

Bamboxê Obitikô and the Nineteenth-Century Expansion of Orisha Worship in Brazil

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Resumo

Nagô freedman Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade (Bamboxê Obitiko), remembered in oral traditions in Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro and Lagos, was one of candomblé's most renowned historical figures. Weaving oral tradition and archival research, this paper traces his path in Brazil. The first part examines his enslavement in the twilight of the Atlantic slave trade, his emancipation and his relationship to Marcelina da Silva, ialorixá of the terreiro Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká. Next, the paper addresses his travels to Lagos and to different parts of Brazil, placing special emphasis on his time in Rio, where he gained a substantial following as a religious leader among the city's West African (Mina) population. The paper also discusses his evident link to the ensign Cândido da Fonseca Galvão, popularly known as Dom Obá II, whose father was part Marcelina da Silva's social network.

Palavras-chave: African freedmen, Afro-Atlantic religions, Black Atlantic.

Bamboxê Obitikô and the nineteenth-century expansion of orixá worship in Brazil: case study of an afro-atlantic network

Abstract

Nagô freedman Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade (Bamboxê Obitikô), remembered in oral traditions in Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro and Lagos, was one of candomblé's most renowned historical figures. Weaving oral tradition and archival research, the paper traces his path in Brazil. The first part of the paper examines his enslavement in the twilight of the Atlantic slave trade and his relationship to Marcelina da Silva, ialorixá of the terreiro Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká. Next, the paper addresses his travels to Lagos and different parts of Brazil, placing special emphasis on his time in Rio de Janeiro, where he gained a substantial following as a religious leader among the city's West African (Mina) population. The paper also discusses his link to the *alferes* (ensign) Candido da Fonseca Galvão, popularly known as dom Obá II, whose father was *compadre* of Marcelina da Silva.

Keywords: African freedmen; Afro-Atlantic religions; Black Atlantic.

Bamboxê Obitikô et l'expansion du culte aux orixás au Brésil (XIXe siècle): un réseau religieux afro-atlantique

Résumé

L'affranchi nagô Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade (Bamboxê Obitikô), bien connu dans les traditions orales à Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro et Lagos, était une des personnes historiques plus renommés du candomblé. L'article actuel utilise la tradition orale et la recherche d'archives comme la base pour une reconstruction historique de sa vie, en train de retracer son chemin de l'esclavage dans les dernières années de la traite négrière transatlantique, sa relation avec Marcelina da Silva, prêtresse du temple Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká, et ses voyages à Lagos et à différentes régions du Brésil, surtout à Rio de Janeiro, où il est devenu un leader religieux entre les africains de nation *mina*. L'article aborde aussi sa relation avec l'*alferes* Candido da Fonseca Galvão, populairement connu comme dom Obá II, via son père, qui a été lié aussi à Marcelina da Silva.

Mots-clés: affranchis africains au Brésil ; religions afro-Atlantiques ; Atlantique Noir.

Bamboxê Obitikô y la expansión del culto a los orichás en el Brasil (siglo XIX): una red religiosa afro-atlántica

Resumen

Nagô libertos Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade (Bamboxê Obitikô), recordado en las tradiciones orales en Bahia, Pernambuco, Río de Janeiro y Lagos, fue uno de los históricos más reconocidos personajes del candomblé. El presente artículo, tejiendo tradiciones orales y investigación de archivo, reconstruye el camino de su vida, desde la esclavitud en Bahía en los años finales de la trata de esclavos en el Atlántico y su relación con Marcelina da Silva, ialorichá de Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oka. El texto también presta atención a sus viajes al Lagos y a diferentes partes de Brasil, con énfasis en su tiempo en Río de Janeiro, donde ganó muchos seguidores entre a población africana de nación mina. El artículo también analiza su relación con el *alferes* Candido da Fonseca Galvão, popularmente conocido como dom Obá II, cuyo padre fue vinculado Marcelina también.

Palabras clave: libertos africanos; las religiones afro-Atlántico; Negro Atlántico.

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Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade is one of *candomblé*'s most celebrated historical figures. Better known by his Yoruba name, Bamboxê Obitikô,² he is remembered as a founding father of one of Bahia's oldest *terreiros*, Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká, now commonly known as the *Casa Branca*. He also figures in oral traditions in Recife and Rio de Janeiro. A priest of both Ifá and Xangô, he was born in the Yoruba kingdom of Oyó, probably around 1820. Enslaved as an adult, he was shipped to Bahia but soon obtained his freedom, rising to prominence as a religious leader and traveling to different provinces of the Brazilian empire. He also returned to West Africa, where he built a home and a religious following in the city of Lagos, leaving descendants both there and in Brazil.

Bamboxê Obitikô's role in the formative period of Afro-Brazilian religions has often been commented on in the ethnographic literature. His importance is highlighted by the fact that the sixteen-cowry method of Yoruba divination, *erindilogun*, widely used in Brazil today, is known in many *terreiros* as the "Bamboxê system" (Beniste, 1999, p. 13; Braga, 2011). Recently, I presented the first historical data about his life, pointing toward his leadership role in a network of freedmen that stretched from Bahia to Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro and Lagos (Castillo, 2012). Adding new archival and ethnographic evidence, the present paper adds important nuances to the historical reconstruction of his unique life story, framing his enslavement in the larger political context of the final collapse of the Oyó Empire and the end of the Atlantic slave trade to Brazil. The present paper also sheds new light on his religious activities in Rio de Janeiro, where, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, he built a devoted following. Bamboxê Obitikô's status in Rio – where he was part of a demographic minority, since Yoruba speakers and other West Africans were vastly outnumbered by West Central and East Africans – provides concrete evidence of Bahia's importance as a focal point from which orishá³ worship spread to other parts of Brazil. In addition, the paper explores a possible relationship between Bamboxê and one of Rio's most well-known black residents, the ensign Cândido da Fonseca Galvão, who was born in Bahia and whose father, Nagô freedman Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão, had ties to the *ialorixá* (priestess) of Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká, Marcelina da Silva (Obá Tossi).

From Captivity to Freedom

Oral traditions give conflicting information about Bamboxê's early years in Bahia, with some stating that he came free and others holding that he arrived as a slave. The documentation confirms that he experienced enslavement. His master, Manoel Martins de Andrade, was a Portuguese immigrant who divided his time between Salvador and a small rural estate, Fazenda Mutá, in

² In Yoruba, *bamgbose* means "he who carries the ose," the double-bladed axe that is one of Xangô's ritual symbols (Lima, 1987, p. 71).

³ Orisha (*orixá* in Portuguese) is the Yoruba term for the divinities of the religious pantheon. The term *ialorixá*, here translated loosely as "priestess", literally means "Mother of the orisha."

the municipality of Jaguaripe, across the bay from the city of Salvador. Andrade dabbled at dealing in captives in the interprovincial slave trade to Rio de Janeiro, but his own slaveholdings were relatively small. After his death in 1871, only five adult captives were listed in his post-mortem inventory. In previous years, around fifteen others had come and gone from his control. One of these was “Rodolfo Nagô”, baptized at the end of 1850, when Brazil’s participation in the Atlantic slave trade was finally coming to a close.⁴

Although the importation of new captives from Africa had been legally prohibited since 1831, in practice the prohibition had little effect. Over the course of the 1840s more than 60,000 Africans arrived in Bahia alone.⁵ Unlike southeastern Brazil, where the slave trade favored West Central African ports, in Bahia the commercial networks had strong ties to the Bight of Benin. In the 1840s, most of those arriving from ports in the latter region, such as Ouidah and Lagos, were Yoruba speakers who had been taken as slaves during regional conflicts related to the disintegration of the Oyó Empire. By 1850, Nagôs, as Yoruba speakers were known in Bahia, formed three quarters of the African-born population of Salvador and their language had become a *lingua franca* that was also used by Africans of other ethnicities (Reis and Mamigonian, 2004, p. 80). Although I was not able to identify the specific slave voyage in which Bamboxê Obitikô arrived in Brazil, in all probability most of his shipmates were fellow Nagôs.

Bamboxê was baptized on December 26, 1850, in Pirajuia Parish, near his master’s estate outside of the coastal town of Jaguaripe.⁶ Under Brazilian law, Africans had to be baptized within a year after their arrival, which suggests that Bamboxê probably disembarked in Bahia around 1849. The baptism record describes him merely as “Rodolfo Nagô, adult” but other documents suggest that he was probably in his mid-twenties.⁷ The sacrament was performed not in a church but in a private oratory belonging to his master’s father-in-law. Two other Nagô men, slaves of the father-in-law, were also baptized. The parish of Pirajuia was sparsely populated and slaves were a minority. That year, out of 143 baptisms performed, only 21 (15%) were slaves, mostly *pardos* (people of mixed race). Only eight were Africans: six Nagôs and two Tapas, as the Nupe were called in Bahia.⁸ Bamboxê’s master’s estate, Fazenda Mutá, was at the tip of a peninsula so narrow that at high tide it became an island, only accessible by boat. It seems likely that during the time he spent there Bamboxê had relatively little contact with members of his own language group, unless they were slaves of his own master.

