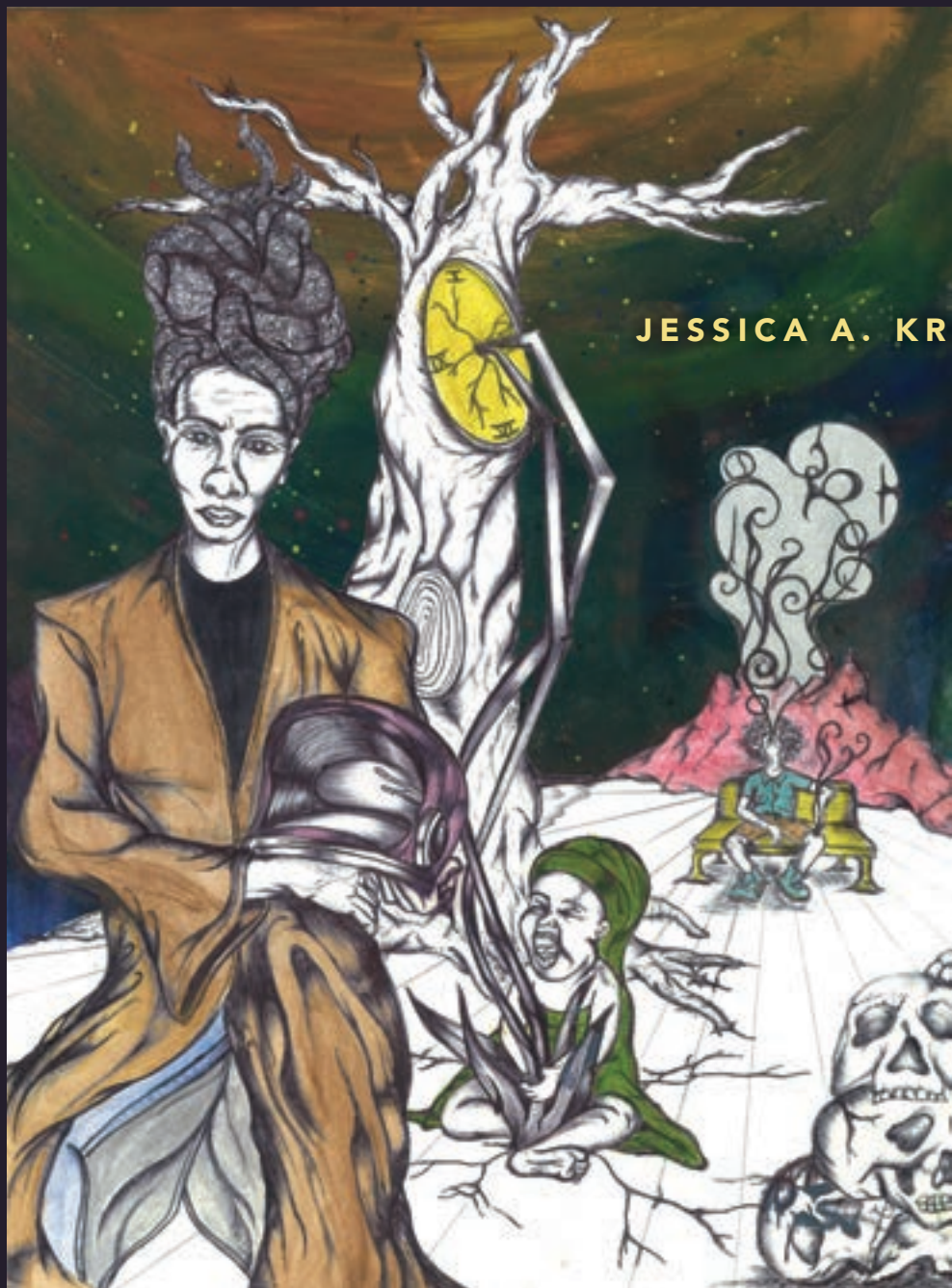


FUGITIVE MODERNITIES

*Kisama and the
Politics of Freedom*

JESSICA A. KRUG



Fugitive Modernities

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Kisama

AND THE POLITICS OF FREEDOM



JESSICA A. KRUG

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS *Durham & London* 2018

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞

Designed by by Matthew Tauch

Typeset in Garamond Premier Pro by Westchester

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Names: Krug, Jessica A., [date] author.

Title: Fugitive modernities : Kisama and the politics of freedom / Jessica A. Krug.

Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2018. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018016917 (print) |

LCCN 2018019866 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478002628 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478001195 (hardcover : alk. paper)

ISBN 9781478001546 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Sama (Angolan people) | Fugitive slaves—Angola. | Fugitive slaves—Colombia. | Fugitive slaves—Brazil.

Classification: LCC DT1308.S34 (ebook) | LCC DT1308.S34

K78 2018 (print) | DDC 305.896/36—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018016917>

Cover art: Francisco McCurry, *We Are Here: 3076*. Mixed media on paper, 9 in. × 12 in. Courtesy of the artist.

I HAVE LONG BELIEVED that love is not possible in translation, and yet, inevitably, I find myself interpreting ways of seeing the world, of being, of knowing, from one context to another, daily. It goes far deeper than language.

This is a book about the political imagination and intellectual labor of fugitives. It is about people who didn't write, by choice. And yet, it is a book. A textual artifact created by someone who learned to tell stories and ask questions from those who never read or wrote, but who loves the written word. It is an act of translation. It is a love letter.

It is an inadequate and perhaps unintelligible love letter to and for those who do not read. My grandparents, who gave me the best parts of themselves, music and movement and storytelling, the inclination to ask and the soul to listen. My ancestors, unknown, unnamed, who bled life into a future they had no reason to believe could or should exist. My brother, the fastest, the smartest, the most charming of us all. Those whose names I cannot say for their own safety, whether in my barrio, in Angola, or in Brazil.

It is a love letter for all of those who have been murdered fighting for freedom, and all of those who stay dying because we have not yet achieved it. It is a love letter for my siblings in solitary, from Rikers to San Quentin, for my cousins being held on gang charges, for my femmes turning tricks. For those who will never be cloaked in the protective veil of innocence woven from five centuries of theft and dismemberment.

It is a love letter for the youth in Angola who find new languages to articulate their unwillingness to smilingly comply with their own murder at the hands of those who claim the right to rule over the sunken-eyed corpse of hollow revolutionary slogans.

It is a love letter for all of us who have no choice but to dream an entirely different way forward.

I wouldn't be here, writing this love letter, if I myself were not formed from the love of all I've named and all I can't name.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For years, I told everyone who knew I was writing a book that my entire acknowledgments section would be cribbed from Biggie: “This book is dedicated to all the teachers who told me I’d never amount to nothing . . .” And while there is no small part of me that is still tempted to leave it there, to stunt on every institution and person who has ever stood in my way, by framing my work or Biggie’s like this, we reinforce the pernicious idea that amounting to something can be measured by the metrics that I inherently reject.

I don’t know if I’ve amounted to anything or not, but I know that the love and labor of a worldwide community of people has made this book possible.

But those who know already know, and listing them here is superfluous. Community is not built through an economy of gratitude.

And so I won’t name individuals here, because there are other, better ways of telling you how essential you are, how critical we are.

Institutions and funders operate under different logics, however. Here, I acknowledge the substantial financial and institutional support for this project, from its inception, from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, the SSRC, Fulbright-Hayes, the Department of Education, George Washington University, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

NOTE ON CARTOGRAPHY

Visually depicting space and power—cartography—is a political act in every sense. Maps represent things not as they are, but rather as we need or want them to be for particular purposes. The conventions of mapmaking to which we are accustomed today are rooted in the very violent histories with which I grapple in this book. It is impossible to separate a north-up map or the typical centering of the Atlantic Ocean from the relationships of power that brought millions of Africans across this ocean in chains.

Thus, the maps in this book depart from convention. They do not center the Atlantic Ocean. They do not orient north.

In each case, these maps attempt to represent the political orientation of the historical actors in whom I am interested: fugitives. They did not face the ocean nor assume that power was ever northward. Reorienting these maps is an important part of this book's intervention, a critical element of reconceiving narratives of modernity.

LIST OF ARCHIVES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- AGI *Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain*
- AHM *Arquivo Histórico Militar, Lisbon, Portugal*
- AHNA *Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, Luanda, Angola*
- AHU *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon, Portugal*
- BdA *Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, Portugal*
- IHGB *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*
- MMA *Monumenta Missionária Africana*

INTRODUCTION

Fugitive Modernities

Chronotope, Epistemology, and Subjectivity

In 1632, seven Portuguese captains ventured north from Rio de Janeiro into a region of Brazil to which Europeans had not yet directly brought their violence. There, they encountered a group of indigenous people and among them, one Black (*preto*) man. Because this meeting took place at a great distance from any established towns or plantations, the Portuguese captains were “perplexed” and asked the man “who he was and how he came to be” in the area. When he responded that he was an emancipated slave, the Portuguese asked him if he was Brazilian-born. He replied that he was not, but was rather “of the nation of Quissamã.”¹ After noting that they did not see the man afterward, and surmising that he had fled from his master and was wary of their queries, the Portuguese captains named the location after him. It bears the name Quissamã to this day.² The same year, the former governor of the Portuguese colony of Angola, Fernão de Sousa, wrote from the colonial capital of Luanda of the fragility of the Portuguese military, slave raiding and trading, and plantation enterprises in the region that they had occupied for more than a half century, complaining that the “souas on whom we border are many and powerful, and warlike; in the province of Quissama . . . [they are] all non-Christians and our enemies.”³

While the maroon in Brazil identifies Kisama as a nation and de Sousa casts it as a place, both drew on the same set of globally circulating signifiers that I refer to as “the Kisama meme.” By the 1630s, the nonstate,

nonliterate, and largely fugitive adults and children who fashioned the Kisama meme—a construction of Kisama as synonymous with a particularly belligerent, obdurate form of resistance to all outside authority or state power, African and European alike—had not only forged a political praxis that would shape action, discourse, and archives until the present, but had also ensnared diffuse people far from the ocean and mobile, merchant capital into a dynamic reputational geography. This is a study of the people who crafted and contested the changing ideologies concerning political legitimacy and the relationship of violence to community that bubbled beneath the seemingly still surface of the Kisama meme in West Central Africa and the Americas. This is a story of conflict *through* violence and conflict *about* violence in an era marked by unprecedented forms and scale of aggression against individuals and communities. The Kisama meme, and the reputational geography it engendered, not only drew fugitives from a broad swath of West Central Africa but also pulsed through the Americas, informing the intellectual repertoires and political technologies of fugitives from the seventeenth century forward. Narrating the history of political ideas of those who never wrote a word requires new methods, and creative application of older ones; tracing a five-century history of people whose existence was largely predicated upon and defined by their eschewing the very practices through which identities normally gain salience and political thought enters the archives necessitates new kinds of questions.

