

Linguistic, Historical and Ethnographic Evidence on the Formation of the *Angolares*, a Maroon-descendant Community in São Tomé (West Africa)¹

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Alma não fala, sente.
Corre o som nas ondas
em atlântico mistério
vindo de longe, presente

Anguéne, Macedo

1.0 Introduction

THIS PAPER EXPLORES the question of the genesis and development of Angolar, an Afro-Portuguese Creole spoken in São Tomé (Gulf of Guinea), off the coast of West Africa. Angolar is the language spoken by descendants of maroon slaves who escaped from Portuguese plantations in São Tomé beginning in the mid-sixteenth century. The historical basis for the formation of a distinct Angolar community is connected to what went on outside the maroon community, namely, the plantations. The latter not only absorbed the vast majority of slaves and shaped social relations among the Portuguese plantocracy, the free Afro-Portuguese and African slaves but, more significantly, were the places where Santomense—the majority creole spoken in São Tomé—developed and where the slaves who contributed to the formation of Angolar originated.

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to the participants of the conference on “The Evolution of the Portuguese Atlantic: Quincentenary Reflections, 1498-1998”: Their comments were always helpful and encouraging, making this revised paper a better one. Of course, I alone am responsible for any errors. Also, I thank Gerhard Seibert (Centre of Non-Western Studies, University of Leiden) for providing me his Portuguese translation of Greef’s article (Richard Greef, “Die Angolares: Neger der Insel São Thomé,” *Globus (Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde)* 42 (1882): 362-4 and 376-8; as well as the 1991 census of São Tomé and Príncipe (São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento geral da população e da habitação(1981, 1991)*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 1987)).

One feature that clearly sets apart Angolar (henceforth AN) from Santomense (henceforth ST) is its high proportion of Kimbundu-derived vocabulary, despite having a general structural resemblance to ST. Further linguistic, historical and ethnographic evidence will be used to show that AN is the result of social and historical conditions responsible for the emergence of the Angolares as a distinct ethnolinguistic group vis-à-vis the ST group. The two main questions discussed in this paper are:

- (1) How did the Angolares' social organization emerge? How did it adapt to the varying pressures from the ST-speaking dominated culture? How did it evolve into its present-day forms? (sociohistorical focus)
- (2) Did the Angolares' isolation and separation from the ST majority change the language over time? What type(s) of linguistic processes could correlate with the emergence of Angolares' group identity? (ethnolinguistic focus)

2.0 São Tomé: Discovery and Settlement

The island of São Tomé was uninhabited when discovered by the Portuguese; the exact date is not known, although most historians agree that it was most probably around 1470.² Settlement must have been under way by the early 1500s. A report of the island written in 1506 refers to a white population of 1,000 citizens, many Portuguese convicts, and a slave population of 2,000 slaves.³ In addition, São Tomé's role as an entrepôt for the transshipment of slaves had already begun by 1516 as evidenced by the presence of 5,000 to 6,000 slaves waiting to be shipped to other.⁴

However, prior to its importance as a port in the slave trade (c. 1650-1800), São Tomé's economy was based on intensive sugar production, for which the massive importation of slaves was necessary. The introduction of sugar into the island was decreed in 1485 along with the contracting of skilled laborers such as Genoese and Portuguese technicians from Madeira.⁵ Between 1529 and 1570, before São Tomé's economy began to decline, sugar

² Robert Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island, 1470-1655* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 5.

³ António Brásio, *Monumenta missionária Africana*, 11 vols. (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1952-1971), 4 (1954): 34.

⁴ Tony Hodges and Malyn Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe: From Plantation Colony to Microstate* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), 19.

⁵ Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island*, 52.

exports increased forty times (from 70 metric tons to 2,800 metric tons annually) while the number of sugar mills operating on the island increased five times (from 14 to 70).⁶ During the sixteenth century, slaves were brought from the Kingdom of Congo, which the Portuguese had been exploring when they came across São Tomé.⁷ However, before Congo slaves became the predominant group in São Tomé in its early stages of colonization, the Portuguese had engaged in trade with the Kingdom of Benin, from which they imported slaves during the early decades of the sixteenth century.⁸

Four events were to have lasting consequences in the formation of the colonial society of São Tomé, its language history and the formation of the Angolares. These events could be grouped into two consecutive periods which shaped São Tomé's history, namely, slavery (events 1-3) and indentured labor (event 4):

