

Chapter 7

Cultural Creativity, Rebellions, and Comparative Questions for Afro-Brazilian Archaeology

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Introduction

The studies presented in this edited volume address subjects of increasing vitality and prominence in the global field of African diaspora studies and archaeology. Archaeological studies of Afro-Brazilian history have expanded significantly in recent years. Such projects promise to yield exciting new discoveries of the facets of cultural creativity, perseverance, and audacious efforts in self-determination (e.g., Funari 2003; Funari and Oliveira 2010; Orser 1994; Symanski 2006, 2012). Detailed studies of Brazilian societies by our colleagues in history and African diaspora analysis have expanded even more dramatically (e.g., Barcia 2013; Curto and Lovejoy 2004; Domingues da Silva and Eltis 2008; Florentino 2008; Hawthorne 2010; Kananoja 2013; Matory 2005; Naro 2003; Oliveira 2003; Reis 1993, 2003, 2011; Ribeiro 2008; Seigel 2009; Sweet 2006).

The rebellions that formed *quilombos* in Brazil, such as the remarkable domain of Palmares, were paralleled by smaller-scale, quotidian acts of resistance and social creativity. The self-liberating process called *marronage* involved “historically important loci of cultural, ideational, aesthetic, and politicoeconomic developments” (Sayers 2012, p. 135). Recent and future archaeological studies will help us understand the spectrum of Afro-Brazilians’ innovations, determination to undertake resistance against colonial oppression, and constant fight for freedom. This edited volume presents highly valuable considerations of what is now known and what questions may best frame future investigations of such a continuum of social rebellions.

This chapter first provides a brief consideration of a sample of Afro-Brazilian cultural innovations uncovered in archaeological and historical analyses. I then review recent archaeological studies of escape sites and rebellion communities in North

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America to provide suggestions of interpretative frameworks and methodological strategies that could inform new projects in Brazil. I close with observations of potential research questions and the prominence of Afro-Brazilian sites within current heritage politics in Brazil. Studies illuminating the detailed histories of quilombos are particularly poignant today, as the Brazilian government has created strong incentives that have focused Brazilians on their African heritage (French 2004, 2009).

Social Innovations in Afro-Brazil

Studies of escape communities, called *palenques* in Cuba and quilombos in Brazil, offer significant opportunities to detect contexts in which profound cultural creativity was facilitated by free territories carved out of colonial landscapes. This is particularly true for Brazil, where archaeological and historical studies show such innovations even within sites of enslavement (Fennell 2007). Brazil's history is notable for examples of profound cultural developments during the period of slavery. In part, these developments occurred due to the context of the way European Brazilians managed their plantations. Rather than engage in the constant surveillance of enslaved laborers that was undertaken in the so-called "gang" system of slavery prominent at North American sites, many European Brazilians conducted a form of "task" labor management. In this latter approach, enslaved laborers were given particular tasks to complete in the plantation's operations and were threatened with violent retribution if those tasks were not undertaken in a prompt and effective manner (Fennell 2007; Morgan 1979). In turn, the European-Brazilian plantation managers tended not to conduct constant surveillance of the labor force. They instead relied upon the threat and performance of brutal punishments to compel and control their workforce. This created contexts of social spaces and times in which Afro-Brazilians could engage in their own creativity, even within settings of enslavement.

In an earlier, larger-scale study, I outlined a process of cultural and social innovations that I called "ethnogenic bricolage" (Fennell 2007), and I draw from that analysis for the following discussion. Ethnogenic bricolage represents a particular form of "ethnogenesis" and "creolization," which in turn comprise broader labels for the myriad ways in which new cultures and sodalities are formed. In that earlier study, I explore how core symbols within particular cultures were impacted by diasporic movements across the Atlantic. Core symbols serve within a culture to express fundamental elements of a group's cosmology and sense of identity within the world. Core symbols can be communicated through spoken words and ritual performances and are often depicted in tangible, graphic form through renderings in material culture (e.g., Ortner 1973; Turner 1967, 1973).