⁴ Arquivo da Cúria Metropolitana de Salvador (ACMS), Freguesia do Pilar, Batismos 1852-84, fls. 15v, 16; Freguesia de Pirajuia, Batismos 1832-54, fl. 327v; Arquivo Público da Bahia (APB), Inventário de Manoel Martins de Andrade, 03/1292/1761/07; Livro de notas 347, fl.11, Livro de notas 357, fl. 60; Livro de notas 232, fl. 13; Polícia, Maço 6360, Pedidos de passaportes, 1864; Arquivo Municipal de Salvador (AMS), Escrituras de compra e venda de escravos: Sé, vol. 6 (1852-54), fl. 58v, vol. 10 (1859-63), fl. 29; Conceição da Praia, vol. 6 (1853-55), fl. 33. ⁵ Slave Voyages Database. Available at www.slavevoyages.org, accessed on 4/2/2015.

⁶ ACMS, Pirajuia, Batismos 1832-54, fl. 327v; APB, Inventário de Manoel Martins de Andrade, 3/1292/1761/7, fls. 99-99v.

⁷ A passport record from 1873 states that he was then fifty years old: APB, Polícia, Registros de passaportes 1873-74, fl. 34.

⁸ ACMS, Pirajuia, Batismos 1832-54.

The evidence suggests that Manoel Martins de Andrade was a severe master who did not hesitate to use violence against his captives. In September of 1852, Andrade went to the police about a slave, Luis Nagô, who he said was disobedient and should be given 400 lashes. The severity of the punishment was extraordinary and although the police chief did not refuse, he reduced it to 150 lashes. A few years later, “Rodolfo Nagô” purchased his freedom for 1:750\$000 réis. The transaction took place in Salvador, on May 22, 1857, six and a half years after his baptism. The shortness of his captivity certainly influenced the price, which was well above the average for men his age. A day later, Nagô freedwoman Marcelina da Silva, *ialorixá* of the *terreiro* Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká, sold his master another enslaved African, for a price that was only half of what Bamboxê had just paid for his freedom.⁹ Although the bill of sale makes no reference to the manumission of Rodolfo Nagô, its timing strongly suggests that it was a kind of trade, intended to compensate Andrade for the loss of Bamboxê’s services (Castillo, 2012, p. 80-81).

All the oral traditions that speak of Bamboxê refer also to Marcelina da Silva and to his involvement in the religious activities of the *terreiro* she led. Her great-great-granddaughter, Mãe Senhora, who was interviewed by Pierre Verger in the mid-20th century, affirmed that Marcelina brought Bamboxê to Brazil, upon returning from a seven-year voyage to the Yoruba city of Ketu, in the company of Iyá Nassô, founding priestess of Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká (Verger, 1992, p. 89).¹⁰ This version of Bamboxê’s arrival, which also states that he came to Brazil for the purpose of assisting the two women in founding the *terreiro*, has circulated widely, both among candomblé initiates and in the academic literature. However, Luis Nicolau Parés and I have shown elsewhere that the two priestesses returned to Africa at the end of 1837, and that their destination was actually Ouidah, a Dahomean slave port around 175 kilometers to the southwest of Ketu. Moreover, Iyá Nassô remained in Ouidah, where she and her husband founded another temple, but by May of 1839 Marcelina had returned to Bahia (Castillo and Parés, 2010, p. 8; Parés and Castillo, 2015, p. 14, 23).

The archival evidence on this sequence of events is quite solid. It is still possible that Bamboxê met one or both of the two women in Africa, as Mãe Senhora maintained, but if he did, it was probably in Ouidah, not Ketu. Ouidah was a major slave port, and over the course of the Atlantic slave trade hundreds of thousands of captives passed through it en route to Brazil. Although captives were kept under guard, they occasionally found opportunities to meet and talk to others, as in the case of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua, who was captured in Borgu, north of Dahomey, and shipped to Brazil in the early 1840s. Upon arriving in Ouidah he encountered one of his countrymen, who had been living there as a slave for several years (Eltis, 2004; Lovejoy, 2004; Law and Lovejoy, 2007, p. 147-48). Baquaqua’s experience suggests that if Bamboxê were taken to Ouidah after his capture, he may have met other Yoruba speakers in the

⁹ AMS, Escrituras de compra e venda de escravos, Sé, vol. 8, 1856-58, fl. 102.

¹⁰ Maria Bibiana do Espírito Santo, *ialorixá* of the *terreiro* Ilê Axé Opô Afonjã in Salvador from 1943-1967.

city, such as Iyá Nassô. However, he would only have met Marcelina if he arrived there before 1839, when she returned to Bahia. On the other hand, it is also possible that he was shipped from another regional port, such as Lagos, Badagry or Porto Novo.

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According to the Bamgbose-Martins family of Lagos, which descends from Bamboxê Obitikô, he belonged to a royal lineage of Oyó, and as such was directly descended from Xangô, an early *alaafin* (king). Deified after his death, Xangô became one of the most important orishas of Oyó, and his cult spread to other Yoruba kingdoms as Oyó expanded into an empire. As mentioned earlier, Bamboxê was a Xangô priest. In Brazil, oral traditions hold that he was consecrated to Ogodô, one of several *qualidades* (avatars) of Xangô.¹¹ Often, the names and ritual practices associated with a given *qualidade* can be traced to the local mythologies and practices of that orisha in specific regions in Yorubaland. In Brazil, as in Cuba, Xangô Ogodô is particularly associated with the Nupe, an ethnic group whose lands, which bordered Oyó to the east and north, are said to have been the homeland of Xangô's mother. Moreover, there was an important Nupe town named Ogodó. Located on the south bank of the Niger River, not far from the city of Oyó, Ogodó came under Oyó's domination toward the end of the eighteenth century. By the 1830s, most wealthy Oyó lineages that were involved in commerce had representatives of their households living there (Law, 1977, p. 158-169; 211-212; Johnson, 1969, p. 149-150; Verger, 2003, p. 140, Cabrera, 2007).¹²

Oyó was by then a major power in that part of Africa, the seat of an empire that dominated other Yoruba-speaking states and at times also received tribute from the kingdoms of neighboring non-Yoruba groups. Oyó reached its apogee in the second half of the eighteenth century, under Alaafin Abiodun, but after his death, around 1789, internal struggles for power began to sap the empire's strength. The early decades of the nineteenth century brought significant losses of territory as the result of rebellions in outlying provinces and invasions by a competing regional power, the Sokoto Caliphate. Between 1835 and 1837, the town of Ogodó allied itself with Ilorin, a Yoruba town that had fallen to Sokoto in the early 1820s. Together, they launched an attack on the imperial capital. Oyó-Ile was set ablaze and its residents fled to the southeast (Law, 1977, p. 53-54; 211-212; 295-296; Johnson, 1969, p. 186-218; Reis, 2003, p. 158-75).

¹¹ Interviews with Irene Sowzer Santos, 2008-2009; Air José Souza de Jesus, 10/6/2010, Erelu Lola Ayorinde, 5/11/2015.

¹² In the Nigerian city of Oshogbo today there is an Ogodó festival, involving a calabash containing stones from the Xangô shrine. Willys Santos, personal communication, 16/11/2015.

No matter what part of Oyó that Bamboxê lived in – the imperial capital, the city of Ogodo, or another town – he was almost certainly displaced by the turbulence that swept the kingdom in the mid-1830s. And, as we have seen, this was precisely the period when Marcelina da Silva arrived in Ouidah, which lay 500 kilometers to the southwest of Oyó. Whether or not Bamboxê met her then, or much later, in Bahia, her assistance in the negotiations for his freedom in 1857 makes it clear that by that point they knew each other fairly well. Marcelina was also a Xangô priestess, and in the years following her return from Ouidah she had obtained a certain degree of economic comfort in Bahia. It is possible that she assisted him in establishing himself financially. Whether the aid came from her or from someone else, the fact is that just a year after obtaining his freedom, Bamboxê managed to purchase a slave of his own. The bill of sale, like all other documents referring to him after his manumission, was issued in his legal name, Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade. Eight years later, he purchased a simple house in the rural part of Santo Antonio Parish, registering the property in the name of a daughter, Júlia, a minor at the time. Putting real estate property in the name of Brazilian-born children was an important way of getting around a provincial law that prohibited Africans in Bahia from owning real estate. Although the law was not consistently enforced, many Africans, like Bamboxê, chose to err on the side of caution. Marcelina da Silva, for example, who owned three houses by the mid-1860s, registered them all in the name of her daughter Maria Magdalena, who was born in Brazil (Castillo and Parés, 2007, p. 124-35; Castillo, 2011b, p. 224-34; Reis, 2013; idem, 2008).

By the 1850s, Marcelina had developed an extensive socio-religious network, making skillful use of the Catholic institution of godparenting. In June of 1856, for example, she was godmother to two Creole children, whose African mother, Raquel, was the slave of an aristocratic white military officer, José Balthazar da Silveira. The children's godfather, Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão, was also Nagô and a freedman.¹³ In all likelihood, the bond of ritual kinship thus created harkened the mother and godchildren's inclusion as members of Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká (Castillo, 2012, p. 71; Parés and Castillo, 2015, p. 18). The children's godfather, Bemvindo, had undoubtedly been a part of Marcelina's socio-religious network since at least 1845, when he stood as godfather to one of her own slaves, thus effectively becoming her *compadre*.¹⁴

The available records indicate that Marcelina had at least nine godchildren.¹⁵ Had she been a man, it would have been a relatively modest number for

¹³ ACMS, Santana, Batismos 1846-65, fls. 246-246v.