- (1) There was an intense and relatively short-lived importation of slaves needed for a sugar-based economy during the first century of the settlement (c. 1470-1570), resulting in a demographic disparity in favor of the African population over the Portuguese.⁹
- (2) Portuguese colonial policy encouraged racial mixing during the early settlement period,¹⁰ leading to the ascent of a racially mixed group. The latter, which owned land and had their own slaves, consolidated their dominance during São Tomé's decline and isolation from Portugal in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹¹
- (3) French and Dutch ships attacked and occupied the island beginning in the last quarter of the sixteenth century;¹² during this period there were internal power disputes among the Creoles (*i.e.* those born in São Tomé), the Church, and Portuguese officials; slave rebellions led

⁶ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 20; Nuno Alves Morgado, "Contribuição para o estudo do problema demográfico de S. Tomé e Príncipe," *Garcia de Orta* 5 (1957): 634-635.

⁷ Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island*, 16.

⁸ John L. Vogt, "The Early São Tomé-Príncipe Slave Trade with Mina, 1500-1540," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6 (1973): 456.

⁹ Brásio, *Monumenta*, 3 (1953): 188.

¹⁰ Brásio, *Monumenta*, 1 (1952): 331.

¹¹ Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island*, 16.

¹² António Lobo de Almada Negreiros, *Historia ethnographica da Ilha de S. Thomé* (Lisbon: Bertrand, 1895); Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 22-24.

to economic decline when plantation owners, fearing for the loss of their sugar mills and slaves, opted to leave the island and move to the greater prosperity and security of Brazil.¹³

- (4) The sluggish pace in these tropical islands during much of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries underwent a jolt in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although slavery had been abolished in the Portuguese colonies in 1858, a royal decree in 1869 established that the freed slaves or *libertos* had to remain on the plantations for another nine years.¹⁴ At the time, cocoa and coffee were a source of lucrative foreign exchange for the plantation owners or *roceiros*. However, in 1875 (before the nine-year period had expired) the freed slaves demanded absolute freedom. This led to their outright abandonment of the plantations, which in turn forced the new Portuguese plantocracy to seek labor from other colonial territories to replace them. As a result, a second and no less important demographic upheaval resulted with the arrival in São Tomé and Príncipe (henceforth STP) of *serviçais* or indentured laborers from Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde.

These events provide the background for the study of the social history of STP languages in §3, their relationship to the emergence of the Angolares in §4, having a separate ethnolinguistic identity (§5) which is the outcome of the interplay of the sociohistorical, linguistic and symbolic factors discussed in this paper (§6).

3.0 Sociolinguistic Distribution in STP: Slavery and Large Scale Migration

The role of STP as an entrepôt for the transshipment of slaves to the New World and its own need for slaves to work on sugar plantations both played a role in STP's history and the resulting language development.¹⁵ Slaves were taken from two active slave-trading regions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the kingdoms of Benin and the Congo.

¹³ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 19.

¹⁴ Fernando Ferreira da Costa, "A escravatura em Africa nos séculos XV e XVI," *História* 54 (1983):43-54.

¹⁵ Francisco Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1961), 59; René Pélissier, *Le naufrage des caravelles* (Orgeval: Pélissier, 1979), 216.

The genesis and development of the three creoles spoken in STP (ST, Principense and AN) must be examined within this framework of population resettlement. What follows is a sociolinguistic description of language distribution in STP. The three creoles spoken in STP are succinctly described below in order to give an overall picture of the language situation, past and present, in STP.

3.1 Santomense (lingua folo)

Santomense, the language of the majority enjoys higher prestige since it was first spoken by free mestizos born to Portuguese men and African women; this group climbed to the higher ranks of plantation society by becoming land- and slaveowners. Their consolidation as a distinct group was accomplished during an interregnum initiated when Portugal shifted its colonial interest from STP to Brazil in the late sixteenth century. The vacuum in leadership created when many sugar planters abandoned their plantations and headed to the New World led to increased opportunities for people of mixed ancestry. During the two ensuing centuries (17th–18th) of relative isolation from the metropolis, a period of STP history called by the Santomense geographer Francisco Tenreiro¹⁶ *o grande pousio* (the great fallowing), the Afro-Portuguese became the most powerful social group. In regards to STP's comparatively greater social and cultural changes, Tenreiro¹⁷ said: "... São Tomé é aquela onde a aculturação das gentes foi mais profunda e Fernando Pó, de todas, a mais africana."¹⁸