Such graphic renderings of core symbols span a continuum of expressive modes within each culture. This spectrum extends from what I refer to as "emblematic" communications, on one end of the continuum, to more "instrumental" versions at the other end (see, e.g., Firth 1973; Ortner 1973; Turner 1967, 1973). Emblematic versions serve to summarize the identity of a culture group as a cohesive order and

are illustrated by symbols such as a national flag, the crucifix of Christianity, or the Star of David for Judaism. Instrumental expressions of the same core symbol are more abbreviated in their compositions and are used for more individual purposes (Fennell 2007).

Core symbols within stable culture groups were deployed in such a broad spectrum of expressive modes. Emblematic expressions of social group identities were typically employed in settings that involved public ceremonies that celebrated group solidarity. More abbreviated and instrumental expressions of those symbols were often utilized in private settings and for individual purposes. These cultural processes played out in divergent ways among populations at sites in North America, the Caribbean, and South America in the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries (Fennell 2007).

In locations such as Brazil, new, embellished symbolism was developed out of the blending of diverse African cosmologies. These symbols were often displayed publicly and in ways intended to signal the formation of new culture groups and communication of their sense of solidarity and collective cultural identity. Some anthropologists refer to this development as a general process of “cultural admixture.” Others use the term creolization to communicate a similar idea of indefinable cultural blending. Such analysts essentially contend that we can see evidence of the shape of diverse antecedent cultures, and we can define the patterns and contours of the new culture, but we cannot discern much of what happened in between. I propose a more specific definition of one of the primary mechanisms of ethnogenesis as observed in the histories of places like Brazil and Haiti. I call this process ethnogenic bricolage to distinguish it from broader concepts offered previously by historians and anthropologists (Fennell 2007).

Ethnogenic bricolage entails a creative process in which individuals raised in different cultures interact in new settings, often at the geographic crossroads of multiple diasporas. In these new locations, individuals tend to desist from displaying emblematic expressions of the core symbols of the former culture groups from which they were abducted. Yet, instrumental expressions of those same core symbols continue with rigor and are employed in private, individual spaces as part of invocations for healing, self-protection, and prayers for the vitality of loved ones (Fennell 2007).

The abbreviated composition of such instrumental symbols gives them a prosaic appearance that can be recognized by members of other cultures for the basic meaning of efforts in self-determination and perseverance. Such instrumental expressions can therefore play an important role in communications across cultures and in the formation of new social relationships among individuals brought together by intersecting diasporas. In time, these social relationships can solidify into new, cohesive culture groups that articulate their own shared meaning system. From the disparate elements of varied instrumental symbols, new core symbols and emblematic designs are configured to communicate the new culture’s sense of identity (Fennell 2007).

I refer to this process as ethnogenic bricolage to emphasize the creative combination of diverse cultural elements into new configurations. The word bricolage is derived from its use by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966) to indicate this creative combination of elements from existing cultural systems. Theory paradigms

in anthropology and sociology have moved beyond the limitations of Lévi-Strauss's structuralist framework (e.g., Geertz 1973; Giddens 1979). However, his concept of bricolage incorporates very useful facets that can be applied in new ways (Dumont 1985; Hebdige 1999, pp. 102–106). When moved to a setting of intercultural negotiation, one can conceive of multiple bricoleurs confronting open sets of cultural materials from various interacting cultural groups. In a process of ethnogenic bricolage, individuals of different cultural heritage interact over time to formulate new social networks with new repertoires of key symbols, communicative domains, and cultural practices. Those new symbols are created and developed over time in large part through engagements with the multiple elements of abbreviated, multivalent symbols from each of the contributing cultural groups (Fennell 2007).