¹⁴ ACMS, Sé, Batismos 1829-1861, fl. 227. Evidently, Marcelina also became integrated into the network of her godchildren's master: a decade later, he and his wife – an important person in her own right, as the daughter of the Baron of Rio Vermelho – became godparents to one of Marcelina's granddaughters (Castillo and Parés, 2007, p. 145). The term *compadrio* refers to the tie of ritual kinship between parent and godparent, who are said to be *compadres* (co-parents). For Africans who owned slaves, a similar relationship was formed with the godparents of their slaves. See Parés and Castillo (2015), p. 16-18.

¹⁵ Her godchildren included three enslaved African women and six Creole children (three boys and three girls). Cf. ACMS, Livros de batismo, freguesias da Conceição da Praia, 1834-1844, fl. 15 (Sofia) and idem, 1844-1889, fl. 50 (Joanna); Sé, 1829-61, fl. 214v (Anna and Josefa) and fl. 229v, (Vicencia), idem, 1861-1877, fl. 18v (Braz); Santana 1846-1865, fls. 246-246v (Dario and Tulia); Santana 1865-78, fl. 228v (Agostinho).

a person of her status. Prior to 1850, with the constant arrival of new captives from Africa, prominent freedmen often accumulated dozens of godchildren. However, slaves often had no godmother, with Our Lady serving as a symbolic maternal figure. Often, a man was chosen to represent her during the ceremony. By “touching Our Lady’s crown” he effectively became a second godfather. Because of this, freedwomen tended to have fewer godchildren than their male peers (Mattoso, 1992, p. 175; Castillo and Parés, 2015, p. 16-18). For example, Marcelina’s *compadre*, Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão, who purchased his freedom in the same year that she did, in 1836, had a total of 21 godchildren, more than twice as many as she did.¹⁶

In both their cases, most of their godchildren were baptized before the end of Brazil’s involvement in the Atlantic slave trade. In the 1850s, without the constant influx of new captives from Africa, the number of baptisms became limited by the birth rate and thus involved far fewer individuals. Since Bamboxê’s entry into Catholicism came just before this sharp drop in the baptism rate, he had little chance of accumulating as many godchildren as prominent freedmen of earlier generations. Creoles born to African parents, also tended to have African godparents, but preference usually went to those who commanded large social networks. The evidence suggests that Bamboxê spent his early years in Bahia on his master’s rural estate, in an area where, as we saw earlier, there were relatively few Africans. Even after relocating to the capital, after he obtained his freedom, his finances were evidently limited, with a standard of living far below that of Marcelina da Silva and Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão. Apart from the slave and modest house described above, there is record of only one other significant asset, a captive purchased in 1864 and sold two years later (Castillo, 2012, p. 82-83). In a social system in which godparents’ ability to assist their godchildren materially was important, Bamboxê’s assets were meager. However, this was certainly offset somewhat by his prestige as an important Xangô priest and *babalaô* (priest of the oracle of Ifá).

There is evidence of only two godchildren, both baptized in Salvador. In 1858, “Rodolfo Manoel de Andrade” became godfather to a Creole child whose African mother was the slave of an African freedman in Passo Parish.¹⁷ Ten years later, in São Pedro Parish, “African freedman Rodolfo Manoel Martins” was godfather to Zacharias, an enslaved child described as *cabra* in the baptism record, whose mother was also a slave. Zacharias had no godmother, but African freedman Joaquim Vieira da Silva served as proxy for Our Lady.¹⁸ Joaquim is another prominent figure in Afro-Brazilian oral traditions, usually referred to by his Yoruba name, Obá Sanyá, whose meaning reveals that he too was a Xangô priest. At Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká, Obá Sanyá is considered a

¹⁶ ACMS, Sé, Batismos 1829-1861, fls. 195, 196, 198v, 225v, 227, 231, 257v, 278v, 281v, 303, 315; Santana, Batismos 1830-1848, fl. 238; Santana, Batismos 1846-1865, fl. 125; Conceição da Praia, Batismos 1844-1864, fl. 14v; Passo, Batismos 1817-1879, fl. 196v; APB, Livro de Notas 257, fl. 131v. I thank Urano Andrade for sharing the latter document with me.

¹⁷ ACMS, Passo, Batismos 1817-1859, fl. 248v.

¹⁸ ACMS, S. Pedro, Batismos 1865-1903, fl. 29v. The term *cabra* referred to individuals whose skin tone was a little lighter than someone of purely African descent, suggesting that one of their parents was mixed-race.

spiritual ancestor, and he and Bamboxê are said to have been close friends, a memory which is clearly supported by their joint participation in the baptism of Zacharias. With these two men as godparents, in all likelihood Zacharias was later initiated into the cult of Xangô under their tutelage, like another Creole child born the following year, Anna Eugenia dos Santos, who was consecrated to both Xangô Ogodô and Xangô Afonjá and to whom both Bamboxê and Obá Sanyá are remembered as having been important mentors. Later in life she became a renowned priestess of Xangô, founding in 1910 one of Bahia's best-known *terreiros*, Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá (Castillo, 2012, p. 83-89; Verger, 1981, p. 28-29, Lima, 1987, p. 53-65).

An Atlantic Network

It is unclear whether Bamboxê Obitikô and Joaquim Vieira da Silva met during the baptism of Zacharias in 1868 or if they already knew each other. It is evident, however, that by 1872 they were friends. On March 22 of that year they traveled together to Recife, remaining there for eight months. During his captivity, Joaquim had been a sailor. His master, a slave trader, did business in the Bight of Benin. Upon the master's death in 1866, Joaquim received his freedom. Although maritime travel had been his way of life during captivity, the trip to Recife was his first voyage out of Bahia since obtaining his freedom. For Bamboxê, it was the first of many other sea journeys he would undertake during the next two decades, not only within the Brazilian Empire but also to Africa (Castillo, 2012, p. 82-89).¹⁹

Capital of the northeastern province of Pernambuco, Recife was home to Brazil's third largest urban African population. In 1872, there were around 950 freed Africans in the city, slightly more than the number of enslaved ones. While there are no reliable figures on ethnicity, many, like Bamboxê, were Yoruba speakers who had arrived in Brazil between 1831 and 1850, when the Atlantic slave trade was already illegal (Costa, 2013, p. 37-48). It is not clear what motivated Bamboxê and Obá Sanyá's voyage to Recife. Since Joaquim was a sailor, he may have come to know that important port city during his many voyages. Another possibility is that he or Bamboxê may have had kinfolk or friends from their homelands who lived there. With so many Yoruba speakers arriving in Brazil over the first half of the nineteenth century, it was not uncommon that people from the same town were captured from the same town, sometimes at the same time. Some also crossed the Atlantic together, only being separated after being sold (Oliveira, 1996).

In any event, it is likely that religious activities played some part in their decision to visit the city. At the Sítio de Pai Adão, Recife's oldest *terreiro*, Obá Sanyá is considered an ancestral figure, and there is evidence of involvement by

¹⁹ *Jornal do Recife*, 23/3/1872, p.1, "Passageiros".

Bamboxê as well.²⁰ The temple is said to have been founded in the mid-1870s, by Egba freedwoman Ignez Joaquina da Costa, whose Yoruba name was Ifá Tinuke (Campos, 2005, p. 9-34).²¹ It seems likely, therefore, that the two men's participation began during their lengthy stay in Recife in 1872.

In Recife, Bamboxê and Obá Sanyá were joined by another Egba freedman, Eduardo Américo de Souza Gomes (Fasesi). Eduardo had lived in Bahia during his enslavement, but for the past four years he had been in Lagos. Returning to Bahia in July of 1872, he left almost immediately for Pernambuco. By early September he had arrived in Bahia again, accompanied by three Creole children who he had brought from Recife and who he planned to take to Africa. In all likelihood, Eduardo's guardianship of these children had been intermediated by Bamboxê and Joaquim (Castillo, 2012, p. 90-92).²² A few weeks later, on October 2, 1872, Bamboxê and Joaquim also returned to Bahia, on the steamship *Cruzeiro do Sul*. As Eduardo had done, they were escorting young people from Recife: when the ship departed, the passenger "Rodolpho M. M. de Andrade" was accompanied by two unnamed minors, described as "his children."²³

Marcelina was also a Xangô priestess, and in the years following her return from Ouidah she had obtained a certain degree of economic comfort in Bahia

At the end of November, Eduardo left Bahia for Lagos, taking his young charges from Pernambuco and two girls, both from Bahia. One, twelve-year-old Querina, had been a slave of Marcelina da Silva. The other, Sophia, who was fifteen, was the freeborn daughter of Esperança Ritta Pereira, an African freedwoman who lived in Passo Parish.²⁴ It is unclear whether Sophia's mother had ties to Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká, but it seems probable, since Marcelina da Silva owned two large rental properties in the tiny parish where they lived (Castillo, 2012, p. 91; Castillo and Parés, 2007, p. 13-14).

Seven months after Eduardo's departure, on June 10, 1873, Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade requested permission to travel to the African Coast, as the Bight of Benin region was known in Bahia. Passport records show that he was traveling with five Creole children. Three – Júlia, Lucrecia, and Theóphilo – were his own. The others, Cosme and Rosalina, were from Pernambuco. Clearly, they were the same two young people that had come with him from Recife. Feliciano Maria da Conceição, who had arrived with them from Recife,

²⁰ I thank historian Valéria Gomes Costa for sharing this information. Xangô was of particular importance in Pernambuco, where his name became synonymous with orishá worship in general.