West Central Africans in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries experienced violence of unprecedented forms and catastrophic scale. While the Portuguese established regular diplomatic relationships with the expansionist Kingdom of Kongo beginning in the late fifteenth century, Portuguese merchants quickly expanded their trade in captive people to the south. As the Portuguese, and later the Dutch, moved along the coast and into the interior following the formal establishment of the colony in Luanda (1575), compelling the states like Kongo and Ndongo with whom they allied, fought, and traded to procure an ever-increasing number of captives for sale, these states directed their forces toward their neighbors. For the vast majority of those in the region, who did not live under the suzerainty of any powerful state, everyday life was fraught with peril. More than three and a half million West Central Africans were eventually bound in chains on board slave ships and transported to the Americas, most from Luanda and Benguela; at least twice that number

were killed in the wars instigated by this trade. Countless more were uprooted, alienated from family, community, and home, and cast into alien lands where they attempted to reconstitute viable communities. It is within this world that thousands of fugitives created and contested the meaning of Kisama as a political signifier, within this context of totalizing terror that Africans and their descendants in the Americas drew from diverse repertoires of nonstate fugitive political ideologies to make a life in the endless echoes of death. Within this context, what did these geographically and sociopolitically disparate seventeenth-century men mean when they identified “Kisama,” either as a nation of origin or as the center of anti-Portuguese resistance? What did the fugitive in Brazil intend to convey when he spoke of himself as part of a “nation” which—even by seventeenth-century standards—without centralized authority, common political institutions, or shared and distinctive linguistic practices, hardly qualified? To gloss Kisama as a simple toponym referring to the arid lands between Angola’s Kwanza and Longa Rivers is to miss the cross-regional, trans-Atlantic political processes through which thousands of the most individually weak and vulnerable people in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Angola collectively fashioned dynamic political identities oriented around renouncing state formations, martial idioms for social organization, and resisting slavery, the slave trade, and imbrication in market economies. To grasp the meanings with which these fugitives imbued Kisama, too, requires embedding ourselves in a different epistemological framework, or system of ideas, that, in turn, fosters new chronotopes, or visions of time, and notions of subjectivity, or views of personhood.

We know this unnamed figure in Brazil through a Portuguese-ascribed racial designation (“preto”) and, more importantly, through a political affiliation he himself claimed (“of the nation of Quissamã”). We can also discern his social silhouette through the political discourse evinced by his fugitivity that preceded this encounter with the Portuguese, and his subsequent decision to flee yet again, after. This otherwise anonymous man in Brazil is the first person whom I have located in archival records who identified *himself* as Kisama, and it is no coincidence that he, as a fugitive, claimed membership in a “nation” that, by the 1630s, was renowned throughout Angola and the broader world as the home of resisters and runaways. While this archival Polaroid can only leave us guessing as to the political or social capital such an assertion would have carried for an African man seemingly alone in a community of indigenous Brazilians, the

Brazilian maroon expected his Portuguese interlocutors to understand his description of origins as a claim concerning political orientation. Kisama meant something to him, something that transcended the matter of origins that fascinated his Portuguese interlocutors then as much as it preoccupies scholars now, and he expected it to mean something, to convey something resonant about politics and space, even in this alien and alienating land. And it did. The synchronicity of these moments in Angola and Brazil, too, hints at a hidden history of revolutionary ideology circulating through Africa and the Americas in the early seventeenth century—a history silenced both as it was happening and as it was later narrated.⁴

Fugitive Modernities is the story of the political actions and intellectual labor that constituted the terrain of meaning and signification upon which these actors and others evoked Kisama in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries until the present, from West Central Africa to the New Kingdom of Grenada (modern-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panamá), Brazil, and beyond. At its root, it is the history of thousands of individually vulnerable fugitives from unprecedented violence and social and political rupture who constituted new communities that were collectively viable. Rather than embracing ideologies of centralization and hierarchy, however, these fugitives forged an ethos centered on the horizontal integration of newcomers. In both a material and symbolic sense, their very survival was predicated on martial skill and on projecting a reputation for military success; however, unlike other novel political entities of the period, those who evoked Kisama identities systemically rejected a martial idiom for social organization. As war became an integral part of life in West Central Africa throughout the seventeenth century and beyond, both older political entities and new formations placed warriors and warrior identities at the center of their schematic maps of social and political life. Warfare was essential, and in many societies, warriors, warrior masculinities, and the practices associated with warfare became the guiding paradigm for social and political life. Not so for those who constituted Kisama. And while those who became and made Kisama rejected centralized political authority and unification, to the frustration and disgruntlement of both African and European state leaders from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, much of what it meant to be Kisama derived from the reputation of one Kisama soba, Kafuxi Ambari.

Time Is Illmatic: Jita Kwatakwata, Archives, and the
Multicontinental, Multicentury Life of Kafuxi Ambari

A history of Kisama requires a comprehensive reimagining of the terrain upon which we tell stories. Time, personhood, space: none of these are universal or apolitical categories.⁵ Power imposes limitations on our imaginations, and this is nowhere more apparent than in this, an effort to tell the history of radical political ideas and practices that relies on sources and disciplinary practices fundamentally and inescapably rooted not only in different epistemes, or ways of knowing, but in ways of knowing that emerged as part of centuries of systemic murder, torture, rape, commodification, and bondage of the people whose lives and ideas are meant to sit at the center of this story. It is not enough to excavate evidence of existence, of political being, from an archive of terror. Rather, it is essential to employ the epistemes through which those who created Kisama made political and moral sense of the bloody milieu within which they lived, loved, and made new worlds.

In many important ways, this is a five-century, multicontinental biography of Kafuxi Ambari that challenges how we conceive of biography, life history, and subjectivities. As Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully note in their efforts to write the life history of Sara Baartman, “Biography . . . emerged at a particular time and place in Europe’s imagining of the self. . . . It emerged along with the idea of the possessive individual, the person who has agency, autonomy, a vision of self. This idea of the person, of the self, is not so easily transferred to anytime and anyplace and to worlds where there is no clearly possessive subject, no ‘me,’ ‘myself.’”⁶

So what are the possibilities for narrating life stories that emerge from alternate epistemes of self and subject? If the fundamental unit of being is not the liberal subject—the atomic individual with rights and obligations ensured by the legal apparatus of state—but rather a collective self, fashioned through the instrumental deployment of historical memory and rituo-political choreography, then, unsurprisingly, biography *must* function differently.⁷ It cannot be bound by the limits of an individual life span or chained to the teloi or chronotopes of state. Instead, it must take seriously the ways of conceiving time and being that derive from and foster other political logics. To render Kisama’s history through Kafuxi Ambari’s biography and the reputational geographies he helped engender, I draw from archival sources intermeshed in their own generation with

oral sources, and oral sources recurring to archival records—an effort to discern the oblique contours of complex political, intellectual, and social histories through the life of a single, rather atypical figure—with all of the caveats that microhistories inevitably entail.⁸

Here, it is useful to situate Kafuxi Ambari's nonstate subjectivity and the history of time, personhood, and ideology that I am endeavoring to tell in the context of a broader historical idiom, employed by Kimbundu speakers both in geographical Kisama and north of the Kwanza River: the Jita Kwatakwata.⁹ "Jita Kwatakwata" translates directly as "War of Acquisition." The reduplication of the term *kwata* to *kwatakwata* serves to emphasize the unitary focus on acquisition, to the exclusion of the social reciprocity that normally governed political and economic relationships in the region. When Kimbundu speakers refer to the Jita Kwatakwata, they collapse a period beginning with the commencement of intensive slave raiding in the late fifteenth century all the way to the extractive economies of forced plantation agriculture in the twentieth century. More ruling party inflected versions of the chronotope end the Jita Kwatakwata with the uprising among cotton cultivators in the Baixa de Kasanje in 1961; living in the twentieth century doesn't change the materiality of slavery. Others, more wary of the ongoing topographies of extraction and exploitation in Angola, explain that the offshore petroleum comes from the bones of the enslaved whom the Portuguese tossed off of ships, and only when the oil is exhausted will the Jita Kwatakwata truly end. By framing history in this way, Kimbundu speakers make an argument about change over time that connects moral community to capital and politics—an idiom and argument far more effective than any provincially European chronotope.

Time is always an argument about power and morality. Epochs like "the Enlightenment" and "the Age of Revolution" posit a Whiggishness—a belief in progress over time—that surely crushes the bones of those on whom that progress for a few is built. This is a history set in the Jita Kwatakwata, and the choices and practices of the people whose story I tell—those who fled made Kisama, or some other fugitive modernity in Angola, those who rewove fugitive fabrics of community anew in the Americas—were conditioned by the bloody topographies of time and being within which they lived. But they could and did create other worlds, and using notions of subjectivity and time grounded in the political and moral epistemology of Kisama can help us access those worlds.

Telling Kisama's history in part as a biography of Kafuxi Ambari involves adopting a concept of personhood unfamiliar to many readers. When people within geographical Kisama refer to Kafuxi Ambari, they do so as if they are speaking of an individual. Specific elements of these histories, however, can be linked through external epistemologies—colonial archives—to events over a number of centuries in the written record. Scholars traditionally refer to this practice as positional succession, or “the notion that social roles or positions termed ‘names’ . . . with permanently defined rights and obligations exist independently of actual living persons.”¹⁰ However, this notion of positional succession serves more as a strategy of translation and less as an explanation of a radically different episteme. Positional succession as a construct assumes a contractual, statist notion of community and political and social order, and imposes it on contexts, like Kisama, where it does not belong.

Kafuxi Ambari was not a title, like “king” or “pope,” but rather a living embodiment of the essence of an enduring subjectivity. In this sense, then, “Kafuxi Ambari” and names of other sobas referred to a particular structural relationship with both the ancestors and the living, a specific social contour of power and legitimacy.¹¹ Far from being easily synonymous with political titles, this widely dispersed practice in Africa points to notions of selfhood and identity centered on the incorporation of sedimented pasts into an embodied present—a nonlinear construct of time and being. Kafuxi Ambari was not a position to which any and all could aspire. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, European and African conceptions of chronology and leadership were often far closer than a twenty-first-century person would imagine. Just as Kisama-based narrators speak of Kafuxi Ambari as a singular entity across the centuries, so too do records generated by the colonial officials and priests who were present in Angola from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries refer to Kafuxi Ambari as one individual.¹²

This fortuitous archival silence compelled me to look for ways of understanding Kisama history that had more to do with how those who created Kisama in the seventeenth century understood time, being, and the world, and how their descendants, living in the brutal twenty-first-century machinations of the Jita Kwatakwata, comprehend the relationship of time, being, and narrative, and less to do with the imperatives of a liberal academic habitus. Because a conception of Kafuxi Ambari as a being who transcends the time of discrete, liberal selves is essential to

understanding the emergence and contestation of the fugitive politics of Kisama, I refer to Kafuxi Ambari in the same terms and using the same pronouns as my sources: as a single person. What follows is thus the fractal biography of one man over centuries and continents, and the permutations of his reputation and evocation in disparate political and social spaces, toward remarkably consistent ends.