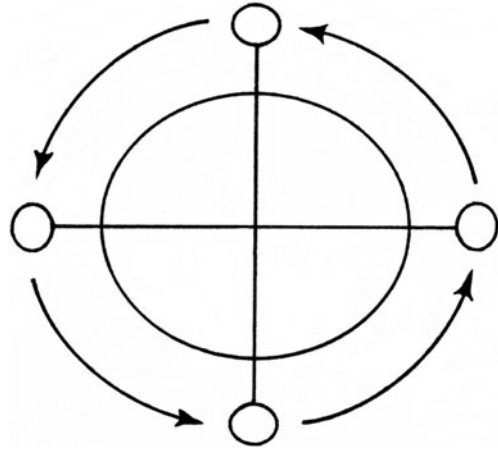
The cultural group called *Macumba* provides an excellent illustration of the operations of ethnogenic bricolage. This dynamic unfolded among the enslaved Africans and Native Americans in plantations of Brazil. Portuguese colonial efforts promoted the establishment and operation of large-scale plantations in this region, focused primarily on sugar production, from the early sixteenth century onward. The first captive Africans imported into Brazil were abducted primarily from the areas of Senegal and Sierra Leone. However, from the late sixteenth century onward, the Portuguese obtained most enslaved people for import into Brazil from the area of Angola and Kongo (Eltis 2000, pp. 189; Orser 1996, pp. 42, 51–52; Sturm 1977, p. 218).

Plantation owners of Brazil typically ran large-scale operations with less consistent control and surveillance of their work force than occurred at locations in North America. As a result, greater opportunities were available to enslaved persons to engage in social interactions within their communities over time. Moreover, many rebelled and won their freedom from the plantations, creating communities of escaped slaves (Orser and Funari 2001, p. 66). Nonetheless, slavery persisted in Brazil until the late nineteenth century, and nearly 2 million newly enslaved persons were imported into the region between 1811 and 1870 (Wolf 1982, pp. 316, 373).

Historic-period documents record cultural practices among enslaved Africans in Brazil that can be related to particular African societies from which individuals were abducted. For example, a colonial report from 1721 described divination practices and beliefs that strongly corresponded with BaKongo rituals. The term BaKongo refers to the people and culture that spoke the KiKongo language, were governed by the Kingdom of Kongo, and became ensnared in the brutality of the trans-Atlantic slave trade starting in the late fifteenth century. An enslaved man named Domingos was described as an Angolan and was known as a talented diviner in the area of a city in Bahia. He began his divination ritual “by drawing a cross in the dirt with his finger” (Sweet 2004, p. 144). Domingos then conducted divination inquiries along those drawn axes with a composition similar to the material culture that the BaKongo referred to as “minkisi” (Sweet 2004, pp. 144–145).

Over time, communities within Brazil developed a new set of beliefs and practices, later to be called *Macumba*, through a blending of different African religions, Catholicism, and Native American religions. The concepts of BaKongo minkisi, Dahomean vodun, Yoruba orishas, and the intercessionary saints of Catholicism were

Fig. 7.1 Dikenga dia Kongo, a key symbol of the BaKongo culture of West Central Africa. (Image by author)



creatively integrated using the complementary elements of those religions (Genovese 1976, pp. 179–180; Thompson 1983, p. 113, 1990, p. 156). Similarly, the indigenous Tupi–Guarani people of Brazil, called Tupinambá by the Europeans, possessed religious beliefs concerning ancestor spirits that blended readily with ancestor beliefs of the BaKongo and the Yoruba concepts of orishas (Genovese 1976, p. 180; Orser 1996, pp. 48–49; Sturm 1977, p. 219).

This articulation of religious concepts included a careful combination of abbreviated symbols from the contributing cultures. Ground blazons, called *pontos riscados* (for “marked points” of invocation), developed in this Brazilian tradition as well. These *pontos* were typically rendered in chalk or sand on the floors of shrines and other public, ritual spaces (Bastide 1978, p. 298; Thompson 1983, pp. 113–115, 1990, pp. 155–156). Each intercessionary spirit was often characterized with the combined names and attributes of a saint, ancestor, Yoruba and Dahomean orisha, or BaKongo *simbi*. Each such spirit possessed a *ponto* which would summon a manifestation of that spirit to render aid. These *pontos* were rendered both in transient forms at particular rituals and as permanent expressions in publicly visible locations (Thompson 1983, pp. 115–116).