The use of ST by such a socially mobile and prestigious group as the Afro-Portuguese probably encouraged its diffusion among all groups. However, ST must have been already nativized by this period in which São Tomé's economy stagnated, becoming thus the first language for many slaves' children as well as a lingua franca among slaves with a heterogeneous linguistic background. The structural similarities among ST, Principense and Fa d'Ambu seem to support nativization of ST prior to the economic decline of São Tomé since both Príncipe and Annobom were populated with slaves brought from São Tomé beginning in the sixteenth century.¹⁹

¹⁶ Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 75.

¹⁷ Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 18.

¹⁸ "São Tomé is that [island] where people's acculturation [to Portuguese] was deeper and Fernando Pó [is] the most Africanized [island] of all" (my translation).

¹⁹ *Fa d'Ambu* is spoken on Annobom Island (Equatorial Guinea); it is the fourth

However, the coffee boom in the early nineteenth century brought about the displacement of creoles short on capital by Portuguese entrepreneurs. In this new socioeconomic order, the Portuguese appropriated much of the land owned by the creoles, who were left with nothing except their common ancestry as a marker of group-identity to set them apart from the slave population.

Santomense has the greatest number of speakers according to the latest censuses of 1987 and 1991.²⁰ That numerical supremacy is tied to the historical importance and continuity of many Santomense speakers belonging to power groups and intellectual circles.²¹ Indeed, Santomense is one of the two creole varieties with the status of a national language (the other being Principense; see below).

The extent to which ST has expanded to all language groups is not known with precision; pre-independence censuses omit data on creole usage. For example, the *Anuario Estatístico do Ultramar*, which sums up the general situation for Portugal's overseas territories for the period 1875-1975 gives general educational data (literacy figures, number of schools per colony, etc.) but little of substance regarding language distribution. However, post-independence government statistics collected for the 1981 census offer some sociolinguistic details in terms of the number of speakers per language, age and geographic distribution.

This census shows some trends and patterns regarding language use in STP:

- (1) Figures relevant to multilingualism are given only indirectly, since population numbers always are lower than the total number of speakers per language.²²

Afro-Portuguese creole spoken in the Gulf of Guinea.

²⁰ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento geral*.

²¹ One example is the creation in 1911 of the *Liga dos Interesses Indigenas* in José de Deus Lima, "Grandes proprietários indígenas de S. Tomé e Príncipe nos fins do sec. XIX—princípios do sec. XX," in *Em Busca da Identidade Forra* (São Tomé: Associação Cultural Santomense, 1992), 27-36, in order to protect the interests of the *filhos da terra* (literally "children of the land"), as people of mixed ancestry called themselves. The *Liga* not only shows the extent to which the *filhos da terra* had acquired an identity as a distinct class, but it must also be seen within the general context of the power struggle over land and the degradation of many *filhos da terra* to a landless class. All contributed to ST being used between different creole-speaking groups for inter-group communication.

²² São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1: 90.

- (2) Angolar is omitted in the census. Its speakers are likely to have been included in the category of ST speakers, their separate ethnic identity being ignored.
- (3) A conservative figure for the number of AN speakers may be calculated using demographic data for villages known for having primarily AN speakers, e.g. Santa Catarina, Ribeira Peixe, São João dos Angolares.²³ This yields an approximate figure of 5,000 speakers.
- (4) The census also reveals a large number of speakers of other languages. These are likely to be the Tongas (see below) since only STP residents were included in the census while indentured workers (i.e. temporary residents) were left out.
- (5) Principense has the lowest number of speakers, even in Príncipe (836/5255, 15.9 per cent).²⁴
- (6) Bilingualism in Portuguese and ST increases among the younger generations (20-40 years old).²⁵

3.2 *Principense* (lingwa ié)