This is, of course, an act of narrative and conceptual imagination on my part. Narrative is *always* an act of selection, framing, editing, adjusting, silencing, and amplifying, and neither radical positivist nor constructivist pretensions alter the reality that choices regarding narrative structure always reflect and construct relations of power. While I certainly disagree with Benedict Anderson's famous notion that literacy is the basis for imagining modern political communities—this entire book may be read as a grounded rejection of Andersonian logics—there is an undeniable connection between narrative and social reality.¹³ Indeed, there is something metanarrative about *Fugitive Modernities*; I am trying to tell the story of the ways in which those in Angola and the Americas, and their interlocutors globally, told the stories that made Kisama a potent tool of political conjuring.¹⁴ Those whose political praxis and imagination created Kisama chose to eschew writing and forms of oral history and tradition that reinforce hierarchy, just as they rejected warrior identities and masculinities as the central ethos for their society. I take these choices as seriously as I do the political, aesthetic, and narrative conventions of my own indigenous language of hip hop, and use them to guide this story and the politics underpinning the ways in which I tell it.¹⁵

I do not pretend to offer an unmediated glimpse into the history of Kisama in this text. Communication is *always* mediated, and authenticity forever the armor of power, acknowledged or otherwise. Many of my sources will be familiar to students of West Central African and African Diaspora history. In my footnotes, you'll find the same assortment of military, colonial governmental, judicial, and missionary sources from the same colonial archives that grace the pages of all canonical works in the field. While I gesture backward in time, I principally begin my story in 1594, when Kisama first leaves its most profound imprint in the colonial archive, and indeed argue that the events of 1594 are essential to the geography of reputation at the core of Kisama's history. This is an approach to archives that, while building on the insights of Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Ann Stoler, Luise White, Nancy Rose Hunt, and others, owes much,

too, to the work of Neil Kodesh and others who insist on reading archival sources through the epistemic lens of oral histories, with sensitivity to genre and setting.¹⁶ My assertion that the history of Kisama is a biography of Kafuxi Ambari is, of course, my own narrative polemic, rooted in the voices and silences through which people in Kisama construct their own stories, and always aware and wary of the contours of power of the world in which we live.

Ten years ago, Saidiya Hartman asked, “How can a narrative of defeat enable a place for the living or envision any alternative future?”¹⁷ Hartman’s question compels us to do far more than weigh between a narrative pole of agency that obfuscates horror or one of totalizing brutality that erases being. She challenges us to accept neither the inhuman anti-Blackness of the archive nor the problematically one-note heroics as the threads linking our present to our past. Taking Hartman’s query as a starting point, in *Fugitive Modernities*, I engage ways of knowing about time, being, and political imagination that come from those who built worlds outside of state hegemony in the past, and ask how these imaginations help us ask questions of our present that can open a future always already foreclosed to the children of slaves in a liberal capitalist state hegemony.

Bemoaning archival silences places the historian in the role of the slave catcher, prowling through the darkness to capture the bodies of those fleeing violence and terror to subject them to bright searchlights, interrogations, and all manner of disciplining/disciplinary brutality.¹⁸ The absence of those in whose histories I am most interested from the archives is a reason to celebrate, not mourn. The extent to which Kisama is and has remained a blank spot on the map, materially and symbolically, represents the degree to which the fugitive politics of Kisama has been successful. Of course, not all who evade the violence through which African people and their descendants in the Americas enter the archives live and die unmarked by the viciousness of state and capital.¹⁹ However, it is certain that none who enter the archives do.²⁰ *Fugitive Modernities* is not a romance, nor is it a tragedy.²¹ I claim not to uncover or recover anything so much as to take seriously the intellectual work of fugitives and to ask how the epistemic, ontological, and chronotypical paradigms they devised—their ways of conceiving knowledge, categories of being, and the nature of time—compel not only a different narrative of Kisama history, or of Angolan history, but also of the history of modernity itself.

Here, I differ both methodologically and politically from the approach of other scholars like Marisa Fuentes, who powerfully critiques, “The manner in which the violent systems and structures of white supremacy produced devastating images of enslaved female personhood, and how these pervade the archive and govern what can be known about them.”²² While I share Fuentes’s impetus to make clear the imperial nature of archives, to register that these archives not only record material acts of violence, but themselves engender discursive and epistemic aggression, this is not the story of archives nor of those whose regimes of power they buttressed. Archives, state power, and capitalism do not represent the only ways of knowing about the world past or present, and it is the forms, shapes, and content of the other stories possible through these other regimes of knowledge that interest me. I stand on the shoulders of those without whose important critique of archives and the practice of history this work would be impossible, but I remain committed to fugitivity as both the focus of this history and as a paradigm.

Like Aisha Finch, I too perceive the archives as a “pedagogy of state terror [that] contains a variety of teachings for those who study its history.” In writing about La Escalera Rebellion in nineteenth-century Cuba, Finch problematizes both scholarly and popular views of the action and agency of enslaved and fugitive people in the Americas that efface the political and intellectual labor of those who do not enter the archives, and fixate instead on the totalizing violence of state. And so too, like Finch, here I endeavor to write a history of the rural, non-elite, nonmercantalist, nonliterate thinkers and actors who “knew those lessons [of totalizing state violence, as encoded in the archives], but defied them anyway.”²³ Indeed, it is these histories of ideas and political action at the greatest distance from the institutions of power that create archives that hold the greatest potential for opening new terrain of political imagination and action.

Meaning from the Margins: Against Identity and
the Black Atlantic

Located at the ground zero bull’s-eye of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, between the Portuguese colonial ports of Luanda and Benguela—the first- and third-highest volume ports of the trans-Atlantic slave trade,

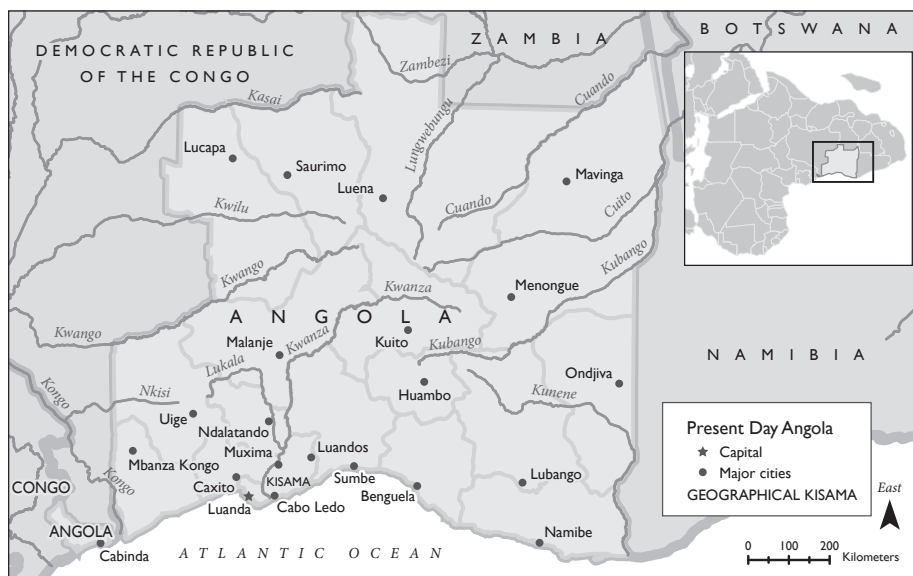
respectively—residents and interlocutors of geographical Kisama inescapably shaped and were shaped by the features of violence, capital, and subjugation that are often bundled under problematically benign terms like “the (Black) Atlantic” or “modernity.”²⁴ However, beginning in the late sixteenth century, the particular political, intellectual, martial, social, and cultural responses of African people to the mounting violence that accompanied the expansion of both slavery and the slave trade in the region led to the emergence of Kisama identities associated as much with resistance, military efficacy, spiritual power, political decentralization, and the harboring of fugitives as with the earlier connection to high-quality rock salt. The story of how Kisama grew to convey particular political meanings is at once intensely local and profoundly global. It requires grounding in the deep past of West Central Africa, but also in the complexities of Central American and Caribbean pirate cultures, and the labor, gender, and ideological contours of the lives of Africans and their descendants within and against the institution of American (hemispherically speaking) chattel slavery.

By any measure, geographical Kisama is a small, remote place. The territory between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers occupies roughly 8,700 square miles, or about the same area as the state of Massachusetts.²⁵ While it is only approximately forty miles from Luanda to the nearest part of geographical Kisama along the Atlantic coast, the social distance from the capital has long been considerably greater. Since at least the sixteenth century, the region has been relatively sparsely populated, at least in relation to the Central Plateau and the Lukala and Bengo River valleys, in no small part because of its endemic aridity.²⁶ Though the relationship between the natural dryness of the land and the subsistence patterns of those living on it undoubtedly changed during the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century period on which I focus here—perhaps most importantly, through the adoption of the American cultigens manioc, maize, and sweet potatoes, as I discuss in chapter 3—the regularity of drought in the region does seem to be an enduring feature.²⁷ While a lack of rain may have been a long-standing attribute of the region, we should read the historical descriptions of the region’s depopulation through endemic disease and drought with a degree of skepticism. Beyond the highly questionable methodology (read: varying degrees of poorly informed speculation) through which these observers obtained their estimates, it is worth noting that the high mortality that early twentieth-century German soldier

and ethnographer Ernst Wilhelm Mattenklodt's source attributes to sleeping sickness belies the large number of those killed and displaced in Portuguese early twentieth-century efforts to fully occupy the land and impose forced cultivation of cotton on the people living there. Later colonial accounts of population are suspect because they reinforce Portuguese arguments in favor of declaring the area first a game reserve (1938) and later a national park (1957).²⁸ Twentieth-century colonial, state, and conservationist actors interested in maintaining the region as a game park and national park have instrumentally forged a national and international imagination of the region between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers as devoid of human settlement and history—a blank space on the map.²⁹ Indeed, despite all of the advancement of technology and outsider knowledge about the region, even today, most maps show nothing in the region save the national park and, perhaps, the colonial fort at Muxima on the banks of the Kwanza River, and Cabo Ledo, the government's fantasy aspirational tourist surf destination at the bar of the river. In the most literal sense, then, Kisama has been and remains an empty space in the imaginary within and about Angola, on the maps that define and delineate the modern nation-state as they did the imperial designs on the colony.

Some of the most prominent historians and anthropologists of Africa have long studied West Central Africa, and seventeenth-century Angola in particular, but Kisama always plays at the margins of this work. The historiography tends to focus either on the machinations of states and their considerable archival corpus, or on those who generated archives through their purchase and sale of human beings.³⁰ In a sea of literature about Kongo, Ndongo and Matamba, and, in recent years, the port of Benguela, there are only two works that focus on Kisama, beyond sporadic footnotes: Beatrix Heintze's 1970 article (translated in abridged form from German to English in 1972) and Aurora da Fonseca Ferreira's 2012 book.³¹ Heintze treats Kisama as critical in a broader regional politics as a haven for fugitives, and Ferreira largely narrates earlier Kisama history by way of locating it in a twentieth-century ruling party narrative of resistance. But neither Heintze nor Ferreira interrogates the relationship between Kisama's strategic marginality, its absence from archives, and the means through which a particular kind of fugitive modernity emerged in Kisama.