²¹ The Egbá are a Yoruba subgroup. Many Egbá were sold into slavery in Brazil between 1820 and 1850.

²² *Jornal do Recife*, 11/9/1872, p. 3.

²³ *Jornal do Recife*, 4/10/1872, p. 1.

²⁴ APB, Polícia, Correspondência sobre passaportes, 1847-72, maço 6354.

received a passport that day as well. The record describes her as a 24-year-old freedwoman of the Mina nation. Two months later, on August 7, 1873, the entire group departed for Lagos.²⁵

Undoubtedly, the *ialorixá* Marcelina da Silva knew about these voyages and lent them her support. After all, she herself had a history of involvement in Atlantic networks. In 1839, when she returned from Ouidah, she had left behind her ten-year-old daughter, Maria Magdalena, under the tutelage of Iyá Nassô. Mother and daughter were only reunited twenty years later, when the girl, now a grown woman with children of her own, came back to Bahia. It seems likely that during the intervening years, Marcelina and her daughter maintained periodic contact via other Atlantic voyagers who carried letters and packages across the Atlantic. Given that Joaquim Vieira da Silva's sea voyages seem to have taken him to Ouidah, he may have been an important contact in this sense (Castillo, 2012, p. 66; Parés and Castillo, 2015, p. 23; Falheiros, 2013, p. 51-61).

The lusophone communities of the Bight of Benin date back to the eighteenth century, with Ouidah having the oldest and, up until the mid-1800s, the largest population. But after 1851, when the British took control of Lagos, that city began to attract increasing numbers of freed Africans from Brazil. By 1865, there were around a thousand, out of a total population of less than 25,000 (Law and Mann, 1999; Cunha, 2012, p. 108-127; Castillo, 2012, p. 72-73; Castillo, 2016).

Within a few months of his arrival in Lagos in 1873, Bamboxê purchased land in the Brazilian neighborhood, still using his Lusophone name, Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade. His present-day descendants in Lagos state that their ancestor played an important role in local Xangô worship. This memory is supported by an 1895 newspaper report that mentions an individual named Bamgbose who was head of the Xango worshippers. As mentioned earlier, he was also a *babalaô*, and his skill as a mediator between the spirit world (*orun*) and living beings is evoked by the name of the family compound in Lagos, Ilê Ajolojo, meaning "house of he who dances in the rain and controls it." To this day, the compound contains shrines to Xangô, the family's ancestral orisha, and four others – Obatalá, Exu, Ogum and Oxum. The altars are said to have been established by Bamboxê during his lifetime (Castillo, 2011a).²⁶

As anthropologist Milton Guran has noted, participation in Catholicism was fundamental to *Agudá*²⁷ identity (Guran, 2002, p. 50-53), considered a symbol of their collective experience in Brazil. Bamboxê Obitikô was no exception, despite his deep involvement in Yoruba religious practices. In colonial Lagos, there was constant social and official pressure to convert to Protestantism. But

²⁵ The Recife newspaper's description of Cosme and Rosalina as Bamboxê's children seems to have been an error. Their names do not appear in oral traditions and the passport record makes a clear distinction between his own children and the other minors traveling with him.

²⁶ Interviews with Erelu Lola Ayorinde, 13/10/2015; 27/10/2015, 1/11/2015; Chief Erinfolami, Oloye Otun of Ilê Ajolojo, 26/9/2010; *Lagos Weekly Record*, 13/07/1895, p. 5.

²⁷ The term *Agudá*, referring to the lusophone communities of the Bight of Benin, probably emerged as a corruption of *Ajudá*, the Portuguese name for Ouidah. It is still used today.

like many other *Agudás* in the city, Bamboxê maintained ties to the Catholic church, taking his children who were born in Lagos to be baptized. However, also like most other *Agudás*, he never embraced the sacrament of marriage. In structuring his family he maintained Yoruba polygyny. Parish records show that he had seven children born in Lagos, from at least three different mothers. The first child was evidently conceived in Brazil, for she was born only three months after her father left Bahia. Her mother's name appears in the Lagos records as "Firmina" da Conceição, but it seems certain that it was actually *Feliciana* da Conceição, the Mina freedwoman who had come from Pernambuco with Bamboxê. The mother of the next child, born in 1875, was Rosalina, the Creole girl who had also accompanied him to Lagos from Pernambuco.²⁸ The mother of his three other children is identified as Orisabukola in the earliest records and later as Esperança Orisabukola, which indicates that she was unbaptized when Bamboxê took her as a wife and only later received the sacrament. In the case of her children, it seems especially clear that the decision to have them baptized was his (Castillo, 2012, p. 102).²⁹

Eduardo Americo de Souza also took several wives in Lagos. One was Querina da Silva, the former slave of Marcelina da Silva who had come with him from Bahia. Another was Bamboxê's eldest daughter, Júlia. Undoubtedly, the two women had known each other since childhood, via Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká. Eduardo and Júlia had two sons: Júlio, baptized in 1875, and Felisberto, baptized in 1878.³⁰ Soon after Felisberto's baptism, Bamboxê returned to Salvador, landing on September 26, 1878, along with freedman Eliseu do Bonfim, a priest of the *egúngún* (ancestor) cult who was also linked to Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká.³¹ Customs records show that the two men brought African products, including large quantities of kola nuts (*obi*). As for other *Agudás* of the period, importing merchandise to sell helped to defray the cost of their travels, perhaps even motivating them (Castillo, 2012, p. 91-92, 97-100; Omidire and Amos, 2012; Cunha, 2012, p. 158-162; Santos, 2013, p. 241-43; Matory, 2005, p. 31, 95-101 ss).

For Bamboxê, this visit to Brazil lasted for a year. He spent most of the time in Salvador but made a two-month side trip to Rio and, apparently, a shorter one to Pernambuco. He left again for Lagos on September 16, 1879. Another voyage to Brazil began early in 1886 and lasted until the end of October of the following year. During this trip he spent nearly a year in Rio de Janeiro. He evidently traveled to Brazil again around five years later, because there is evidence that in 1893 he was in Rio (Castillo, 2012, p. 102-103). Taking into account that

²⁸ If Firmina/Feliciana da Conceição is the same woman identified in an 1876 record as "Philomena" da Conceição, as seems likely, this would mean that Bamboxê Obitikô had three children with this wife.

²⁹ The name Orisabukola means "orisha enhances status," from which it can be inferred that this wife was involved in traditional religious practices (Oduyoye, 2001, p.80).

³⁰ Interview with Irene Sowzer Santos, 2006; Fundação Pierre Verger, Notas de Pesquisa/Brésiliens en Afrique: interview with Caetana America Sowzer.

³¹ Eliseu was the father of Martiniano do Bomfim, an important figure in the early twentieth century world of *candomblé*. Marcelina da Silva was godmother of one of Martiniano's younger brothers. For more information regarding this family, see Castillo (2012), p. 69-78; Omidire and Amos (2012).

each trip across the Atlantic took at least three weeks and could last as long as six, depending on the winds, it was certainly an active and probably tiring itinerary for someone his age.³²

The last records I was able to locate about Bamboxê Obitikô are from the end of 1897, when his name appeared on several lists of people for whom registered letters had arrived in the Lagos post office. It seems likely that the letters were mailed in Brazil. Perhaps in response to the news in these letters, he made still another voyage to Brazil, for he died in Bahia, apparently in the first years of the twentieth century. His remains are buried in the Pelourinho neighborhood, in the church of the Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos, one of Salvador's most important black brotherhoods (Castillo, 2012, p. 101-103). Over the course of his life, Bamboxê Obitikô had spent relatively little time in Salvador, probably less than two decades all told. Nonetheless, the memory of his legacy is strong, especially in relation to the cults of Xangô and Ifá. His role as a spiritual mentor of *ialorixá* Eugenia Anna dos Santos is well known, but he also initiated others, including Manoel do Bomfim, a priest of Xangô who founded a *terreiro* just a few meters away from Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká. Still another person apparently initiated by Bamboxê was a priest named Manoel Xangô, who led a *terreiro* near Matatu, the semi-rural district where Bamboxê lived during his last years (Castillo, 2008, p. 69, 124-36; Ramos, 2014, p. 6; Lima, 1987).

Two of Bamboxê's three Brazilian-born children, Lucrecia and Theóphilo, remained in Lagos for the rest of their lives. But Júlia, the eldest, inherited her father's independent spirit and taste for travel, crossing the ocean repeatedly. On her first trip back to Bahia, in September of 1886, she left her husband in Lagos, bringing only her son, Felisberto. There is no evidence of her return to Lagos, and in 1893 the documentation shows she was in Rio de Janeiro, which may suggest she had been in Brazil the entire time. It is not clear when, but she later returned to Africa, for in April of 1896, when the ship *Alliança* arrived in Bahia from Lagos, "Maria Júlia Martins" was one of its passengers. This may have been Júlia's last Atlantic voyage. Her son, Felisberto Sowzer, soon settled in Salvador, too, becoming a well-known construction contractor and member of the Irmandade do Rosário. Oral traditions remember him as a priest of Ogum and a *babalaô*. By 1905 mother and son had established themselves in the district of Matatu, where Bamboxê lived his last years and where the descendants of Felisberto's youngest daughter, Irene Sowzer Santos, still live. (Castillo, 2012, p. 98-99; Castillo, 2008, p. 70-71; Souza, 2011).³³

³² *Jornal do Recife*, 27/1/1879, p. 2; *Jornal do Brasil*, 30/5/1893, p.1.