The name of the language (*Lingua Ie*) derives from Portuguese *ilba*, “island”, in reference to Príncipe Island. The history of Príncipe, lying one hundred and sixty miles northeast of São Tomé, has been little affected by the internal divisions of the larger island. Príncipe was populated by slaves brought from São Tomé beginning in the sixteenth century. Its settlement does not differ much from that of São Tomé’s, though its smaller size led to the importation of fewer slaves. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century (1844), slaves made up approximately two-thirds of Príncipe’s population, the remaining third being whites and mestizos.²⁶

It is possible that the creole spoken by slaves from São Tomé served as a model for slaves arriving subsequently in Príncipe. Furthermore, this historical link between ST and Principense was probably reinforced by linguistic convergence in view of the similar languages contributing to the formation of ST and Principense, that is, Portuguese, Bantu and Kwa inputs. Thus structural affinities permeate the two creole systems. Indeed,

²³ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1: 90.

²⁴ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1: 94.

²⁵ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1: 90.

²⁶ Pélissier, *Le naufrage des caravelles*, 219.

the shared linguistic history of the Gulf of Guinea islands justifies grouping them into one language area, as claimed by Ivens Ferraz²⁷ about all the Gulf of Guinea Afro-Portuguese creoles as being all linguistically related.

3.3 *Angolar* (lingwa ngolá)

Angolar is the last of STP's three creoles. Unlike the other two, the origin of AN is controversial.²⁸ The Angolares are thought to be the descendants of Maroons who, on occasions, raided the plantations and the town of São Tomé from the 1550s until the late seventeenth century. Yet, the existence of the Angolares is attested only from the early 1700s onward.²⁹ They enjoyed a relatively independent life outside the plantation system with a subsistence-level economy based on fishing and small-scale agriculture. A tightly-knit social organization helped to create the Angolares' separate identity, as a badge of which language played a significant role.

The Angolares' lives underwent a major change when the inhabitants of their communities, located mostly in the southeastern part of the island, began dispersing in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁰ Being exposed to the numerically superior Santomense culture and language this must have weakened the internal organization of their group.³¹ Initially, the Angolares' experience as sailors and builders of canoes (*dongo* in Angolar),³² was of use to the plantation owners, who needed a means of transporting coffee and cocoa to shipping ports.³³ Ultimately, the maintenance of AN, especially

²⁷ Luiz Ivens Ferraz, "The Origin and Development of Four Creoles in the Gulf of Guinea," *African Studies* 35 (1976): 33-8.

²⁸ The mystery surrounding the origin of the Angolares was succinctly expressed by Greeff, "Die Angolares," 3, when he said that "Se os diversos estratos que compõem a população são tomense têm uma origem mais ou menos determinável, o mesmo não se pode dizer do povo angolar que apresenta uma série de características impares, cuja explicação continua a causar surpresa aos etnologos e historiadores."

²⁹ Fernando Castelo-Branco, "Subsídios para o estudo dos 'angolares' de S. Tomé," *Studia* 33 (1971): 151.

³⁰ Tenreiro, *A Ilha de São Tomé*, 134; Alfredo Dias and Augusto do Nascimento Diniz, "Os Angolares: Da autonomia à inserção na sociedade colonial (segunda metade do século XIX)," *Ler História* 13 (1988): 69.

³¹ People describe this acculturation process as *bilá folo* "to become a Forro". According to Almeida, it resulted in the Angolares speaking an Angolar *claro*, i.e. Santomense-influenced Angolar (António de Almeida, "Contribuição para o estudo da etnologia física dos 'angolares' (Ilha de São Tomé)," in *Actas da Conferência Internacional dos Africanistas Ocidentais, São Tomé* (Portugal: CCTA, 1956), 5: 11-20).

³² Greeff, "Die Angolares," 9.

³³ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 60.

among those speakers who migrated to the city in the last decades, has been jeopardized under the pressure of both Portuguese and ST.³⁴ Some of the factors working against language maintenance among the Angolares are the relatively small size of the Angolar population, its education in Portuguese, increased contact and intermarriages with other creole groups, all causing the retreat of AN in favor of ST, especially as children of these mixed unions grow up speaking ST.