As marginal as Kisama is in the literature of Angolan history, it is non-existent in Diasporic texts. Kisama has not left an obvious mark in the Americas in the same way that other African ur-identities, like Yoruba



Map Intro.1 — Present Day Angola. Map by Heather Rosenfeld.

or Kongo, have. There are no practices or people in the Americas labeled Kisama who reverberate with anthropological and cultural/nationalist visions of Blackness. In terms of seemingly straightforward toponymic connections, there are only a handful of places in the Americas that are named Kisama—two towns in Brazil (including the one in Rio de Janeiro mentioned above and another in Sergipe), one in Panamá, and one in Chile. What can these toponyms tell us, however? In the case of the town in Rio de Janeiro, even the apparently obvious connection between the self-proclaimed provenance of a single seventeenth-century individual and the name of the town obscures centuries of political and social imaginations and imaginaries. There is no clear, direct link between the seventeenth century and today that does not pass through the reentrenchment of slavery in Rio and beyond in the nineteenth century, and the subsequent growth of sugar plantations around Quissamã, but stories of origins inevitably excise these bloody complexities.

Indeed, the Brazilian municipality's account of the origins of the name moves beyond relating the maroon's tale at the beginning of this book, further contending that Kisama (Quissamã) is "a word with Angolan

origin which signifies ‘fruit of the land that is located between the river and the sea’ and gave its name to a city 80 km from Luanda, at the mouth of the Kwanza River, that was the principal origin of blacks who were sold or traded in Brasil.”³² This highly imaginative account of the lexicon, geography, historical relations, and demography of the trans-Atlantic slave trade dates to a twenty-first century visit of Angolan government officials to the area. Overlooking the tangled interrelations of politics, ideologies, identities, and economies over a global four centuries not only blurs our concept of *Kisama’s* particular histories—and Quissama’s—but it also obfuscates the very nature of history itself. If history is naught but a telos of a bounded people who were always already coherent, in possession of a self-evident identity, then—even from the perspective of storytelling—what conflicts can possibly drive the narrative? Such quests, understandably animated by a desire to salve the gaping wounds of centuries of the slave trade, slavery, and its colonial life and legacies in both the Americas and Africa, replace the burden of an unknowable history with answers that stifle a possibility of political imagination and creativity beyond moribund colonial statist anthropological views of Africans. Replacing “tribe” with “ethnicity” or “culture” doesn’t render these ways of thinking of Africa any less one-dimensional, and substituting the derision of white supremacy (“Africans were primitives!”) with flattened, state and state-aspirational politics (“Africans had kingdoms, too! And our ancestors brought the practices of these states with them to the Americas!”) not only ignores the histories and worlds of most African people but it promises that our political imagination will remain hollow, stillborn, forever shackled to a fantasy built on the very violence we seek to address.

As James Lorand Matory keenly observed, since its inception throughout the Americas, and particularly in the United States, African Diasporic scholarship has been preoccupied by questions of identity that center geographical origins and are animated by geographic logics.³³ Though some, like Mariza de Carvalho Soares, Luis Nicolau Parés, and James Sweet, have pointed to the multiplicity and fluidity of African identities, arguing that over a lifetime and depending on context many Africans, both on the continent and in the Americas, claimed multiple identities, even for these more process-oriented scholars, identity is still, primarily, a function of geographic origin.³⁴ Others focus on the role that European (mis)conceptions played in assigning nation labels to African people in the Americas. Pablo Gómez, echoing scholarship by Mariana Candido and others, char-

acterizes *naciones* (*nações* in Portuguese) as “African ethnic groups as defined by Europeans.”³⁵ This recent focus on process, multiplicity, and the power relationships encoded in nation labels represents a more nuanced and sophisticated approach to African Diasporic nations than generations of straightforwardly geographically deterministic scholarship. However, the literature still remains engrossed with geographic origins as the primary component of identity, and with a notion of identity as a materiality, a characteristic or set of characteristics someone has or doesn’t have.

However, my research in other contexts suggests that identity is less a materiality and more of a language through which people describe and orient politics, often independent from geography. In eighteenth-century Jamaica, enslaved and fugitive people from origins as diverse as Madagascar, Kongo, Calabar (modern-day southeastern Nigeria), and throughout the Americas evoked a Kromanti identity—which scholars typically identify as connoting origins in Akan-speaking parts of present-day Ghana—as a means of constructing communities of resistance. Kromanti identity was never about the fishing village whose name it shares, but rather signified a ritual practice and oath, a political idiom, that emerged after a devastating betrayal and the loss of both a head of state and the means by which to properly memorialize him. The oath, employed in both West Africa and the Americas, became a means by which those from diverse geographic origins could link acts of memory with the political practice of reconstituting viable communities bound together by oath.³⁶ Whether articulating an identity that cohered around a ritual idiom, like Kromanti, or a geography of reputation, like Kisama, African nation identities—so-called ethnic identities more globally—are *always* primarily political claims rather than ascriptions of location or origin.

An instructive example comes from the excellent scholarship on perhaps the most omnipresent and iconic of all African Diasporic ur-identities, the Yoruba. A semiotic view of Yoruba ritual as history combined with political economy enable us to see purity and primordialism as instrumental discourses in a broader field of political and economic power.³⁷ Amplifying the analysis of Stephan Palmié, Matory, and others in the case of Yoruba identities, what if we begin to ask what *identity means at all*, even in the cases where it would seem to cohere with earlier anthropological constructs, such as possession of a shared language and distinct set of cultural practices, evocation of a centralized political regime, and so on? Kisama’s contingent, constructed nature should not stand as

an exception in a field contoured largely through an implicit notion of the materiality of identities, particularly those associated with kingdoms legible through Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies (e.g., Oyo, Kongo, Dahomey). Following Vincent Brown's call to move beyond the "mistaken impression that people's sole aim was to achieve a distinct cultural identity"—a preoccupation determined by the devastating culturalist obsessions of twentieth- and twenty-first-century states—I instead interrogate the political work and ideological valences that those invoking Kisama meant to do, whether in Africa or the Americas. Because the intellectual underpinnings of this labor are visible to us only through fractured archives and evidence of action, Brown describes this as "the politics of practical behavior."³⁸ Here, and throughout my work, "politics" refers not to the institutional relationship between state or state-sanctioned entities, but rather to the machinations and maneuverings of individuals, constituencies, and communities in relationship to power. This expansive view of politics excludes little. Its inclusiveness, however, allows us to move beyond antiquated notions of culture and identity—and equally outdated yet enduring notions of atavism and Africa—to use the seemingly marginal case of Kisama to advance new understandings of political thought outside of states, its relationship to modernity, alternate chronotopes emerging from fugitive epistemologies, and new concepts of personhood and subjectivity springing from this newly imagined space/time.

I seek to unravel the processes by which Kisama shifted from a primarily geographical referent in the lexicon of Kongo nobility ("the province of Kisama") to one with which fugitives identified politically ("the nation of Quissamã") through debates over the meaning and the contours of political legitimacy and its relationship to violence in a world characterized for most by dislocation, alienation, and deprivation.³⁹ In Angola, changes in local conceptions about the relationship between military prowess and leadership during the late sixteenth century, and in particular the emergence of a charismatic and particularly martially and spiritually powerful soba named Kafuxi Ambari, animated the development of an internally relevant and externally compelling Kisama meme. The Kisama meme is a remarkably abiding discourse across time (sixteenth century to the present) and space (Africa, the Americas, and Europe) in which Kisama is characterized through (1) the importance and universal desirability of the rock salt mines at Ndemba; (2) the fundamentally obdurate and martially and spiritually potent nature of its inhabitants, especially the soba Kafuxi

Ambari; and (3) the dedication with which the people of Kisama welcomed maroons and fugitives, harbored them, and fought to defend them. Those participating in this process transformed the meaning of Kisama from a territorial referent to a set of traits modeled on the exceptional qualities and practices of Kafuxi Ambari, including ferocity, commitment to autonomy, and intractable resistance. As the reputation of geographical Kisama as the locus of effective military resistance grew, it attracted thousands of runaways, including entire groups of trained soldiers from the armies of Ndongo and Portugal and large numbers of women. These fugitives in turn reconfigured the political and ideological landscape of Kisama, preserving and encouraging the association of Kisama with martial skill and spiritual aptitude while—in contrast to other groups, like the Imbangala, who also formed in response to the omnipresent violence and dislocation of the period—refusing to institutionalize martial social idioms.⁴⁰ Kisama became a society of warriors by reputation while abjuring the creation of any enduring warrior class. It is no coincidence that during this same critical period of the 1630s, Kisama-identified people first appear in sources from the Americas, almost always in conjunction with maroonage and resistance, as in the case of the Brazilian anecdote above or the several Kisama-identified men and women who appear in documents concerning a *palenque* (maroon settlement) outside of Cartagena in 1634.

A study of Kisama can therefore illuminate the complex history of Africans in Africa and the Americas during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from the perspective of the vulnerable as they worked to transform themselves into the collectively inviolable. By studying Kisama, we can understand how local histories informed global historical memories for centuries, and how these global historical memories in turn dialogically shaped local practices and identities; indeed, Kisama's history compels us to move beyond the politically coded language of "local" and "global." We are further driven to reimagine time, space, and being, in order to locate Kisama and multiple Kisama-like streams of consciousness emanating from without and against states at the center of the modern world. Modernity looks different from Kisama, and Kisama is far from exceptional, globally. What we thought we knew about modernity has largely been a product of our complicity with state hegemonies.

Those who imbued Kisama with its reputations are paradigmatic examples of the sort of people James C. Scott evoked in his work to develop "a global history of populations trying to avoid, or having been extruded

by, the state.”⁴¹ Scott calls for a transnational, cross-regional approach that understands “hill people” in a mutually constitutive relationship with the states in resistance to whom their identities were forged and reformed. Arguing against scholarship that tends to, unsurprisingly, replicate ontologies of state by viewing those who live outside of centralized political entities as uncivilized remnants of an earlier stage of human political development (often glossed, especially in Africanist scholarship, as “the hinterlands”), Scott asserts that fragmented, diverse, and noncentralized political regions evolved as conscious responses to the acquisitive, repressive nature of states. According to Scott, “Shatter zones are found wherever the expansion of states, empires, slave-trading, and wars, as well as natural disasters, have driven large numbers of people to seek refuge in out-of-the-way places.”⁴² Geographical Kisama is exactly such a place, where fugitives from kingdoms and expansionist powers in the north, south, and east had long settled, and where those fleeing Portuguese incursions from at least the early seventeenth century into the twentieth found refuge. Archaeological, linguistic, botanical, and further oral historical research is necessary to be able to say with certainty, but Kisama likely served as a haven from expanding states since the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century conquests of Kongo and Ndongo.⁴³ It is Kisama’s status as a shatter zone, or long-standing maroon society, that makes it an ideal place from which to reconfigure many of the most basic categories of time and space. Beyond redefining approaches to African and African Diasporic histories, and emphatically scuttling the “Atlantic” and all of its modifiers (Black, African, etc.), I seek to delineate a new intellectual terrain.⁴⁴ The putative heuristic value of “the Atlantic,” however qualified by Blackness, Africanness, or any other modifier, is considerably less than its conceptual weakness and political alignment with effacing the bloody hegemonies of capital and state.