For example, the crossed lines of the BaKongo core symbol called the *dikenga dia Kongo* (Fig. 7.1) were combined with the concept of Eshu Elegba as the mediator of the crossroads between the spirit world and the land of the living. Elegba was viewed as being unpredictable and inclined to punish those who trifled with the spirit world. In turn, Elegba’s attributes were merged selectively with symbols for the Satan figure of Catholicism, with Elegba challenging and testing the righteousness of individuals, but not representing an opponent to the Godhead (Thompson 1983, p. 114, 1990, p. 156). Figure 7.2 depicts an example of a *ponto* for Elegba within the Macumba tradition. This idiographic rendering blends the intersecting lines of the *dikenga dia Kongo* with the pitchfork motifs of Elegba, and a spinning pinwheel design suggestive of the dynamism and unpredictability of that guardian of the crossroads (Thompson 1983, p. 114, 1990, p. 156).

Fig. 7.2 Example of a ponto riscado of the Macumba culture of Brazil. (Image by author)



This blending of elements from different African religions, as well as facets of European and Native American beliefs, developed in Brazil and Haiti with “a depth and visibility virtually unknown in the United States” (Genovese 1976, p. 179). This creative combination of elements was also evident in facets of Palo Monte Mayombe, with its selective incorporation of orisha and related symbolism by BaKongo heritage groups in Cuba (Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert 2003, pp. 82–83). Palo Monte Mayombe also developed complex *firma* blazons that were similar in character to *vèvè* symbols in Haitian Vodoun and the pontos riscados of Macumba (e.g., Ballard 2005, p. 131; Matibag 1996, p. 161). These religious systems developed in Brazil, Cuba, and Haiti, and the associated material expressions of key symbols were deployed as part of larger-scale processes of social organization and the consolidation of new group identities. Central elements of a variety of African religions were combined and developed for continuing observance, not just in the private rituals of households and covert meetings, but in public displays that signaled an evolving group cohesion to anyone within view (Fennell 2007).

The rich beliefs, practices, and material culture of captive Africans in Brazil are also evident in the archaeological remains of the Valongo Wharf site in Rio de Janeiro. The Valongo Wharf was the port location in Rio de Janeiro in which hundreds of thousands of captives disembarked from slave vessels in the period of 1821 through the 1840s. Many captives were held in the port area for some length of time before being sold and transported to plantations. Extensive archaeological investigations are being conducted at the Valongo site in advance of the 2016 Olympic Games scheduled to convene in Rio de Janeiro. Project leader Tania Andrade Lima has reported voluminous finds of artifacts that were seized or lost from the hands of captive Africans. Small clay figurines appear to depict images of spirits and subdeities within particular African cultures from which slaves were abducted. Handmade earthenware pottery vessels have what appear to be religious symbols etched into their bases.

Anthropomorphic forms of smoking pipes, beads, and various forms of protective amulets have also been recovered (Banyasz 2013; Barbassa 2012). These artifacts from Valongo Wharf promise to provide poignant comparative data relative to the earthenware on Brazilian plantations analyzed by Luís Cláudio Symanski and others, the etched colonoware pottery bases studied by Ferguson in North America, and the pipes uncovered at Palmares.

Recent archaeological investigations in Brazil have revealed new evidence of cultural creativity among Afro-Brazilians in bondage. For example, Symanski (2006, 2012) examines social dynamics on sugar plantations of the Chapada dos Guimarães region in Mato Grosso in western Brazil. Documentary evidence indicates a significant proportion of the laborers were abducted into slavery from cultures located in West Central Africa. Portuguese plantation owners arranged their operations with a sense of hierarchical space radiating out from the location of their main houses. The spaces of the enslaved laborers on those sugar plantations included notable distributions of low-fired earthenwares, similar to the colonoware pottery of North American plantations. These earthenwares uncovered in the work spaces of enslaved laborers on the Brazilian plantations were often decorated with incised line configurations that recalled the scarification patterns with which members of West Central African cultures exhibited their social statuses and cultural affiliations (Symanski 2012). Similar studies by Marcos André Torres de Souza and Camilla Agostini (2012) propose that both ceramics and locally made pipes were decorated with motifs that entailed creative adaptations of previous symbolic communications into new forms within the contexts of enslavement.