3.4 *Tonga*

A second major event in the demographic history of STP was the recruitment of contracted labor from Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde. This lasted nearly one hundred years, from the 1870s until the late 1950s. It is interesting to observe that the population in 1827 (7,612 inhabitants) had remained stationary since the late sixteenth century as a result of Portugal's increasingly involvement in Brazil during the two previous centuries, relegating STP principal economic activity to the slave trade.³⁵ The population of STP, which had reached approximately 12,000 in the 1850s, increased fivefold to 64,221 inhabitants within fifty years (1906); most was due to the influx of laborers from other Portuguese colonies recruited to work on cocoa and coffee plantations.³⁶

In a country which received so many indentured workers in less than a century, one might ask what were, if any, the cultural consequences of these demographic changes?:³⁷

- First, except for the Cape Verdians who spoke one or more of the several creole variants spoken in Cape Verde and had some degree of

³⁴ For Angolares, language still signals group solidarity. A case in point are the Angolar fishermen who live and work near the predominantly ST-speaking capital, in the northeastern region of Agua Grande (São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1:91). Here, an all-Angolar fishermen association and shared ownership of boats and fishing equipment reinforce a social network conducive to language maintenance.

³⁵ Morgado, "Contribuição para o estudo," 635.

³⁶ Morgado, "Contribuição para o estudo," 636.

³⁷ Unfortunately, we know little about the language of the Tongas except for Jean-Louis Rougé, "Les langues des Tongas," in Ernesto d'Andrade and Alain Kihm, eds., *Actas do Colóquio sobre Crioulos de Base Lexical Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Colibri, 1992). For pioneering work on the African languages (Kimbundu, Umbundu) and the Portuguese spoken by the Tongas see Gerardo A. Lorenzino, "Language Contact in São Tomé and Príncipe," *CUNYForum* 18 (1994): 98-113; Gerardo A. Lorenzino, "The Umbundu of the Tongas: A Case of Language Retention," manuscript (unpublished *Proceedings of the 1997 Annual Conference of African Linguistics, Cornell University*).

fluency in Portuguese, many African workers only spoke their native languages (e.g. Kimbundu, Umbundu) upon arrival to STP³⁸ and interpreters were needed to aid them.³⁹

- Second, plantation workers were initially under five-year renewable contracts. It was not until 1910 that the first laborers began to be repatriated,⁴⁰ thus nullifying the practice at the time of “automatic re-contracting”.⁴¹
- Third, ethnicity played an important role in the socialization practices of contracted laborers. Sometimes, these links became an important factor for the workers’ association once on the island.⁴²
- Fourth, the Tongas or descendants of the indentured workers had to stay on the plantations where they were born. This was the standard practice until “automatic re-contracting” was forbidden.⁴³ And just as the freed slaves were a result of the abolition of slavery, so the Tongas were a result of large-scale migration, that is, both were the outcomes of two crucial sociohistorical periods in STP.

The use of ST seems to be expanding at the expense of the Tonga languages. The shift to the major creole must have started one or two generations ago as indicated by Tongas who are sixty or older and who are bilingual in an African language and ST. On the contrary, the following sociolinguistic considerations might have minimized Tonga influence on ST:

³⁸ W.G. Clarence-Smith, “The Hidden Costs of Labour on the Cocoa Plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe, 1875-1914,” *Portuguese Studies* 6 (1990): 166.

³⁹ Francisco Mantero, *A mão-de-obra em S. Tomé e Príncipe* (Lisbon: F. Mantero, 1910), 57.

⁴⁰ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 62.

⁴¹ Clarence-Smith, “The Hidden Costs,” 155. Some of the *batukes* and *pwitas*—traditional songs and dances of the Angolan indentured laborers—reflect what for many of them became a one-way ticket to São Tomé as the following Kimbundu lyrics express:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Ko San Tomé</i> | In São Tomé |
| <i>Kuri o'n bundi o ku nyingira</i> | there is a door to enter |
| <i>Ka kuri o'n bundi o kupita</i> | but there is no door to leave |

Pablo B. Eyzaguirre, “Small Farms and Estates in São Tomé, West Africa,” Ph. D. Dissertation, Yale University (1986), 187.

⁴² Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 191.

⁴³ Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 191.