On Time and Being: Imagining History and Consciousness beyond the State

A serious study of the political ideologies underlying the formation of fugitive communities—societies that shunned centralization, the adoption of statist technologies like lineage, history, and writing, and the naturalization of idioms of violence or social identification with warriors—compels

a reimagination of some of the critical concepts used by historians and social scientists, not just of Africa, but of the world. If we date modernity to Columbus's voyages or to the French Revolution, to urban industrialization or to the advent of nation-states as the hegemonic form of spatiopolitical organization, do we inherently relegate the peoples of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific Islands to the exclusive role of labor and/or cultural inputs, malcontents or after-the-beat reactionaries?⁴⁵ And if we accept even the seemingly more radical notion of "alternate" modernities emanating from states outside of Western Europe, or from imperial subjects' interlocution with Western Europe, do we then inherently deny the histories of other political trajectories and the inter-related systems of spatiotemporal imaginations and subjectivities they fostered? If being "a people without history" is a deliberate choice rather than a developmental failure, what animates that choice, and what are its consequences? What happens when we adopt ways of organizing knowledge that arise from within fugitive societies as analytic categories?⁴⁶

Since at least the mid-1990s, scholars have assailed the still-prevailing convention of dividing the history of Africa (and the rest of the world outside of Europe, for that matter) into precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods.⁴⁷ The shortcomings of this schematic are clear: "It 'privileges as primary the role of colonialism', and implies that 'all that came before colonialism becomes its own prehistory and whatever comes after can only be lived as infinite aftermath.'"⁴⁸ From a historical perspective, this periodization flattens everything that came before the Europeans into a single, indistinct mass, attributes agency only to European actors and those Africans who were influenced by and emulated them, and imposes the illusion of autonomy onto people who don't experience their own lives as postcolonial in any meaningful way. For example, the Congolese soldiers who, mere days after the official declaration of independence on June 30, 1960, witnessed the Belgian commander who remained in charge of the supposedly sovereign national army write "Before Independence = After Independence" on a chalk board, would likely contest such categories.⁴⁹ Surely, no one imagines that an eleventh-century merchant in an urban settlement in the Niger River bend or a goatherd in the twelfth-century Sahel or a blacksmith in fourteenth-century Central Africa paused during their daily activities to wonder when colonialism would commence and their history would begin. So what categories did these goatherds and blacksmiths, farmers and fisherpeople, weavers and

pottery, use to imagine time? And what do we lose in understanding the worlds they occupied when we neglect to even ask this?

And, indeed, when *did* colonialism begin? Did colonialism arrive in West Central Africa in 1482 on board Diogo Cão's ships, or with Paulo Dias de Novais's formal establishment of a colony in Luanda in 1575? Were those who were forced to work growing manioc in the Lukala and Bengo River valleys of early seventeenth-century Angola colonial subjects? Were their contemporaries who lived under vassalage treaties with the Portuguese? Did a child captured deep in the interior, forcibly marched to the coast, boarded on a slave ship in chains, and then made to labor until death on a sugar plantation in Brazil transition from pre-colonial Africa to colonial Latin America? Did colonialism start only after 1808, though the British abolition of the slave trade would take another few decades to impact life in the region? Or was it the other date commonly recognized by those who divide African history curricula: the beginning of the so-called scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century? The Portuguese did not gain full territorial control over geographical Kisama until the 1920s. Does that mean that Kisama alone was precolonial and experienced only fifty years of colonial rule, even in the shadow of the sixteenth-century Portuguese fort at Muxima? Such questions merely illustrate the indefensible teleology and Eurocentric perspective of the precolonial/colonial/postcolonial divide. Furthermore, they reinforce how, given Portuguese marginality within Europe and the conventional scholarship of empires, the common use of the nineteenth century as the dividing line only renders places like Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé, Cape Verde, Angola, and Mozambique further outside of the normative discussions about African history.

Into the twentieth century, Portuguese colonial officials still spoke of the necessity of conquering Kisama and bringing it into the colonial sphere, and yet the Portuguese built a fort on the southern banks of the Kwanza River, in geographic Kisama, in the late sixteenth century. In the early sixteenth century, the king of Kongo claimed Kisama as one of his provinces, and yet in the mid-seventeenth century, Njinga described the conquest of Kisama as something no one had yet accomplished.⁵⁰ While there is no doubt that the violence through which the Portuguese and other European powers and their allies acquired bondsmen and women for sale was on an unprecedented scale, there is no reason to assume that those who may have fled across the Kwanza River to escape Kongo and

Ndongo state power would have understood their political options in radically different terms than later fugitives from the Portuguese. Further, as in many other cases, West Central Africans likely understood their lived experiences of violence through the lens of regional political conflicts, again troubling our neat divisions between “local” and “global” categories. Only centuries of hindsight, for example, makes it possible to extend the notion of colonialism backward to include these state expansions—and characterizing resistance to it as anticolonial—but inevitably ignores the particularities of local politics in favor of adopting a concept that fails to even adequately explain practices of Europeans in the fifteenth through twentieth centuries.

The long scholarly collusion in identifying Angola—the place from which more people left the continent in chains than any other—as a *feito-ria*, or trading post, rather than as a colony, silences the connections across the long centuries of Portuguese violence in Angola.⁵¹ This was all the Jita Kwatakwata, and debates about the distinctions in European desires and intentions center agents of devastation in the history of those against whom they turned their destructive powers. The notion of precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial realities reveals less about the experiences and paradigms of most of the world and more about what those who benefited from this exploitation thought about it. They are etic categories, or ideas from outside the realities and paradigms of those whom they pretend to describe, that foreclose possibilities, political imaginations.

Because colonial time has a spatial element as well, deracinating my study of Kisama from a temporal ontology centered on colonization compels me to define a new conceptual terrain within which to locate my research, separate from—or at least distinct within—the most obvious field within which to locate a study of Kisama history: the long, dynamic body of scholarship concerning the African Diaspora and, in the last couple of decades, the newer domain of (Black) Atlantic Studies. Both of these approaches are tacitly undergirded by colonial time and undermined by their conflation of time, space, and politics. In particular, the popular notion of “creolization” and “Atlantic creoles” correlates cultural change with European contact.⁵² By contrast, my study of Kisama and my notion of fugitive modernities allow us to follow the political practices and discursive strategies of those fleeing from and resisting the violence of states—in this period, violence closely associated with the trans-Atlantic slave trade—without yoking agency to actors’ embeddedness within states. Those who

forged Kisama politics in Angola were not the African source of a more modern African American cultural or political practice, nor the more backward kin of their neighbors in Kongo or Ndongo. Rather, their histories provide a critical perspective on intellectual and political history in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Africa and the Americas distinct from the problematic chronotopes of earlier scholarship.

While the often depoliticized culturalist discourse underlying much of the scholarship on the African Diaspora emerged out of a desire by scholars to counter the economically determined structural literature that reduced enslaved Africans and their descendants to mere units of capital production, as Jason Young argues, it is more generative to move beyond the demography/culture dichotomy to instead view the world wrought by slavery as “more than a simple scattering of dispersed bodies . . . [but rather] as a system of theoretical and intellectual engagement whereby Africans on the continent and enslaved in the Americas redressed and resisted the trauma and violence of slavery and the slave trade.”⁵³ In other words, rather than investigating the transmission of particular cultural practices from Africa to the Americas by waves of people who left Africa from the same ports, I will be exploring the contours of debates about the meanings of community, freedom, and political legitimacy in geographical Kisama and through the lens of Kisama politics. I will ask how those who advocated particular political positions evoked these through the deployment of the Kisama meme in the context of maroonage in the Americas. I am less interested in the movements of individual bodies and more interested in the political consequences of the movement of ideologies that coalesced under an identity called Kisama.

What is necessary, then, is to begin imagining a new intellectual space, distinct from both (Black) Atlantic Studies and the African Diaspora, beyond the creolist and revisionist debates, within which to locate Kisama’s dynamic, diffuse histories and the ripples of fugitive ideologies spreading both within the lands between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers and well beyond, both regionally and trans Atlanticly. As appealing and prolific as the term “Atlantic” is as a heuristic, I believe that it is important to move away from the Eurocentric nature of this term, from the comforting sense of the mobile, the literate, the privileged, with which it too often paints over the histories of the majorities. It is not a term with which those in whose histories I am interested would have identified, and it does nothing to explain lives lived far from the ocean and, by political choice, as far

removed from the machinations of capital as possible. The practical politics of dissent through flight and evasion of the state was a deep tradition in geographical Kisama, though of course the contours of this practice shifted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both in Angola and in the Americas. Those shaping Kisama, however, did not face the Atlantic Ocean, even in the sense in which “the Atlantic” is synecdoche for “mobile, profit-focused merchants.”

Fugitive modernities encompass the political strategies, economic and subsistence adaptations, and intellectual and cultural conceits forged by those who fled from totalizing state power and all of its manifestations. Pirates, bandits, maroons, and others wove together distinct, often interacting, and at times conflicting forms of fugitive modernities in contiguous spaces. Just as James C. Scott argues for the multimillennia “anarchist history” of southeast Asia that spans several epochs of history and conventional, state-centered periodization schemes, I too contend that the practice of flight from the intolerable excesses of states in West Central Africa is a long-standing practice.⁵⁴ In other words, there is nothing particularly “modern” about the practice of flight from tyrannical states and their violence, in the sense that “modern” represents a profound rupture from a “nonmodern” antiquity. However, if we understand modernities as multiple—not only in a geographic or cultural sense, but also chronologically, rejecting the notion that there was ever a static zero point of political, cultural, intellectual, or social history—then we can begin to resolve the tensions and contradictions that Frederick Cooper details in his critique of the use of the concept.⁵⁵ While those living between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers may not have articulated their political strategies as modern, whether fleeing from an expanding and consolidating Kongo or Ndongo or from the predations of the Portuguese and their allies, these maroons certainly did perceive significant ruptures in their world.