These studies in Brazil of possible correlations of pottery decoration with social symbolism of previous scarification practices raise intriguing interpretative debates familiar to researchers in North America. For example, approximately 26 colonoware bowls with marks etched into their bases have been recovered from rivers along the coastal plantation sites of South Carolina. Leland Ferguson (1992) has interpreted these vessels as likely components of riverside observances by enslaved African Americans. In personal rituals related to the BaKongo culture of West Central Africa, for example, one could make supplication for aid by ancestors and spirits by creating a material composition with cross-line symbolism within a surrounding circle, invoking elements of the *dikenga dia Kongo*. Casting this composition into the river waters with accompanying prayers may have connoted symbolic meanings of a boundary between the spirits and the living that was to be crossed (Fennell 2007). J. W. Joseph (2007) has raised the intriguing observation that “Dave the Potter,” an enslaved artisan who worked in the stoneware potteries of Edgefield, South Carolina, from 1830 onward, apparently inscribed his market goods with similar cross marks (Joseph 2007).

In addition to the articulation of these more detailed questions in studies within North America, an expanding body of studies of African diaspora communities in South America and the Caribbean is now providing valuable comparative data concerning particular African-influenced pottery traditions that developed in those locations (e.g., Hauser and DeCorse 2003; Symanski 2006). Studies in the Caribbean have also started to expand beyond questions of the potters’ cultural affiliations to

analysis of differences in production procedures due to consumer demands for market trading or personal use (Hauser 2007, 2008; Ogundiran and Falola 2007, p. 25). A growing array of historical archaeology investigations in West African locations may also provide data for such comparative studies. Examinations of the pottery traditions in the period of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries within the societies targeted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade may provide suggestive data when analyzing the characteristics of colonoware in the Americas (Hauser and DeCorse 2003; Kelly 2004). However, analysts must proceed carefully in such comparisons, in view of the highly disruptive character of the slave trade and its impacts on the social contexts in which material culture was produced in each location and time period (Ogundiran and Falola 2007, pp. 14–15).

Comparative Studies of North American Escape Community Sites

As archaeologists increasingly turn their attention to quilombo sites in Brazil, they can consider insights from archaeological studies in North America when formulating research questions. Archaeological research of African-descendant populations in North America has expanded dramatically in scope and in the diversity of research questions over the past several decades. I recently conducted a study of published reports of such projects, and the following discussion is drawn from that survey (Fennell 2011). In North America, many enslaved Africans, African Americans, and Native Americans escaped from plantations through routes traversing the countryside and waterways in both open and clandestine paths (Aptheker 1939; Thompson 2006). Many attempted to find family members who had been sold to distant plantations, while others traveled to the relative safety of Canada to escape bounty hunters. Many obtained freedom by escaping plantations to join communities of self-liberated individuals in Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida (Blight 2004).

This self-liberating process has been referred to by analysts as forms of marronage and resulting settlements have been called Maroon communities. The English term maroon and the French word marronage are both derived from the Spanish word “cimarrón” which denoted escaped livestock and connoted runaway property (Price 1996, pp. 1–2; Weik 2007, pp. 316–317). Thus, these labels used today by analysts are derived from a demeaning Spanish term. Nonetheless, these analytic labels have been promoted with good intentions to define themes of research concerning a broad spectrum of self-liberating individuals and their communities (e.g., Sayers 2012).

These self-liberating processes of marronage occurred on multiple scales and in varying contexts. Shorter-term and often individualized liberation from enslavement has been referred to as acts of “petit marronage.” Longer-term efforts of liberation by multiple individuals working in coordination and often forming rebellion settlements, such as quilombos in Brazil, can be referred to as acts of “grand marronage” (e.g., Price 1996, p. 3; Sayers 2012, p. 136). This array of marronage efforts spurred the development of innovative “communities, social enclaves, settlement networks,

cultural traditions, and political economies” (Sayers 2012, p. 136). The economic networks of such interactions by self-liberating groups extended to neighboring settlements of free populations of European, Indigenous, and African heritage peoples. The exchanges of goods and information with neighboring groups often resulted in complex economic and social entanglements within shifting colonial contexts (e.g., Agorsah 1994; La Rosa Corzo 2003; Orser and Funari 2001).