³³ AMS, Registros de IPTU, Brotas, 1905, vol. 2, fl. 33v. The surname Sowzer is an anglicized version of Souza, Felisberto's father's last name. Maria Júlia's other son, Júlio, remained in Africa, eventually moving to Abeokuta. Her brother Theóphilo died in Lagos on November 25, 1927. Interview with Irene Sowzer Santos, 2006; Fundação Pierre Verger, Notas de Pesquisa/Brésiliens en Afrique: interview with Caetana America Sowzer.

Rio de Janeiro

Maria Júlia Martins de Andrade died in Bahia on February 18, 1926. After her death, Felisberto Sowzer placed notices in the local newspapers announcing the masses to be said for her soul. Although they were not mentioned in the newspapers, the Afro-Brazilian funeral rites of *axexê* took place during the six days preceding each mass, as is still customary in *candomblé* communities today. Masses were also held in Rio de Janeiro, one at the parish church of the Santíssimo Sacramento and another at the church of the Irmandade do Rosário, which demonstrates the family's continued connections to that city.³⁴ Indeed, a 1905 article in *Gazeta de Notícias*, by journalist João do Rio, refers to Felisberto by a nickname, “Benzinho,” describing him as “a fearsome sorcerer” whose grandfather, “the illustrious Bamboché, [...] celebrated among the Africans as a prodigious master of *idams* [i.e., magical feats]” was the founder of “a dynasty also involved with the occult powers.”³⁵ This documentary evidence supports what oral traditions in Rio have long maintained regarding the importance of Bamboxê Obitikô and his grandson in that city (Conduru, 2010, p. 180-181, 187).

There were striking demographic differences between the nineteenth-century African populations of Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. As we have seen, Yoruba speakers predominated in Bahia. But in Rio, most Africans were Bantu speakers from the region corresponding to present-day Angola, Congo and Mozambique. In the 1830s, the number of West Africans (referred to in Rio as “Minas”) began to grow, as a result of the interprovincial slave trade from the northeast. At the same time, voluntary migrations brought freed Minas into the city. Some were merchants who came and went, while others settled there permanently. Although Minas in Rio never outnumbered the Bantu-speaking population, by the 1850s, around 30% of African *ganhadores* (wage-earning day workers) were Minas. By the mid-1880s, Minas formed the overwhelming majority of all *ganhadores* (Florentino, 2002, p. 27-28; Farias, 2012, p. 160-164; Farias et al, 2006, p. 91-92; Sampaio, 2009b; Graham, 2012; Reis e Mamigonian, 2004, p. 99-105).

As many scholars have noted, the influx of Minas forms a backdrop for the establishment and growth of Yoruba-influenced religious communities in Rio de Janeiro. As the pioneering study of João do Rio, *Religiões no Rio*, makes clear, they were numerous and well-established by the first years of the twentieth century. The migrations from the northeast also explain why many of Rio's oral traditions refer to the presence of people from Bahia or *baianos*. Tia Ciata, a priestess of Oxum, who was born in Bahia and is said to have arrived in Rio

³⁴ *Jornal do Brasil*, 19/3/1926, p. 18; *A Noite*, 17/5/1926, p. 6; *O Jornal*, 18/5/1926, p. 13; *A Capital*, 18/2/1927, p. 2.

³⁵ *Gazeta de Notícias*, 2/3/1905, p. 1. Original emphasis. I thank Maria Clementina Pereira Cunha for sharing this source.

sometime in the 1870s, is a well-known example. But other so-called *baianos* were actually African born. Their Bahian identity was acquired by virtue of having disembarked in Bahia when they first arrived from Africa. Bamboxê Obitikô falls into this category. It is said that the first shrines of one of Rio's oldest *terreiros*, Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá, were created in a house in the Saúde district, during a ceremony held in 1886 that involved Bamboxê Obitikô and Joaquim Vieira da Silva. In some versions, Eugenia Anna dos Santos, the *filha de santo* (spiritual daughter), of Bamboxê mentioned earlier, is said to have played a central role (Sampaio, 2009b, p. 73-74; Rio, 2006; Silva, 1999, p. 70, 81-84; Cunha, 2015; Moura, 1995, p. 98; Rocha, 1994, p. 33; Augras and Santos, 2005).³⁶

The records of passengers traveling between Bahia and Rio in 1886 show no trace of Joaquim Vieira da Silva or Eugenia Anna dos Santos. However, they reveal that Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade, Bamboxê Obitikô, spent almost the entire year there. As mentioned above, he had returned to Bahia from Lagos early in 1886. On March 30, he left Salvador aboard the *Ville de Pernambuco*, arriving in Rio on April 2. Five months later, on the night of August 24, 1886, he was arrested at a house in Sacramento Parish, after a complaint to the police about a *zungu* in the area. Of Bantu origin, the term *zungu* referred to boarding houses owned by people of color where freedpersons and slaves congregated, for social encounters and also for religious rites. Another report described the place as a *casa de dar fortuna*, a pejorative term that arose from the idea that Afro-Brazilian divination practices were a form of fortune-telling.³⁷

Located on Rua da Alfândega, 303, between Núncio and Regente, the house was in the center of an area notorious for its *zungus* and "*casas de feitiço*" (sorcery houses) (Farias et al, 2006, p. 83-101; Soares, 2007, p. 217).³⁸ Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade, who was identified as proprietor of the premises, received a fine of 30\$000 réis. Four Mina women "who had surrendered themselves to the arts of sorcery," were arrested with him: Maria da Conceição, Ignez da Conceição, Maria Thereza and Leopoldina Maria da Conceição.³⁹ Their heads were shaven, a significant detail.⁴⁰ In *candomblé*, as among the Yoruba in Africa, initiation is considered a spiritual rebirth and the officiating priest or priestess shaves the novices' heads. Clearly, what the police

³⁶ This temple should not be confused with a related one by the same name in Bahia mentioned earlier founded by Eugenia Anna dos Santos in 1910. Aninha was born in 1869, making her only 17 years old in 1886, rather young to preside over the founding of a temple. The first conclusive evidence of her in Rio comes in the 1920s (Santos, 2007, p. 267-268).

³⁷ APB, Registros de passaportes 1885-1890, Maço 5910; Saídas de passageiros, vol. 55, 1886-1890; *Gazeta de Notícias* (RJ), 3/4/1886, p. 5; *O Rio de Janeiro*, 26/8/1886, p.1; *Gazeta de Notícias* (RJ), 26/8/1886, p. 2.

³⁸ *O Rio de Janeiro*, 26/8/1886, p.1; *Gazeta de Notícias* (RJ), 26/8/1886, p. 2. The house was located a block away from the house where renowned *pai de santo* (priest) José Sebastião "Juca" Rosa, was arrested in 1870, at the corner of Rua do Senhor dos Passos and Nuncio. At the turn of the twentieth century, Tia Ciata lived at Rua da Alfândega, 304 (Sampaio, 2009a, p. 15; Rio, 2006, p.44).

³⁹ *O Rio de Janeiro*, 26/8/1886, p.1; *Gazeta de Notícias* (RJ), 26/8/1886, p. 2. The fact that these women had the same "surnames" is not evidence of blood kinship, nor necessarily of enslavement by the same master. *Nossa Senhora da Conceição* was one of the most popular invocations of the Virgin Mary and many African women adopted "da Conceição" as a sign of their devotion.

⁴⁰ *Gazeta de Notícias* (RJ), 26/8/1886, p. 2.

had stumbled upon was an initiation ceremony led by Bamboxê. The recorded oral traditions about the founding of Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá do not mention Rua da Alfândega, nor do they refer to the names of the women found with Bamboxê that night. This suggests that his activity in Rio was more extensive and his followers more numerous than is remembered today.

Participation in Catholicism was fundamental to the Agudá identity, a symbol of their experience in Brazil

In all probability, the Maria da Conceição arrested with him was a Mina freedwoman and *quitandeira* (food hawker) of the same name who lived a few doors away, at Rua da Alfândega, nº 315. This Maria da Conceição had frequently been the subject of reports in the newspapers. In 1883, she was accused of running a *zungu* and of pushing her daughter, Eva, into a sexual relationship with a wealthy man, for financial gain.⁴¹ When the same accusations recurred in 1886, she went to the police and made a complaint against a Creole man named Cândido da Fonseca Galvão, alleging that he had forced his way into her house with the intent of raping Eva. Cândido was one of Rio's most high-profile black residents.⁴² A native of Bahia, he had been promoted to ensign after serving in the War of Paraguay. Afterwards, he had made a name for himself by writing opinion pieces on politics and racial equality for different newspapers. Around 1879, he moved to Rio, where he began to publish in local papers. But the real source of his notoriety was his claim to be the grandson of Alaafin Abiodun, the eighteenth century ruler of Oyó mentioned above. Adopting one of the words for "king" in Yoruba, *obá*, as a title, along with the Portuguese "Dom", used by members of the aristocracy, Cândido referred to himself as "Prince Dom Obá II." In 1885, he began to seek nomination as ambassador to Lagos, based on his military service and his claim to royal descent.⁴³

Historian Eduardo Silva, whose 1997 book about this extraordinary figure is still the best source on the subject, affirmed that Cândido was born and raised in Lençóis, in the interior of Bahia, basing his arguments on Cândido's own statements (Silva, 1999, p. 20, 38, 187 ss).⁴⁴ However, other documents reveal that Cândido was born in Salvador and baptized in Sé Parish on May 13, 1838. His father was Nagô freedman Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão, the *compadre*

⁴¹ *Corsário*, 27/2/1883, p. 4.