As an emic, or internal, category, then, modernity is synonymous with political and social disjuncture; as an etic, or externally imposed, category, modernity requires qualifiers. The modernity within which this study is situated has multiple historical sources, including the broader political traditions of West Central Africa, the particular political cultures of neighboring state and nonstate people, and, perhaps most importantly, the local intellectual repertoires of resistance from which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century West Central Africans drew. Unlike Jan Vansina, I do not argue that the onslaught of colonialism—whether in the sixteenth

century or the nineteenth—represented the end of political tradition in Kisama or in the region more broadly.⁵⁶ However, if we understand the tradition of Kisama as a constant adaptation to the broader regional predations of state from which people fled, then we can cease viewing modernity and tradition as diametrically opposed, and more closely approach asking what contemporary actors would have perceived as novel about their own experiences, given local historical understandings. The fugitive modernities on which I focus here evolved primarily between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and by the reputation and rumor about the political life in between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers throughout the broader region, likely building on older paradigms and structures of political thought and action throughout West Central Africa. However, those who evoked, constructed, and contested Kisama during this time did so as a response to the truly unprecedented scope of bloodshed and warfare that were the local experiences of the Jita Kwatakwa. The political, intellectual, and social strategies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kisama are thus best understood not only from within a deeper regional history where those resisting expanding states had created other fugitive modernities, but also in a contemporary, comparative perspective with the fugitive modernities that emerged throughout the region, in Kasanze, Imbangala society, and in the Americas. Fugitive modernities allows us to consider histories that occurred entirely within Africa and among Africans within the same intellectual framework as transoceanic people. It allows us to view maroon communities in seventeenth-century Angola and in the Americas as part of an intellectually, politically, socially, and culturally contiguous space; its capaciousness also permits us to imagine a new way to periodize modernity itself.

The terrain of fugitive modernities is rich with possibilities for conceiving of new logics of historical causality and new frameworks through which to grapple with the political and social strategies of those who have long played at and against the margins of national and nationalist imaginations. While nations across the globe have adopted some form of “Out of Many, One People” as their official motto, in the past decade, it has become increasingly clear that the notion of distinct peoples seamlessly joining together to forge secular nation-states governed by the rule of law has always already been, at best, a fantasy. Fugitive modernities allows us to untangle the intellectual and political histories of nonstate identities on their own terms, as distinct from and yet always in conversation with

states and each other.⁵⁷ It provides a framework for voicing counternarratives to colonial time and to the well-documented tendency since the 1960s for scholars of African history to seek to legitimate African political, cultural, and social forms by fitting them into an inherently provincial, Eurocentric/universalizing concept of modernity.⁵⁸ Fugitive modernities and state modernities were always in dialogue with each other, at times borrowing discourses, practices, and institutions in order to adapt to new circumstances. If fugitive modernities seems an inherently reactionary concept, it is—but no more so than state modernities, be they monarchical or republican.

Summary of the Chapters

Drawing from archives in Angola, Brazil, Portugal, and Spain, as well as oral histories, linguistics, and ethnographic fieldwork in various maroon communities in Pará, Brazil, and villages throughout geographical Kisama, Angola, in 2007 and 2010, I present my major arguments concerning Kisama's histories and the ways in which it fundamentally reconfigures our understandings of identity, modernity, and subjectivity in the six chapters and conclusion that follow.

Chapter 1, "Kafuxi Ambari and the People without State's History: Forging Kisama Reputations, c. 1580–1630," argues for the central role of one local leader in the emergence of the contours of Kisama politics and ideologies, even in the absence of political, cultural, or social unity within geographic Kisama. This chapter functions as the introduction to the longue durée biography of soba Kafuxi Ambari. Local epistemologies of personhood function radically differently than more familiar, corporally bounded ones, and Kafuxi Ambari is understood locally as being an enduring, structural relationship between an embodied personhood and ancestral and local spirits. An iconic 1594 battle during which Kafuxi Ambari defeated a much larger force of Portuguese soldiers and their allies, would define the Kisama meme for centuries to come. Kafuxi Ambari's efficacy against Portuguese forces, as well as against Ndongongo and Matamba, attracted thousands of fugitives to seek a haven in Kisama. By using oral histories to think about the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century forging of reputation, I interrogate how Kisama grew to a legible, coherent identity in the absence of centralization. This approach compels us to rethink the relationship between time, state, personhood, and identity.

Kafuxi Ambari's reputation was critical in drawing fugitives into many regions of geographic Kisama, and these fugitives in turn reconfigured and contested the very fabric of social and political life. Chapter 2, "They Publicize to the Neighboring Nations that the Arms of Your Majesty Do Not Conquer': Fugitive Politics and Legitimacy, c. 1620–55," places Kisama within the broader context of violence, social rupture, and the radical political and social shifts of early seventeenth-century Angola. Geographical Kisama was not the only place to which those fleeing enslavement or seeking refuge from violence and extraction fled, and by comparing the ways in which politics was practiced by those identified as Kisama to other state- and nonstate fugitives, a more distinct picture of Kisama's ideologies emerges. By analyzing in detail a succession struggle in the lands of another Kisama soba, Langere, in the early 1630s, we gain a sharper view of the ways in which political constituencies formed and functioned in the nonstate maroon communities of seventeenth-century Kisama.

Chapter 3, "The Husbands Having First Laid Down Their Lives in Their Defense': Gender, Food, and Politics in the War of 1655–58," details the relationship between martial practices and political ideologies, material production, the environment, and the experiences of those in geographical Kisama who endured a devastating three-year war in the mid-seventeenth century. After Njinga of Matamba and Ndongo negotiated an end to their three-decade long conflict with the Portuguese in 1655, they turned their forces on Kisama, instigating a war that physically transformed the always-arid landscape of Kisama into a land of endemic, politically produced famine. Accounts of the battles of the War of 1655–58 reveal the centrality of fugitives in weaving the political fabric of the region, and their insistence on rejecting warrior identities even as the practice of warfare grew increasingly vital, resulting in the emergence of distinct gender ideologies.

The ideologies of political practice and their broad circulation move beyond a regional story to a truly global one in chapter 4, "(Mis)Taken Identities: Kisama and the Politics of Naming in the Palenque Limón, New Kingdom of Grenada, c. 1570–1634," based on a detailed reading of a thousand pages of documents produced by the trial of several captured leaders of a maroon society outside of Cartagena in 1634. This chapter interrogates how the arrival of several Kisama-identified men in a century-old fugitive society in the Americas established primarily by those whose experiences with antistate resistance derived from the riverine societies

of Guinea instigated sharp conflicts about the relationship of violence to political legitimacy. Not only do these Kisama-identified individuals trouble geographically distinct notions of social order but they also conflicted and collaborated politically with other West Central Africans whose ideologies regarding violence and social organization operated differently. These trial records constitute the greatest archival source of Kisama-identified individual people prior to the twentieth century, including in Angolan materials. This chapter does not argue for the direct transmission of people from geographical Kisama to the Americas, or for an inherent and inevitable conflict between those of different geographic origins, but rather for the global flow of reputations, memes, and ideologies and the plurality of fugitive political repertoires available to maroons in the seventeenth-century Americas.

This semiotic approach also drives chapter 5, “Fugitive Angola: Toward a New History of Palmares.” Palmares’s history, historiography, and historical evocation are intimately bound to the racialized formation of the Brazilian nation-state. Indeed, those who have studied maroonage in Brazil, and the famous seventeenth-century maroon society of Palmares in particular, have long searched for legible Angolan antecedents to Brazilian practice. Notably, many have observed that the term *quilombo*, used in Brazilian Portuguese only since the late seventeenth century to refer to maroon societies, derives from the Imbangala term for “war camp,” and have attempted to link Palmares to Njinga and their alliance with Imbangala factions. However, rejecting the traditional scholarly search for origins, I instead employ an approach grounded in Angolan history and knowledge of the Kimbundu language. In particular, by demonstrating how a phrase that has been glossed for more than three centuries as “little Angola” actually means “*fugitive* Angola,” I establish a history of Palmares rooted in the lived experiences of those who created it. Indeed, it is on the basis of this accidental testimony of the affective realities of maroons in seventeenth-century Brazil that I derive the notion of *fugitive modernities* as an emic category. From this perspective, Imbangala antisociability was hardly a political antecedent from which those who were likely captured and sold into slavery by the Imbangala would have drawn. Instead, I review the evidence for political dissent and conflict within Palmares as commentary on the multiplicity of West Central African political ideologies within the maroon society, including those informed by Kisama’s reputations.

Chapter 6, “The Ashes of Revolutionary Fires Burn Hot”: Brazilian and Angolan Nationalism and the ‘Colonial’ and ‘Postcolonial’ Life of the Kisama Meme, c. 1700–Present,” interrogates the relationship between the radical macropolitical transformations within nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century Angola and Brazil and the uses and obfuscations of Kisama and the Kisama meme. Beginning with an exploration of Kisama and Kafuxi Ambari’s relative absence from the eighteenth-century archives and Portuguese imputations of Kisama’s connection to revolutionary ideologies spanning the Atlantic, I then trace the processes through which revolutionary Kisama has been written out of Angolan and Diasporic histories in favor of legible, literate, state-oriented interlocutors. Drawing not only from colonial archives, but also from textbooks, tourist propaganda, novels, and plays, I argue for Kisama’s fundamental unthinkability within the statist ontologies of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. While Kisama’s—and in particular, Kafuxi Ambari’s—resistance has a certain romantic appeal both for anticolonial propagandists in Angola and for cultural nationalist scholars and activists in Brazil, fugitive modernities present an insurmountable conundrum for those aspiring to take the reins of state.

The conclusion, “Fugitive Modernities in the Neoliberal Afterlife of the Nation-State,” considers the relationship of fugitive modernities to the fierce urgency of now. Given the range of coercive political forms across present-day Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, from outright dictatorship in Angola to the extractive anti-Black neocolonies of Brazil and Colombia, I apply my concept of fugitive modernities and the alternate subjectivities it engenders to the question of political imagination in the age of neoliberalism. If sovereign nation-states are today little more than operating fictions, then what possibilities do nonstate intellectual histories offer for conceiving alternate political paths? How can fugitive modernities enable us to escape the confines of colonial ontologies and state epistemologies to envision alternate political strategies and futures?

This is a story about Angola, and the New Kingdom of Grenada, and Brazil; a story about ideas that circulated and recirculated in the minds and dreams of those who never wrote a single word; a story about those who created vibrant life in the shadow of death. It is a story about time, and space, and the violence through which we are interpolated into them and the creativity with which we can bend them, break them, shatter them, and make them anew. There are many villains, few named individu-

als, and even fewer who skew toward heroism. This is a story about the seventeenth century, primarily, but it is, after all, a story *for* now, for us, for all of the people drowning and barely keeping their heads above the rising tide of nation and capital, where we were never meant to belong anyway. It's not a celebration, nor a mourning of postcolonial failure, but an exploration of the threads by which we may weave a different cloth.