Traces of Petit Marronage in North America

It is usually very difficult to find archaeological remains of isolated or individual escape routes as events of petit marronage in North America. Many escaping persons avoided houses and settlements, and traveled across the landscape and waterways at night (Ginsburg 2007). In time, networks of persons formed to assist runaways and maintained safe houses and transportation routes in what became called the “Underground Railroad” to freedom. Even in the time period of the Underground Railroad, however, archaeologists find very few remains that can be directly associated with such activities, likely due to the secretive character of those efforts (Vlach 2004). Ongoing research efforts are providing greater appreciation for the work of African Americans and their church networks in assisting escapees, as well as for the ingenuity and self-reliance of individuals (LaRoche 2004; Sayers 2012; Thompson 2006). Alvin Thompson (2006, p. 104) estimates that approximately 3200 individuals assisted up to 100,000 people to seek freedom in these acts of petit marronage in North America in the period of slavery. Researchers have examined such dynamics of self-determination, the operations of escape networks combating slavery, and the development of Maroon communities of escaped laborers and their families in the regions of the USA and Canada (Delle 2008; LaRoche 2004; Weik 2004, 2007, 2009).

For example, some limited archaeological work on Africans in Canada has been undertaken. Overall, African-descendant people moved into Canada during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in two principal waves. The first involved the migration of approximately 3500 free, indentured, and enslaved Africans and African Americans to the area of Nova Scotia with British Loyalists after the American Revolutionary War (Niven 1994; Smardz Frost 2007, pp. 207–208). The free African Americans included some who had purchased their freedom and many others who had fought for the British during the Revolutionary War in exchange for their freedom. These “Black Loyalists” were forced to leave the newly formed USA after the defeat of the British. The principal archaeological work on Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia has focused on the settlement of Birchtown, which reached a peak population of approximately 1500 in 1784 (Niven 1994, 1999). Excavations over several years revealed a diversity of housing for residents of Birchtown, from temporary construction to residences with substantial cellar spaces (Niven 1999). Unfortunately, racism erupted in Birchtown as well, and a race riot in 1784 followed by famine conditions in 1789 led to the settlement’s demise and an exodus of the African heritage

population to Sierra Leone in West Africa in 1791 (Niven 1999). In a second wave, approximately 2000 free African Americans who had fought for the British in the War of 1812 settled in Nova Scotia after the end of that conflict (Whitfield 2006).

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, approximately 35,000 enslaved and free African Americans fled from the USA to Canada to escape the institution of slavery and accompanying social structures of racism in America (Smardz Frost 2007, pp. 207–208). Smardz Frost (2007) and her colleagues undertook the most in-depth archaeological and historical study of African-Canadian heritage to date, conducting investigations of the home and business sites of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn in Toronto. The Blackburns were born into slavery and lived in Kentucky in the early 1800s. They undertook a daring escape to Canada as a married couple in 1831 to prevent Lucie's sale to a new, distant slave owner. Rather than escaping under the cover of night, they started their journey by boarding the steamboat *Versailles*, walking through the dockside crowds along the Ohio River in the broad daylight of Louisville, Kentucky. Apprehended for a short time in Detroit, Michigan, the Blackburns made legal history in the course of their escape, as reflected in decisions by courts in the USA and Canada as to the exact scope of federal fugitive slave laws and the grounds for extradition of escapees. Settling in Toronto in 1834, the Blackburns again made history in 1837 by starting the city's first horse-drawn taxi service and exercising their skills as businesspeople and entrepreneurs (Smardz Frost 2007).

Excavations of the Blackburn house site in Toronto uncovered material culture dating to their residence there, and the remains of a root cellar, an outlying horse barn, and the overall footprint of their small "shotgun"-style house. Artifacts included cutlery, transfer-printed plates, clay smoking pipes, and fragments of wine bottles and preserve jars. This house design included a linear arrangement of three rooms that was popular in African-American vernacular architecture forms in North America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Smardz Frost 2007, pp. 264–267). The term "shotgun" was likely derived from the Yoruba term "togun" which denoted a place of gathering. The Yoruba peoples of West Africa were among those most heavily targeted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This terminology and domestic building tradition in the Americas likely developed early in plantation locations in the Caribbean and soon thereafter in the regions of the USA and Canada impacted by slavery and the movement of African diaspora populations (Vlach 1990). The Blackburns were likely familiar with this house design due to its popularity in Louisville, Kentucky (Jones 1985, p. 205). Researchers working on sites in Brazil can consider similar questions concerning the influences of vernacular architecture traditions and proxemics from particular African cultures.