⁴² *Diário de Notícias* (24/3/1886 p. 3; 28/7/1886, p. 1); *Gazeta de Notícias* (24/3/1886, p. 1; 28/7/1886, p. 1) *Carbonário* (14/6/1886, p. 4; 30/7/1886, p. 4). Although the complaints were anonymous, their style and content suggest that they were written by Cândido da Fonseca Galvão.

⁴³ *A Nação* (RJ), 28/3/1874, p. 4, "Parte ineditorial". This piece states that in Salvador, Cândido contributed to various newspapers, including *Correio da Bahia*, *Diário da Bahia*, *Jornal da Bahia* and *Alabama*.

⁴⁴ On Cândido da Fonseca Galvão, see also Kraay (2012).

of Marcelina da Silva discussed above.⁴⁵ In all likelihood, Bamboxê Obitikô knew Bemvindo and his family through their mutual involvement in Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká.

If the ties of Catholic ritual kinship between Bemvindo and Marcelina already suggest his family's involvement in Afro-Brazilian religious practices, Cândido's evident familiarity with the attributes and mythology of the orishas leaves no doubt. In his writing, he often referred to them, demonstrating an understanding of their characteristics and interrelationships, even invoking their protection, an unprecedented stance at the time. The earliest example that I was able to find comes in a Bahian newspaper, *O Monitor*, on December 13, 1878. In this piece, Cândido protested the suspension of his military pension, invoking the assistance of a locally important Catholic saint, the Lord of Bonfim, and of the warrior god Ogum – protector of soldiers – in his struggle to have his benefits restored. In the 1880s, after he had moved to Rio, Cândido began to use a stylized drawing to accompany his writing: a bust portrait of himself, with the ritual symbols of Xangô, Ogum, Oxum and Oxossi inserted at the cardinal points (Silva, 1997, p. 168-173). After Cândido's move to Rio, Xangô and his wife, the goddess Oyá, took on a growing importance in his writing. Oyá/Iansã was often identified interchangeably with Santa Barbara, who was described as armed with an "African shield [and] the thunderbolts of Xangô". This provides evidence that the syncretic association that exists in *candomblé* today between the intrepid Yoruba goddess of wind and storms and the Catholic patroness of firefighters and electricians had already taken shape by the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶

In a society that routinely criminalized African religious practices, such bold references to the Afro-Brazilian pantheon by a well-known individual could not fail to attract attention. In Bahia, his father's membership in the Yoruba-speaking elite and relationship to Marcelina da Silva must have further piqued the interest of wagging tongues. When the article in *O Monitor* referred to above was published, Bamboxê Obitikô had recently arrived in Bahia from Lagos for an extended visit. At this point, Cândido's claim to be a member of the royal house of Oyó was already circulating. Given that Bamboxê was from Oyó, he could not fail to be aware of Cândido and his claim to be grandson of Abiodun.

⁴⁵ Cândido's baptism record identifies him merely as "Cândido, Creole, natural son of freedwoman Maria de São José, freedwoman". However, it was standard practice not to mention the father if the parents were not married. In 1844, Maria de São José and Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão were married in the same parish. Bemvindo's will, written a few years before his death in 1877, states that he was the father of "the ensign Cândido da Fonseca Galvão." ACMS, Freguesia da Sé, Batismos 1829-1840, fl. 155v; Casamentos 1838-1879, fl. 43; APB, Setor Judicial, Inventário de Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão (1877), 05/2134/2603/14, fls. 4-4v. In one of his earliest published writings, while still living in the Bahian capital, Cândido identified himself as "a son of the city of São Salvador": *O Monitor* (BA), 29/9/1877.

⁴⁶ *O Monitor* (BA), 13/12/1878, p. 2; *O País*, 23/10/1885, p. 4; *Carbonário*, 16/7/1886, p. 4. On Xangô's well-known association with lightning, see Verger, 1981, p. 134-140; 168-170; Parés, 2014; Silva, 1999, p. 168-170.

African royalty in Brazil

A significant number of the narratives left by enslaved Africans in the Anglophone world suggest that during the Atlantic slave trade, it was not uncommon for people of royal or aristocratic descent to be sold into slavery in the Americas. This is unsurprising. The African kingdoms exploited by the slave trade were relatively small, with each polity often having several royal lineages. For aristocratic or royal individuals, enslavement could come from the usual causes, such as warfare and slave raids. But there was also a factor peculiar to their high status: disputes over the throne or other titles. With regard to Brazil, Pierre Verger has argued convincingly that the pantheon of deities at the Casa das Minas suggests an eighteenth-century link to the royal family of Dahomey.⁴⁷ In Bahia, descendants of the founding priestess of the Alaketu *candomblé* temple hold that their ancestor was from a royal family of Ketu, a claim which appears to be substantiated by evidence showing that a daughter of the king was taken prisoner by Dahomean slave raiders around 1789. Statements made by the son of an Ijebu chief reveal that he arrived in Recife as a slave around 1820. Moreover, Cândido da Fonseca Galvão was not the first African descendant in Rio de Janeiro to claim royal ancestry. In the 1870s, Miguel Manoel Pereira, a former slave, had gained notoriety by assuming the title *Príncipe Natureza* (Prince of Nature) (Silva, 1999, p. 17; Engel, 2001, p. 37; Castillo, 2011b; Santana, 2015).

Still, it is difficult to substantiate Cândido da Fonseca Galvão's claim that his father was the son of Alaafin Abiodun. Although Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão seems to have been born between 1779 and 1787, during the latter part of Abiodun's reign,⁴⁸ the period is remembered as a remarkably peaceful one and the oral traditions described by historians of the period do not mention the disappearance of any princes of the palace. It is more plausible that a son of Abiodun could have been sold into slavery after the Alaafin's death, around 1789, which ushered in a period of violent political upheaval (Johnson, 1966, p. 186-87; Law, 1977, p. 54-55, 247-48). We have seen that Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão had a large number of godchildren, a fact that indicates that he had a certain amount of prestige in Salvador's African community. This could have been the result of various factors, including noble birth. But there is no evidence that Bemvindo ever made the claim of royal descent that became the hallmark of his son's public persona. Bemvindo's only known reference to his parents comes in his will, written in 1873, in which he stated

⁴⁷ See, for example, the narratives of Job ben Solomon (Bluett, 1734), William Ansah Sessarakoo (1750) and Ukawsaw Gronniosaw (1772). Historiographical case studies provide additional evidence (Alford, 1977; Sparks, 2009).

⁴⁸ Historian Robin Law calculates that Alaafin Abiodun reigned between 1774-1789 (Law, 1977, p. 54-55, 60). In a document written in 1874, Cândido stated that his father was 87 years old, which would place his birth in 1787, but in 1877, a newspaper announcement about Bemvindo's death only three years later gave his age as 98, which suggests that he was born in 1779: Silva (1997) p. 189-190; *O Monitor*, 25/11/1877, p.1, "Óbitos."

I am a native of the African Coast [i.e., West Africa], and was taken from there while still a child and brought to this city [of Salvador], capital of the Province of Bahia, and [...] since coming from my native land [...] *nevermore, to this day, have I received news of my father and mother, and for this reason I do not know if they are still alive or are now deceased.*⁴⁹

Although Bemvindo provides no clues as to his parents' names or position, his statement implies that they were still alive when he was taken from Africa. Yet if he were the son of Abiodun, he would almost certainly have heard later about the king's death, via the numerous other people from Oyó who arrived in Bahia as slaves during the first decades of the nineteenth century. In this sense, Bemvindo's professed ignorance of his father's fate would seem to contradict the idea that he was the son of the Alaafin Abiodun.

It seems significant, therefore, that it was only after Bemvindo's death at the end of 1877 that Cândido da Fonseca Galvão's public claims of royal descent began. Apparently, the idea was met with skepticism. Some believed that he was in need of medical help and a proposal began to circulate, calling for donations to help finance the cost of his treatment. Cândido, however, refused to back down. On January 20, 1878, he published a note in *O Monitor*, reiterating his desire to be addressed as "His Highness, Ensign Cândido da Fonseca Galvão, son of the late prince Obá I [and] grandson of His Majesty, Abiodun, King of Africa" and stating that it was impossible for him to "renounce his position as prince of Africa."⁵⁰

Although Cândido's earlier writing had often focused on social issues, defending his claim of royal descent from critics began to consume him. At the end of 1885, his noble lineage formed the basis of his request to be named ambassador to Lagos, an idea that was received with great amusement by the press. By this time, his writing style had become increasingly incoherent, apparently the result of a growing tendency to over-indulge in the bottle. At the end of 1879, still in Bahia, he was required by the police to sign a legal statement obliging him to refrain from disorderly conduct, a promise broken more than once in Rio, where he was arrested a number of times for drunkenness.⁵¹ Nonetheless, there is no doubt that racism played an insidious role in the scornful treatment that he received in the press, a fact which was not lost on him.⁵²

Cândido defended himself angrily and voluminously in print. His frustration seems to have carried over into other aspects of his life. A clear example is his dispute with Mina freedwoman Maria da Conceição, mentioned above, which first appeared in the papers in 1883 and resurfaced in 1886, just before Bamboxê arrived in Rio. On March 22, the newspaper *O Carbonário*, to which

⁴⁹ APB, Inventário de Bemvindo da Fonseca Galvão, 5/2134/2603/14, fl. 4. Emphasis added.