NOTES

Introduction

- 1 As is true for historical transcriptions of words in African languages by European interlocutors, orthographic representations vary wildly. Kisama can appear as Quissama, Quisama, Quiçama, Quissamã, Quisyma, and other forms. This is also the case for the name Kafuxi Ambari (Cafushe, Cafuchy, Cafuxe, Cafuxhe Cambare, Kafuxi kya Mbari), and *soba* (*sóva*, *sova*), and many others. Unless quoting an original source, in which case I use the orthography as it appears in the text, I write “Kisama,” “Kafuxi Ambari,” and “soba” in accordance not only with the most recent conventions of Kimbundu orthography but also to reflect the most current pronunciation within geographical Kisama and the Kimbundu-speaking world more broadly. This can obscure important grammatical relationships, however, and, where important, I explain these.
- 2 Miguel Ayres Maldonado and Jozé de Castilho Pinto, “Descrição que faz o Capitão Miguel Ayres Maldonado e o Capitão Jozé de Castilho Pinto e seus compaheiros dos trabalhos e fadigas das suas vidas, que tiveram nas conquistas da capitania do Rio de Janeiro e São Vicente, com a gentildade e com os piratas n’esta costa,” *Revista Trimensal do Instituto Histórico e Geographico Brasileiro* 56 (1893): 379.
- 3 “Relação da costa de Angola e Congo pelo ex-governador Fernão de Sousa,” February 21, 1632, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana: África Occidental*, ed. Antonio Brásio, 10 vols. (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1962), 8:121 (hereafter cited as *MMA*).

Soba is a Kimbundu term meaning “local leader,” and speakers usually imbue it with both governmental and ritual authority. The Portuguese appropriated the term and used it throughout Angola to mean “lord,” or, later, “chief,” even in regions where neither the concept of “chief” in general nor “soba” in particular initially had any meaning. In present-day geographical Kisama, people use the term *soba*, and the Portuguese sources use it to refer to authority figures in Kisama from the late sixteenth century on, but it is impossible to know if that

was the term people within Kisama used during that period, or if not, when it was adopted. Because of its presence in archival sources, oral histories and memories, and political culture in present-day geographical Kisama, I use the term throughout this manuscript with the understanding that it is a fractured echo distorted through a colonial chamber. Moreover, while the Kimbundu plural of *soba* is *jisoba*, I have chosen to use *sobas* to cohere to present-day use in Kisama. Throughout this text, I eschew linguistic prescriptivism and the highly gendered and classed politics of propriety and authentic usage in favor of orthography that reflects living language. For a discussion of the comparative and historical linguistic history of the term *soba*, see Jan Vansina, *How Societies Are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 163–67.

- 4 See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
- 5 *Illmatic* refers to Nas's debut album, and *Time is Illmatic* to the documentary about its making. My intellectual world has been very much shaped by both this album, released during my childhood, and the paradigms of time that it evokes. *Illmatic* is a moral episteme of time and being, one that contrasts with the teleological Whiggishness of Eurocentric historicity and instead conceives of the value of being in terms of relationships to community and creation. See Nas, *Illmatic* (New York: Columbia Records, 1994); *Time is Illmatic*, dir. One9, New York: Tribeca Film Institute, 2014.

Johannes Fabian and Matti Bunzl, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

- 6 Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (reprint; Princeton University Press, 2010), 5. While they articulate Baartman's circulation in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century as "speaking from beyond the grave," Crais and Scully also tell a story of Baartman that suggests an enduring subjectivity.
- 7 For an instructive example from eighteenth-century Jamaica, see Jessica A. Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social (Re)membering: Obeah Idioms, Kromanti Identities and the Trans-Atlantic Politics of Memory, c. 1675–Present," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 4 (2014): 537–58.
- 8 For a discussion of the convergence of Atlantic history and microhistorical methods and approaches, see Lara Putnam, "To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 615–30; Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Atlantic Microhistory: Slaving, Transatlantic Networks, and Cultural Exchange in Angola (ca. 1700–ca. 1830)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5–7. For an elaboration of reputational geographies, see David Parker and Christian Karner, "Reputational Geographies and Urban Social Cohesion," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 8 (2010): 1451–70. The seminal work on the entanglement of oral and written sources is Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of*

Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

- 9 I refer to the territories between the Kwanza and Longa Rivers as “geographical Kisama,” in contrast to the evolving, nonspatially-bound repertoire of political orientations and social practices that delineate Kisama political identities and reputations. Throughout this work, I will distinguish between the two overlapping but noncongruent senses of the term, specifying where I mean geographical Kisama, and leaving “Kisama” unmarked to connote the political/reputation sense.
- 10 Joseph Miller, “Imbangala Lineage Slavery,” in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 208–9.
- 11 I use the past tense here because after centuries of Portuguese interference and decades of state dictates, the always already invented traditions of local rule now function as apparatuses of state interest.
- 12 There are but two exceptions: the response to Kafuxi Ambari’s apparent petition for baptism, and the record of Kafuxi Ambari’s death. “Cópia da carta ao Soba Cafuchi, que pede o baptismo,” February 23, 1693, in Brásio, *MMA*, 14:279–81. For the death of Kafuxi Ambari in 1916, see “Carta de Frederico Augusto Esteves, Capitania Mor da Quissama, ao Chefe da Secretaria Militar do Distrito do Cuanza,” August 1, 1916, 2/2/45/7, Muxima, Arquivo Histórico Militar, Lisbon, Portugal (hereafter cited as *AHM*).
- 13 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1998).
- 14 For an illuminating look at the entanglement of conjure, capital, and modernity, see Andrew Zimmerman, “Guinea Sam Nightingale and Magic Marx: Conjure and Communism in Civil War Missouri” (forthcoming).
- 15 For a discussion of political and moral chronotopes in hip hop, see Jessica Krug, “‘Amadou Diallo, Reggae Music Knows Your Name’: Popular Music, Historical Memory, and Black Identity in New York City in the Wake of Amadou Diallo’s Murder,” in *Remembering Africa: Memory, Public History, and Representations of the Past: Africa and Its Diasporas*, ed. Audra Diptee and David Vincent Trotman (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2012), 291–308.
- 16 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*; Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Thinking through Colonial Ontologies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Luise White, “Hodgepodge Historiography: Documents, Itineraries, and the Absence of Archives,” *History in Africa* 42, no. 309–18 (2015): 309–18; Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Nancy Rose Hunt, “An Acoustic Register, Tenacious Images, and Congolese Scenes of Rape and Repetition,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 2 (2008): 220–53; Neil Kodesh, “History from the Healer’s Shrine: Genre, Historical Imagination, and Early Ganda History,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 3 (2007): 527–52.

- 17 Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 14.
- 18 After having these conversations about the politics of sources and narrative for a number of years, Greg Childs brilliantly crystalized the disciplinary relationship between historians and slave catcher in Greg Childs, "Insanity, the Historian, and the Slave Catcher: 'Capturing' Black Voices," in *Black Perspectives*, African American Intellectual History Society, February 15, 2015, <http://www.aaihs.org/insanity-the-historian-and-the-slave-catcher-capturing-black-voices/>.
- 19 While in many maroon societies, historical narratives center on the struggles through which the ancestors freed themselves from slavery, there are competing narratives within many of these same communities, including the Angolars in São Tomé and the Maroons in Jamaica, of being descended from those who survived the wreckage of slave ships. This trope is a way of disavowing a connection to the experiences of enslavement.
- 20 This raises important questions about the political underpinnings of a proliferation of scholarship that fixates on a freedom that leaves a thick archival trace. See, for example, Rebecca J. Scott, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation*, ed. Jean M. Hébrard (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
- 21 For an important conversation about the politics of history as romance or tragedy, albeit from a limited and singular perspective on modernity, see David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
- 22 Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 5.
- 23 Aisha K. Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Insurgencies of 1841–1844* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 2–3.
- 24 David Eltis, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, ed. David Richardson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 90; Mariana Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 152.
- 25 Aurora Ferreira, *A Kisama em Angola do século XVI ao início do século XX: Autonomia, ocupação e resistência* (Luanda: Kilombelombe, 2012).
- 26 Even in the present day, it is nearly impossible to arrive at a reasonable estimate of the population of Angola as a whole, or of Kisama in particular. In 2014, the Angolan government undertook the first census since independence. The last census prior to this was undertaken by the Portuguese in 1970, five years prior to independence; many Angolans avoided being counted for fear of being detained by the colonial government. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estatística (National Statistical Institute), the preliminary census registers 25,086 inhabitants of geographical Kisama today. Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Censo 2014, <http://censo.ine.gov.ao/xportal/xmain?xid=censo2014&xpid>

- =provincias&provincias-generic-detail_qry=BOUI=10505458&actualmenu=10505458, last accessed April 15, 2018. Ferreria cites different nineteenth- and twentieth-century estimates of Kisama's population. Among these are the colonial district official in Massangano's estimate of the population in the northern part of the region as 9,350 to 10,350 in 1847. In the same period, German explorer Laszlo Magyar estimated that approximately 25,000 people lived in Kisama. By the 1920s, Ernst Wilhelm Mattenklodt cited Portuguese sources who claimed that in the preceding thirty years, only 10,000 of the original 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants of Kisama survived a particularly virulent outbreak of sleeping sickness. In the mid twentieth century, an ecologist estimated that approximately 6,000 people lived in the region. A. Ferreira, *A Kisama em Angola*, 69–72.
- 27 See, for example, Joseph Miller, "The Significance of Drought, Disease and Famine in the Agriculturally Marginal Zones of West-Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 23 (1982): 17–61; and Jill Dias, "Famine and Disease in the History of Angola c. 1830–1930," *Journal of African History* 22 (1981): 349–78.
- 28 For example, in 1588, an anonymous Portuguese source reported an extremely severe drought in part of Kisama, which I will discuss at greater length in chapter 2. See "Estado religioso e politico de Angola," in Brásio, *MMA*, 3:375–76.
- 29 For a detailed critique of this process in an East African context, see Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).
- 30 Linda Heywood, "Slavery and Its Transformations in the Kingdom of Kongo: 1491–1800," *Journal of African History* 50 (2009): 1–22; Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Making of the Foundation of the Americas, 1585–1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–22; Linda M. Heywood, *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); John Thornton, "The Origins and Early History of the Kingdom of Kongo, c. 1350–1550," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 1 (2001): 89–120; Joseph Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Vanessa Oliveira, "The Gendered Dimension of Trade: Female Traders in Nineteenth-Century Luanda," *Portuguese Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2015): 93–121. Important exceptions include Mariana Candido, "Jagas e sobas no 'Reino de Benguela': Vassalagem e criação de novas categorias políticas e sociais no contexto da expansão portuguesa na África durante os séculos XVI e XVII," in *África: Histórias Conectadas*, ed. Alexandre Vieira Ribeiro, Alexsander de Almeida Gebara, and Marina Berthet (Niterói: Programa de Pós-graduação em História da Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2015), 41–77; T. J. Desch Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial*

- Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008); Roquinaldo Ferreira, "Slave Flights and Runaway Communities in Angola (17th–19th Centuries)," *Revista Anos 90* 21, no. 40 (2015): 65–90; and Beatrix Heintze, *Asilo ameaçado: Oportunidades e consequências da fuga de escravos em Angola no século XVII* (Luanda: Museu Nacional da Escravatura, 1995).
- 31 Beatrix Heintze, "Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kultur der Kisama (Angola)," *Paideuma* 16 (1970): 159–86; Beatrix Heintze, "Historical Notes on the Kisama of Angola," *Journal of African History* 13, no. 3 (1972): 407–18; A. Ferreira, *A Kisama em Angola*. Ferreira in particular relies on Miller for nearly all of her perspective on reading earlier archives, resulting in a narrative that essentially replicates all of the overdetermined structuralist conceptual limitations of Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*.
- 32 Prefeitura de Quissamã, http://www.quissama.rj.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17128&Itemid=528, last accessed April 15, 2018.
- 33 For an incisive critique of the politics of the origins and development of African Diasporic Studies as a field, see James Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 10–16.
- 34 Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *Devotos da cor: Identidade étnica, religiosidade e escravidão no Rio de Janeiro, século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2000); Mariza de Carvalho Soares, "A 'nação' que se tem e a 'terra' de onde se vem: Categorias de inserção social de africanos no Império português, século XVIII," *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 26, no. 2 (2004): 303–30; Luis Nicolau Parés, *A formação do candomblé: História e ritual da nação jeje na Bahia* (Campinas: Editora Unicamp, 2006); James Sweet, "Mistaken Identities?: Oludah Equiano, Domingos Álvares, and the Methodological Challenges of Studying the African Diaspora," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 2 (2009): 279–306; James Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
- 35 Pablo Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 34; Candido, "Jagas e sobas."
- 36 Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social (Re)membering."
- 37 Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*; James Lorand Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyo Yoruba Religion* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).
- 38 Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 7.
- 39 For details on the experience of capture and march toward the coast in Angola, see Miller, *Way of Death*.
- 40 Nearly every historian who writes about Angola during the age of the trans-Atlantic slave trade writes about the Jaga, or Imbangala. The debates concerning

Jaga historiography are vast and deep, and contend with questions as varied as origins, cultural practices, and the veracity of the widespread claims in contemporary European sources that the Jaga practiced anthropophagy. See Jan Vansina, “More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda,” *Journal of African History* 7 (1966): 421–29; Miller, “Imbangala,” 549–74; Miller, “Requiem for the ‘Jaga,’” *Cahiers d’études africaines* 13 (1973): 121–49; John Thornton, “A Resurrection for the Jaga,” *Cahiers d’études africaines* 18 (1978): 223–31; and Beatrice Heintze, “The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga through the Centuries: Critical Approaches to Precolonial Angolan Historical Sources,” *History in Africa* 34 (2007): 67–101. For a critical examination of Andrew Battell, the seminal source for all who write about the Imbangala, see Jared Staller, “Rivalry and Allegory: Reflections on Andrew Battell’s Jaga Materials Printed by Samuel Purchas from 1613 to 1625,” *History in Africa* 43 (2016): 7–28. For an analysis of the Jaga as products of Portuguese imperial spatiopolitical imagination, see Candido, “Jagas e sobas.” For our purposes here, it is important to recognize Imbangala society as a rejection of kin-based descent in favor of a society bound by a newly forged warrior ethos in the wake of burgeoning regional violence. In chapter 3, I will explore the difference between Imbangala and Kisama responses to these conditions at length.

- 41 James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 328.
- 42 J. C. Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*, 8.
- 43 For a detailed discussion of the relationship of oral traditions of voluntary confederation and military conquest in early Kongo to the politics of the sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century state, see Thornton, “Origins and Early History,” 89–120. For a discussion of an ecologically, politically, and linguistically similar shatter zone in Angola, where there is suggestive evidence for the deeper antiquity of the practice of flight, see Jan Vansina’s discussion of the area around the lower Okavango River in southern Angola, Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 182–86.
- 44 Although I believed that I had coined the term “fugitive modernities,” as I completed my doctoral dissertation in 2012, I discovered that it appears in South African literary scholar David Attwell’s *Rewriting Modernity* (2005). Attwell, however, engages fugitivity primarily through an existential/cultural production lens, rather than through a material, political approach. He explains, “I suggested that the investment in modernity on the part of South Africa’s black writers had a ‘fugitive’ quality, that it produced something like ‘fugitive modernities.’ By this, I meant that such investment was never complete or unguarded. It always involved an element of counter-humanism; it always sought, in other words, to define itself outside of received, colonial versions of authority. Fugitiveness, in this sense, has less to do with flight—as in, for example, the fugitive slave culture of nineteenth-century African-American experience—than with the fugitiveness of

being in-and-out simultaneously.” David Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 23–24. Atwell and others, including Homi Bhabha and John Comaroff, cannot unhinge modernity from coloniality, and thus their sense of fugitivity remains irrevocably linked to elite, literate interlocutors of states and colonial regimes. See Homi Bhabha, ed. *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990); John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 of *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). My own sense of fugitive modernities is thus distinct from that of Attwell and emerges most directly from the traces of seventeenth-century fugitive discourse I discuss in chapter 5.

- 45 For further elaboration of these ideas, see Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); and Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
- 46 Many of these arguments were first posited by the anthropologist Johannes Fabian in Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); and Fabian and Buzl, *Time and the Other*.
- 47 See, for example, Ella Shohat, “Notes on the ‘Post-Colonial,’” *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (1992): 99–113; Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1516–45; T. O. Ranger and Richard P. Werbner, *Postcolonial Identities in Africa* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1996); Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*.
- 48 Aijaz Ahmad, “The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality,” *Race & Class* 36, no. 3 (January 1, 1995): 6–7, cited in Rita Abrahamsen, “African Studies and the Post-colonial Challenge,” *African Affairs* 102, no. 407 (2003): 193.
- 49 Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (New York: Verso, 2001), 6.
- 50 “Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo III,” 21 February 21, 1535, cited in Brásio, *MMA*, 2:38; Linda Heywood, “Letter from Queen Ana Njinga to the Governor General of Angola, December 13, 1655,” in Kathryn McKnight and Leo Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives from the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World, 1550–1812* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 2009), 47; letter text translated by Luis Madureira.

Most scholars, writers, artists, activists, and everyday people who talk about Njinga refer to “Queen Njinga” and use feminine pronouns, “she” and “her.” However, it is important to note that for much of Njinga’s adult life, they deliberately and conscientiously gendered themselves as masculine. Taking seriously the work of scholars of gender and sexuality and of trans and genderqueer and gender nonconforming activists, as well as Njinga’s own actions, I refer to their royal personage throughout this text either by name or with the gender-neutral pronoun

“they.” It is not necessary to reify biological sex as social or political identity to understand Njinga through a lens of feminism. Rescuing the legacy of Njinga from centuries of Eurocentric abuse and use to demonize Black womanhood does not require a retrograde gender essentialism as a corrective. For a fascinating discussion of Njinga’s gender practices and politics, and appropriation and afterlife, see Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*.

- 51 Candido, *African Slaving Port*, 43.
- 52 By far the most thoroughly researched and rigorously argued of the creolist studies are Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*; and Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300–1589* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). For an insightful critique of creolist scholarship, see T. J. Desch Obi, “The Jogo de Capoeira and the Fallacy of ‘Creole’ Cultural Forms,” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 5, no. 2 (2012): 211–28.
- 53 Jason Young, *Rituals of Resistance: African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 16. Earlier, Mariza de Carvalho Soares critiqued the culturalist roots of much of the scholarship of the African Diaspora, noting, “Culturalist authors begin from the presupposition that an ethnic group is defined in terms of cultural traits that operate in society, as discrete entities that can be subtracted or added, without this affecting the relations that comprise the unity of the group . . . these retentions assume a quasi-ontological existence, without considering the conditions and the transformations through which segments of the ‘transplanted’ ethnic groups pass, violently, from one continent to another”; Soares, *Devotos da cor*, 114–15.
- 54 The archaeological, linguistic, and oral data from the Kavango River delta in southern Angola support this contention. While there is suggestive evidence that Kisama also functioned as such a refuge for those fleeing Kongo and Ndongo before the sixteenth century, until comparable linguistic and archaeological studies are conducted in geographical Kisama, it is impossible to detail this history conclusively. Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 182–86. It is also important to note that much of Scott’s argument rests on the particular forms of economic extraction and violence associated with societies organized around paddy-based rice cultivation. Because the agriculture labor regimes and political culture of West Central African states differed greatly from those of Southeast Asia, the contours of state practice and resistance also differed.
- 55 Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 113–49.
- 56 Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).
- 57 Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*; Brown, *Reaper’s Garden*; “Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery,” *American Historical Review* 24, no. 5 (2009): 1231–49; Matory, *Sex and the Empire*.

- 58 See Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010); and Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Chapter 1. Kafuxi Ambari and the People without State's History

- 1 Kodesh, "History from the Healer's Shrine," 527–52.
- 2 According to Beatrix Heintze, fugitives from as far away as Luanda fled to Kisama throughout the seventeenth century. When combined with the regular flight of those whom the Portuguese purchased from many inland markets and congregated at the forts in Muxima, Massangano, and Cambambe, this means that Kisama developed a far-flung reputation as a safe haven. See Heintze, *Asilo ameaçado*.
- 3 Report of José Ignácio de Sousa Andrade, January 13, 1885, Sala 1L, Caixa 6/790, Doc. 227, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon, Portugal (hereafter cited as AHU).
- 4 For a discussion of the connected histories of dislocation, social dismemberment, and rupture south of geographical Kisama, see Candido, *African Slaving Port*.
- 5 Heintze, "Historical Notes," 412–14; Paes Brandão, "Diário da marcha do chefe do Concelho de Libolo, tenente Paes Brandão, a região de Quibala," *Portugal em Africa* 11 no. 123 (1904) 407–8; A. Ferreira, *A Kisama em Angola*, 88–89. While Miller mentions Kafuxi Ambari as an *ngola* title in *Kings and Kinsmen*, he does not discuss Kisama at length in *Way of Death*, beyond mentioning the importance of Kisama as a "maroon colony" and also the role that salt from Ndemba played in the regional economy. As I argue in chapter 6, this may be because in *Way of Death*, Miller is concerned with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Kafuxi Ambari faded from the archival record. See Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*; and Miller, *Way of Death*.
- 6 This challenge has been taken up in different ways by many scholars of Africa and the African Diaspora in recent years, ranging from more individualistic to more collective. See, for example, Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba*; Benjamin N. Lawrance, *Amistad's Orphans: An Atlantic Story of Children, Slavery, and Smuggling* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); and João José Reis, *Domingos Sodré, um sacerdote africano: Escravidão, liberdade, e candomblé na Bahia do século XIX* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008); Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*.
- 7 Even today, Kisama's population density is roughly 2.88 people per square mile, an exceptionally low figure, even for rural areas of Angola.
- 8 See Dias, "Famine and Disease," 349–78.
- 9 Based on what he admits is "sparse linguistic evidence," Jan Vansina speculates that "the society of the proto-Njila speakers [including the ancestors of those