Legacies of Rebellion Communities in North America

Settlements of African Americans who defied slavery in North America include those referred to as Maroon communities and events of grand marronage. Such communities often included persons from diverse cultural backgrounds of societies

in West Africa, West Central Africa, Southeast Africa, as well as Native Americans, all of whom escaped from area plantations. Some analogous communities in other regions, such as the palenques of Cuba, were organized along the lines of a common cultural heritage, and thus tended to consist, for example, of persons primarily of Yoruba or BaKongo heritage (Fennell 2007).

A number of Maroon communities in North America have been the focus of archaeological research projects. Daniel Sayers and his colleagues have recently undertaken the challenging task of investigating the remains of escape settlements in the Great Dismal Swamp, which straddles the tidewater areas of southeastern Virginia and the northeastern portion of North Carolina (Sayers 2012; Sayers et al. 2007). Documentary evidence indicates that thousands of African Americans escaping bondage created long-term settlements in this swamp region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Genovese 1979, pp. 68–69; Morgan 1979). Native Americans maintained settlements in interior portions of the swamp. Encampments of enslaved laborers also occupied parts of the region from 1765 through 1865 as part of canal construction projects (Sayers et al. 2007, p. 75). Survey and excavation work uncovered structural and artifact remains of African-American settlements on “mesic islands,” which consisted of portions of the landscape that rose higher above the water level of the swamp (Sayers et al. 2007, pp. 80–81). While some African-American settlements along the swamp perimeter engaged in exchanges of goods with outsiders, interior “scission” communities were marked by an absence of such interactions (Sayers et al. 2007, pp. 85–87).

The example of these hidden settlements within the Great Dismal Swamp provides intriguing questions for analogous research in Brazil. Were grand marronage efforts in Brazil at times hidden deep in the backcountry? If so, did such communities engage in any long-distance interactions with outsiders or exist mostly in isolation? In contrast, Palmares and Canudos in Brazil were more open and obtrusive settlements of rebellious societies engaging variably in trade relations and open conflict with colonial neighbors and governmental entities (Funari 2007).

Prominent examples of Maroon communities in North America were also established at “Pilaklikaha” in central Florida and the “Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose” military compound (or “Fort Mose”) and adjoining settlement just north of St. Augustine (Landers 1990; Mulroy 1993; Weik 2004, 2007, 2009). As Europeans sought to colonize the New World, the southeastern region of North America became a contested area for Spain, England, and France. After 1776, the USA also joined the colonial struggle for control of the region. The Florida peninsula, in particular, was much sought after by colonial governments attempting to control the rich and strategic shipping routes in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. As early as 1687, the Spanish government had unofficially offered asylum to enslaved persons escaping from British plantations, in an attempt to break Britain’s economic stronghold in the borderlands around Spanish Florida. In 1693, that asylum was made official when the Spanish crown offered limited freedom to any enslaved person escaping to Spanish Florida who would accept Catholicism. When the English established the border colony of Georgia in 1733, the Spanish Crown made it known once again that runaways would find freedom in Spanish Florida, in return for Catholic conversion

and a term of 4 years in service to the crown (Deagan and MacMahon 1995; Mulroy 1993; Weik 2004, 2007).