⁵⁰ *O Monitor*, 20/1/1878, p. 2, "Ineditoriais"; *O Monitor*, 21/2/1878, p.2.

⁵¹ See, among others, *O Monitor* (BA), 17/12/1879, p. 2; *Diário de Notícias*, 13/11/1885, p.3, "Ao País"; *Diário de Notícias*, 3/1/1886, p. 1, "Notas suburbanas"; *Diário de Notícias*, 4/5/1886, p.2, "Um príncipe na touca".

⁵² See, among others, *Gazeta de Notícias*, 1/12/1883, p. 1, "Notas a margem"; *Diário de Notícias*, 3/1/1886, p. 1, "Notas suburbanas"; *Diário de Notícias*, 4/5/1886 p. 2, "Um príncipe na touca".

Cândido was a regular contributor, published a complaint by an anonymous “friend of Prince Obá II,” repeating the claim that Maria da Conceição had forced her daughter into prostitution. In response, she quickly filed charges against Cândido, accusing him of forcing his way into her house in order to rape the girl. Cândido defended himself repeatedly in the press, dismissing her charges as a fabrication invented by enemies whose real goal was to prevent his nomination as ambassador to Lagos. He also attacked the mother’s character, reiterating the charge that she pimped her daughter. He also accused her of sorcery. The quarrel dragged on for months, receiving considerable attention in the papers – much of it in pieces published by Cândido himself – and Cândido was jailed briefly twice.⁵³ Given the controversy already surrounding him, there is no doubt that most of the Yoruba-speaking population of Rio knew about the feud, including Bamboxê Obitikô, who arrived in the city in April, while the situation was still unfolding. One could even speculate that Maria da Conceição’s decision to be initiated was envisioned as a way of assuring her victory in the dispute with Cândido.

It was not uncommon for people of royal or aristocratic descent to be sold into slavery in the Americas

In any event, after Bamboxê’s arrest during Maria da Conceição’s initiation, he remained in Rio for another six months. It is unclear whether this was due to legal problems resulting from the incident, or whether after paying the fine he discreetly resumed religious activities in the city. In any case, when he finally departed, on January 16, 1887, a detailed description appeared in the *Gazeta de Notícias*, with the headline, “African Prince:”

The day before yesterday, an illustrious person departed this city aboard the packet *Niger*, bound for Bahia, where, after a certain delay, he will continue on to Africa. During his stay here, his high position and origin remained a closely guarded secret. We refer to Prince Manuel Rodolpho, chief of the valiant Nagô tribe of the Yobá [i.e., Yoruba], in Africa.

The women were dressed in brightly colored calico, with their heads wrapped in enormous turbans and wool shawls draped over the necklines of their blouses; the men wore simple jackets and black trousers, with straw hats. The sight of so many people aroused curiosity about who was on board. Clearly, it had to be

⁵³ Cf. Passagem de Venus pelo disco Solar. *O Carbonário*, 22 mar. 1886, p. 4; O Príncipe Obá II. *Diário de Notícias*, 24 mar. 1886, p. 4; O Príncipe Obá, *Gazeta de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 24 mar. 1886, p.1; Protesto solene contra o rapto. *Carbonário*, 26/3/1886; “É verdade e consciência” (*O Carbonário*, 11/6/1886, p. 4, *O Carbonário*, 14/6/1886, p. 4; *Gazeta de Notícias*, 28/7/1886, p. 1, “Prisão de um príncipe”.

a prince. But which prince? No one could say. Finally, when the ship was about to sail, His Highness came onto the stern to bid his people farewell, and only then was it possible to recognize *Prince Rodolpho*, by the marks of his race emblazoned on his visage.

His Highness has been called to Yobá to defend his tribe, which is at war with neighboring tribes. His Highness was accompanied on board by a large number of cheering subjects. He then retired to his chambers, leaving his subjects to await his reappearance on the steamship's stern.⁵⁴

By referring to the protagonist as Prince Manoel Rodolfo, the piece slyly alluded to Archduke Rudolf, crown prince of the Austro-Hungarian empire, who was often in the news; by identifying him as “Yobá,” it also invited comparison with Prince Obá II. However, there is no doubt that the piece was inspired by Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade. Prince Manoel Rodolpho had evidently spent a fair amount of time in Rio; Bamboxê Obitikô had been there for nine months. The “Yoba” prince traveled on the *Niger* and planned to stop in Bahia before continuing on to Africa; Bamboxê embarked for Bahia on the same day and ship, and would remain there for ten months before leaving for Lagos (Castillo, 2012, p. 102). Although there is no mention of religious activities or problems with the police, the writer's evident familiarity with Bamboxê's movements is striking, suggesting personal contact.

Some elements of this narrative seem to mimic those of news items about “Prince Obá,” in which mocking descriptions of the black population's devotion to him and the tremendous burden of his political responsibilities were regular components. However, although the newspapers invariably portrayed Cândido da Fonseca Galvão as a self-satisfied buffoon, eager for public attention, “Prince Manoel Rodolpho” appears as a man of modest demeanor who kept his royal status a closely guarded secret. The suggestion that there was another Yoruba prince in Brazil could not fail to undermine Cândido's claim to have a unique connection to African royalty.

Indeed, it seems likely that the portrayal of “Manoel Rodolpho” as a prince was a rhetorical device, designed to strengthen the parallel being made by the writer with the public persona of Prince Obá. Thus, while it is tempting to interpret the piece as concrete confirmation of the claims of royal descent made by Bamboxê Obitikô's descendants in Lagos today, it would be premature. Further evidence is needed. But in any event, this description of Bamboxê's departure from Rio suggests that by 1887 he had attained a prominent, even prestigious position among Rio de Janeiro's Mina population. Those who accompanied him to the ship certainly included people who had been initiated by him during his time in Rio as well clients who had consulted him for Ifá divination, as well as other members of religious communities he had been involved with during his stay.

⁵⁴ *Gazeta de Notícias*, 18/1/1887, p. 2, original emphasis.

A third visit to Rio

Seven years later, on his next trip to Brazil, Bamboxê made a third visit to Rio. Once again, he was actively involved in orisha worship. On the night of May 29, 1893, the police responded to complaints about a “fortune-telling” establishment located at Rua General Câmara, 305, corner of Núncio, just a block away from the *zungu* where Bamboxê had been arrested in 1886. Arriving on the scene, the authorities found Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade, five other people and “a variety of *manipansos* [sculpted icons], herbs, *patuás* [i.e., amulets] and other trinkets... used as medicines for sickness and to bring good fortune.”⁵⁵ Five different newspapers ran stories about the incident, all identifying Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade as owner of the house and leader of its activities.⁵⁶ One paper, *O Tempo*, stated that he was known as “Bambucho,” while another, *Diário de Notícias*, gave his “nickname” as “Bombachê.”⁵⁷ Despite the slight differences in spelling, it is clear that it was by his Yoruba name that Bamboxê was known to followers and clients in Rio.

According to *Diário de Notícias*, he was a *curandeiro* (faith-healer) who “deceived and extorted money from the unwary,” while for *O Tempo*, he was an “old sorcerer.”⁵⁸ The mention of advanced age was no mistake. At this point, Bamboxê Obitikô was probably over seventy. But the accusations of faith-healing and sorcery were serious ones: Brazil’s new penal code, passed in 1890, had criminalized both as forms of false medicine (Dantas, 1988, p. 165-172), punishable by a fine of up to 500\$000 réis or imprisonment for a period of one to six months.⁵⁹ Various papers that covered the incident mentioned that the police found “trinkets” and other objects used in sorcery. According to *O Tempo*, a number of animals were also found: a male goat, a hen, and eighteen turtles. The “turtles” were probably actually tortoises, customary offerings during the initiation of novices consecrated to Xangô (Johnson, 1966, p. 34). This is an important detail, because according to oral traditions, the *terreiro* that Bamboxê founded in Rio was dedicated to Xangô (Augras and Santos, 2005). Although the newspaper accounts of the arrests made that night at Rua General Câmara do not include the names of other people remembered by oral traditions, they

⁵⁵ *Diário de Notícias*, 30/5/1893, p. 1, original emphasis. *Manipanso* is a term of Bantu origin that comes up frequently in newspaper accounts of arrests for sorcery during this period in Rio de Janeiro. For a discussion, see Possidonio (2015, p. 122-123). A few months before this incident, the police found similar objects in the same address, in a room belonging to Eleutério Ferreira Brito: *Diário de Notícias*, 8/2/1893, p. 2. And in 1883, eleven people had been arrested there, for the same reason. *Gazeta de Notícias* (RJ), 1/2/1883, p. 2, “Casa de dar fortuna”. The names of the participants, however, do not coincide with those of the people found with Bamboxê.

⁵⁶ *Diário de Notícias*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *O Tempo*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *Jornal do Brasil*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *Gazeta de Notícias*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *O País*, 30/5/1893, p. 2.

⁵⁷ *Diário de Notícias*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *O Tempo*, 30/5/1893, p. 1.

⁵⁸ *Diário de Notícias*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *O Tempo*, 30/5/1893, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Cf. Chapter. III, articles 157 and 158 of decree no 847 of October 11, 1890, “Promulgação do Código Penal dos Estados Unidos do Brasil,” available at legis.senado.gov.br/legislacao/ListaPublicacoes.action?id=66049, accessed on 12/11/2015.

do make it clear that in the 1893 incident Bamboxê was initiating new devotees into the cult of Xangô.

