes Papers. Letter from Ruth Landes to Mãe Menininha, March 1, 1972.
33. Box 4, Landes Papers. Letter from Edison Carneiro to Ruth Landes, May 22, 1972.
34. Ickes, *African-Brazilian and Regional Identity*, p. 141.
35. Braga, *Na Gamela do Feitiço*, p. 184.
36. The actual signatories of this letter were: Mãe Menininha of *Gantois*, Mãe Stella of *Opó Afonjá*, and Mãe Tete of *Casa Branca*, representing the Big Three. Also invited to sign the letter were Mãe Olga of *Alaketu* as well as Nicinha do Bogum, *Mãe de Santo* of *Zogodo Bogum Malé Ki-Rundo*. Interestingly, these two women both head temples claiming an earlier origin than *Engenho Velho*. Their inclusion probably represented an attempt to consolidate into a single grouping anyone who could make a plausible claim at authority or legitimacy over *candomble* theology or ritual. The letter was published in English on a website operated by *Opó Afonjá* and was found at www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/1322/page11/html, though, as of this writing, was no longer in operation. Portions of the letter were also published in July and August, 1983, in the newspaper *Jornal da Bahia*. This is an early example of an expanding trend among practitioners to use the internet and now social media to express the new openness of the religion. Even a cursory search on Facebook or Twitter will yield dozens of pages and accounts operated by temples or devotees.
37. Ibid., p. 1.
38. Ibid., p. 2.
39. Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum*, p. 152.
40. *Globe and Mail*, October 14, 1986.
41. *Diario Oficial*, Caderno 3, *Diario Legislativo*, p. 37, June 10, 1989.
42. *Folha de São Paulo*, August 17, 1986.

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