Incoming freedom seekers were recognized as emancipated, mustered into the Spanish militia, and placed into service at Fort Mose, which was established in 1738. Their leader, who had fled from British slavery in Carolina, was known to the Spaniards as Francisco Menendez. Once in Florida, African Americans encountered the Creek and Seminole Native Americans who had established settlements there at the invitation of the Spanish government (Deagan and MacMahon 1995). Those who chose to make their lives among the Creeks and Seminoles were welcomed into those Native American societies, and were later referred to as “Black Seminoles” or “African Seminoles” (Mulroy 1993; Weik 2007). Fort Mose was a diverse community made up of African heritage individuals with varied backgrounds and ethnic group names in the Americas such as the Araras, Carabalis, Congos, Gambas, Gangas, Guineans, Lecumis, Mandingos, Minas, and Sambas (Landers 1990, p. 27; Weik 2007, pp. 323–326). Excavations at the site of Fort Mose have revealed artifacts of the daily lives of the occupants. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994, Fort Mose is now a premier site on the “Florida Black Heritage Trail,” and a tangible commemoration of the lives of these freedom fighters.

Pilaklikaha was occupied by African Seminoles primarily from 1813 through 1836, when the settlement was destroyed by the US military. Archaeological investigations of the settlement site have uncovered ceramics, pipe fragments, bottle glass, wrought and cut nails, and brick fragments. Artifact assemblages at such African Seminole communities in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Florida were similar to the material culture uncovered at other European-American occupation sites in the colonial setting (Weik 2007, pp. 325–326). Rather than create some unique and isolated form of material culture for their households, “Maroons took part in the wider global economic and social systems of the Americas” through “trade, raids, barter, gift giving, and local production” (Weik 2007, p. 327). A number of other African Seminole settlements were established over time across the southern USA and in Mexico (Weik 2008).

Conclusion: Potential Research Questions and Heritage Politics

From this range of examples in North America, one can begin to formulate an array of research questions for the facets of marronage in Brazil. Sayers (2012, p. 145) proposes that researchers of marronage dynamics examine factors such as: “variability in site types associated with marronage; the probable landscapes that were used and culturally developed under marronage systems; and the ranges of material culture that were used under varying conditions.” Research agendas for marronage can also include basic dynamics for most historical archaeology projects. What variations are found in landscape choices, modifications, and environmental vagaries and adaptive strategies? What evidence can be uncovered of the everyday lifeways, health,

and dietary practices? How did dynamics of gender, ethnic and social affiliations, and economic status play out in Maroon communities? What patterns of material culture production and consumption are discernable, such as in pottery, tools, and weapons? Are there patterned elements of architectural designs, building techniques, and spatial proxemics? Are there lines of evidence of particular beliefs and practices in religion, social stratification, and political organization? What economic networks are discernable and what trade and exchange strategies were pursued?

Researchers can also explore the degree of “exceptionalism” in Maroon communities. Did the social spaces of quilombos exhibit different degrees of cultural creativity than those spaces enveloped within the system of plantation slavery? Did Maroon communities provide greater opportunities for continuing developments of facets of particular African cultures from which individuals were abducted and brought to Brazil? If so, did this dynamic vary across time and space? Some Maroon communities likely included persons of diverse cultural backgrounds from West Africa, West Central Africa, Southeast Africa, and Indigenous American societies. In other examples, such as several palenques in Cuba, the Maroon communities were organized along lines of shared cultural heritage (Fennell 2007).

Other challenges in archaeological investigations of Maroon occupations in more remote locations of Brazil may include the similarities of such sites to indigenous population settlements in those regions. Maroon communities in remote locations will likely exhibit handmade, low-fired earthenware ceramics and implements made of stone, wood, bone, and reworked materials. Residential structures in more remote settings may similarly employ construction methods analogous to those used by indigenous people in those areas (e.g., Orser and Funari 2001).

An increased focus by archaeologists on Maroon communities in Brazil will also confront fascinating dynamics of modern-day heritage politics. Brazil’s 1988 Constitution created an initiative for legal recognition and related land and resource allocations for local populations who demonstrate their connections to a past quilombo community as part of their geographic and cultural heritage. This legal and economic initiative of recognizing heritage claims and allocating related economic resources has led to distortions in which quilombo heritage claims are rapidly invented for strategic purposes. Past trends of a greater emphasis on indigenous heritage have been displaced by a more recent popularity of Afro-Brazilian and quilombo pride (French 2004, 2009). Historians and archaeologists researching Afro-Brazilian histories will need to navigate carefully these complex social and political contexts of active heritage construction.

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