Still another paper, *O País*, offered a detailed description of what was occurring when the police arrived:

Two women were kneeling before a *manipanso* [i.e., idol], each wearing a crown of horns. Nearby, bunches of rosemary and myrtle were laid out on a tin tray in front of a fearsome beast. Another woman, with a shaved head and wearing a necklace made of charms, was talking gibberish and removing cards from a black deck. She did not notice the officer who, upon approaching her, saw tiny red crosses painted onto her scalp. When the police officer ordered her to wash her head, she awoke from her lethargy, hid the cards and cried out, “May ill fortune pursue you!” In one of the rooms two women were stretched out on the floor, one laid perpendicularly on top of the other, forming a cross, with their hands folded as though praying and their eyes closed. They were chanting in a soft monotone. Standing near them was a tall black man, semi naked and using a dirty thigh bone to strike a skull painted green.⁶⁰

The article does not state whether this information came from the police or witnesses. Some details, however, seem to be deliberate exaggerations designed to create a sinister tone. “The fearsome beast” for example, is probably the same animal that *O Tempo* described merely as a goat. The “black deck of cards” and the “skull and bones” – associated with European geomancy – may also be embellishments introduced with the goal of reinforcing familiar stereotypes of the times, which portrayed African religious practices as inherently malevolent. However, other elements are more credible, such as the leaves laid out next to the “fearsome beast.” In *candomblé* rituals in Brazil today, four-footed animals offered for sacrifice are fed medicinal plants. Kneeling – or, more frequently, prostrating – before altars is also a familiar gesture, a sign of respect. Head-shaving has already been mentioned, with reference to the *zungu* of 1886. The “necklace made of charms” used by the novice may have been a *kelê*, a tight-fitting necklace used in the days immediately following initiation. These elements, in addition to the tortoises already mentioned, confirm that, as in 1886, once again Bamboxê was in the midst of performing an initiation ceremony when the police arrived.

In addition to Rodolfo Manoel Martins de Andrade, five other participants were mentioned: Alexandrina Maria dos Reis, Sabina Theodora Torres, Antonia Francisca Torres, Manoel do Bomfim, and Maria Júlia.⁶¹ Although no last name was attributed to the latter, she was undoubtedly Bamboxê’s daughter. The month before, several newspapers had carried reports about a police raid on a much larger group of “sorcerers,” at a house on Rua Souza Barros, some distance

⁶⁰ *O País*, 30/5/1893, p.1.

⁶¹ *O Tempo*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *Jornal do Brasil*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *Gazeta de Notícias*, 30/5/1893, p. 1; *O País*, 30/5/1893, p. 2.

from the center of the city, in the semi-rural parish of Engenho Novo. Maria Júlia de Andrade was one of eighteen people arrested. This was also evidently an initiation ceremony: in addition to “*manipansos*” and other ritual objects, once again, there were references to participants with shaven heads. The complaint to the police referred to a “black priest,” apparently the leader, who was already gone when the authorities arrived.⁶² Given that Bamboxê’s daughter was a participant, the unidentified priest is likely to have been Bamboxê himself.

The syncretic association that exists in candomblé today between the intrepid Yoruba goddess of wind and storms and the Catholic patroness of firefighters and electricians had already taken shape by the second half of the nineteenth century

These three incidents demonstrate the involvement, not only by Bamboxê Obitikô but also by his eldest daughter, in Afro-Brazilian religious activities in Rio de Janeiro during the final decades of the nineteenth century. This confirms local oral traditions about the family’s importance in Yoruba-derived religious practices and demonstrates that they were active during what is considered to have been a formative period in the growth of *orisha* worship there. While some of the individuals involved in these ceremonies certainly lived in Rio, others may have been part of Bamboxê’s religious network in Bahia, such as the Manoel do Bomfim arrested during the police raid on the house at Rua General Camara, given that Bamboxê had a *filho de santo* by that name in Salvador. It is also possible that when Bamboxê and his daughter came to Rio they brought members of their network from Lagos.

Final Considerations

After his visit to Rio in 1893, Bamboxê returned once again to Lagos. In September of 1895, his wife Orisabukola gave birth to their second child and in June of 1897 their third and last child was born (Castillo, 2012, p.78). Documentary evidence is elusive, but there is no doubt that he made a final voyage to Brazil, since, as we saw above, he died in Bahia. Evidently, his death occurred before 1905, because in that year, the newspaper article by João do Rio mentioned above referred to Bamboxê in the past tense.

Although he experienced first-hand the persecution of Afro-Brazilian religious practices, being jailed at least twice, Bamboxê Obitikô also lived to see the first calls for an end to such discrimination, made by Nina Rodrigues. Based

⁶² *Jornal do Brasil*, 21/4/1893, p.1; *Cidade do Rio de Janeiro*, 21/4/1893, p. 1; *O Tempo*, 21/4/1893, p. 1; *O País*, 2/4/1983, p.1.

on ethnographic research in various *terreiros* in Bahia, Nina's work mentioned Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká (using one of its nicknames, "Engenho Velho"), but did not mention Bamboxê (Rodrigues, 2006, p. 50, 101). The *babalaô* would only emerge in the ethnography of Afro-Bahian culture in 1943 – four decades after João do Rio's article – when his name was cited in a list of the most "fearsome sorcerers" of the nineteenth century.

The same list mentions João Alabá, undoubtedly the person by that name who lived in Rio de Janeiro, cited by João do Rio as a renowned sorcerer. Alabá is a Yoruba name, indicating that he was either born in Yorubaland himself or was the son of Yoruba-speaking parents (Campos, 1943, p. 305; Rio, 2006, p. 83; Odudoye, 2001, p. 86).⁶³ Whether João Alabá and Bamboxê knew each other in Bahia is unknown, but it seems likely. Bamboxê was clearly part of a network of Yoruba-speakers from Bahia, some of them linked to Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká, who were involved in traditional religious practices and who moved between Salvador and Rio de Janeiro. Cândido da Fonseca Galvão seems to have been a peripheral part of this network, as were several Atlantic voyagers mentioned above, such as Eliseu do Bomfim, who returned from Lagos with Bamboxê in 1878. Eliseu traveled to Rio at least twice. When he arrived in Rio for the first time, in May of 1879, Bamboxê had been in the city since the month before. The *babalaô* returned to Bahia in June, but Eliseu remained in Rio until October of the following year. Bamboxê's son-in-law, Eduardo Américo de Souza Gomes, visited Rio for a month, in 1881, when the *babalaô* was in Lagos. He may have made the trip in order to sell goods brought from Lagos, but whatever his main motive, it is likely that he also brought letters, packages or simply news sent by his father-in-law and other "Brazilian" residents of Lagos.⁶⁴ Although I was unable to uncover concrete evidence of oral traditions' claims that Joaquim Vieira da Silva traveled to Rio, it is quite plausible, in light of the journeys made by Bamboxê and other members of their circle.

Bamboxê Obitikô's legacy in Rio de Janeiro continues. The first to carry the torch were his *filha de santo* Eugenia Anna dos Santos (better known as Mãe Aninha), and his grandson, Felisberto Sowzer, who were both frequently in Rio during the early decades of the twentieth century, as leaders of temples with an established following. In the next generations, they were succeeded by Agripina de Souza (*filha de santo* of Aninha), Cantulina Pacheco (granddaughter of Joaquim Viera da Silva and also *filha de santo* of Aninha), and Regina Topázio Sowzer (daughter of Felisberto), all natives of Bahia. In addition to this group of priests and priestesses who were directly descended, whether spiritually or biologically, from Bamboxê Obitikô, during this period many other people from

⁶³ João Alabá is remembered in oral traditions as a priest of Omolu and founder of one of the first Yoruba-influenced *terreiros*, located on Rua Barão de São Félix (Rocha, 2000, p. 31-33).

⁶⁴ APB, Livro de saída de passageiros, vol. 53, 1877-1881, vapor Tarqués, 25/5/1879 and vapor *Gisonde*, 6/11/1880; Livro de entrada de passageiros, vol. 3, 1879-83, vapor *Douro* (27/10/1880 e 12/7/1881) and vapor *Equateur*, 18/11/1880; Maço 5909, Registros de passaportes, fl. 23v (Eliseu do Bonfim). On African freedmen based in Bahia who traveled to Rio as merchants, see Sampaio (in press).

Bahia who were involved in *candomblé* migrated to what was then the capital of Brazil (Rocha, 2000, p. 32-35; Conduru, 2010, Augras and Santos, 2005).

The multifaceted life of Bamboxê Obitikô provides insights into diverse aspects of the lived experience of Africans in Brazil under slavery, as well as showing the relationship of political events in the Oyó Empire on the rise of the cult of Xangô in Brazil. At the same time, by retracing his path through Salvador, Recife, Lagos and Rio de Janeiro, it becomes possible to perceive the existence of sophisticated socio-religious networks, not only in the return to Africa but also in other parts of Brazil, especially Rio de Janeiro. His activities in the latter city provide a concrete demonstration of the role of “Bahians” in the establishment and growth of *orisha* worship there during the last decades of the nineteenth century, a phenomenon often mentioned in the historiography and ethnography of Afro-Brazilian religions but relatively poorly documented.

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