- First, the type of language situation which best describes that of the Tongas is one of stable bilingualism, partly supported by a rigid plantation system which fostered demarcation of language domains. This separation was in part due to the typological distance between ST and the African languages spoken by the Tongas. It is noteworthy that while many creole speakers put down the creole language as corrupted forms or dialects of Portuguese, they see the languages of the Tongas as *linguas pesadas* heavy “languages”, *i.e.* difficult to learn, and not dialects. However, after independence there was a growing awareness among the intellectual elite of the African contribution to the creoles, an awareness resulting in part from STP’s new nationhood and renewed ties to Africa.⁴⁴

Table 1. Country of origin of indentured workers in STP in 1950
(Tenreiro 1961: 191)

| | | |
|---------------|--------|--------|
| Tongas | 2,696 | 11.4% |
| Angolans | 9,680 | 41.0% |
| Mozambicans | 4,917 | 20.8% |
| Cape Verdians | 6,320 | 26.8% |
| <i>Total</i> | 23,613 | 100.0% |

- Secondly, similar experience and similar ethnic and/or geographical roots with their people in Africa helped many Tongas occupy an intermediate role in the plantation social structure, between a small European managerial population and a considerable migrant population. The 1950 census shown in Table 1 indicates the distribution of agricultural workers by country of origin compared to the Tongas.

3.5 Portuguese

Portuguese remains the only code used in formal situations (government, education, media).⁴⁵ In the early days of independence Portuguese was

⁴⁴ Carlos Espírito Santo, “Situação actual da Língua Portuguesa nas ilhas de S. Tomé e Príncipe,” *Actas* 1 (1985): 254.

⁴⁵ Among creole speakers it may signal superiority and/or refusal to accept group

officially perceived as a unifying factor for bringing together all groups.⁴⁶ As with other European languages in colonial Africa, Portuguese was used to conduct the day-to-day business of managing an independent nation or nationalist function. However, Portuguese at the time lacked some of the attributes a nationalist function requires, *e.g.* everyday, unofficial use of the language; symbol of national identity; reasonable number of fluent speakers, *etc.*⁴⁷

Free education was extended to the entire population; literacy campaigns were launched, sometimes requiring a ST-speaking interpreter to facilitate instruction. New schools were built, but a shortage of trained teachers willing to live in the rural areas became a problem. The results of such literacy efforts were not encouraging, at least in the rural areas, and the government gradually withdrew from such projects.⁴⁸

4.0 The Development of the Angolares: Maroonage, Isolation and Diaspora

In the few studies dedicated to the Angolares, their history has been linked to the slave rebellions the island underwent throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Otherwise, documentary data on the Angolar community have been almost nil for most of its existence, at least until the last century, in striking contrast to how much more is known about the *filhos da terra*. Indeed, these relatively anonymous existence of the Angolares has carried over to the present day, since postindependence STP censuses failed to grant them independent group status, merging them for statistical purposes with the majority ST-speaking group, as shown in §3.

In trying to understand the sociolinguistic history of the Angolares and, more importantly, their development as a separate ethnolinguistic community, one must first look into the Angolares' lives in a more general context, taking into account the parallel development of STP as a

origins. For example, Santomenses who have returned to the island after living in Angola will continue to speak Portuguese (with an Angolan accent), and avoid the creole to signal the relatively higher economic status and social prestige that traveling abroad confers. This said, changes in ST at the group level are most likely to derive from Portuguese rather than from the other creole varieties or the Tonga's ancestral languages.

⁴⁶ Espírito Santo, "Situação actual," 253-60.

⁴⁷ For a fuller treatment of the macrosociolinguistic notions of nationalist and nationalist, see Raph Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

⁴⁸ Maria Nazare Ceita, *Ensaio para uma reconstrução histórico-antropológica dos angolares de S. Tomé* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Africanos, 1991), 36.

plantation society. By highlighting the interrelationship between the Angolares and external affairs, it is possible to delineate three basic periods spanning the Angolares' history from their controversial origins to the present time. It will be shown that such a chronological approach for the Angolares has more explanatory power in accounting for the several factors that might have shaped the Angolar culture. In what follows, each of the three historical periods is described in §§4.1-4.3, which conform the sociohistorical focus of this paper while the linguistic and cultural characterization (or ethnolinguistic focus) of the Angolares is discussed in §5.0. Briefly put, the Angolar community went through an initial period of confrontation (1500-1700), followed by normalization (1700-1850) and a diaspora (1850-present). As indicated above, those three historical phases must be understood in terms of the Angolares' relationship with the established power structure of the plantation system of STP.

4.1 Confrontation (1500-1700)

Slave rebellions are frequently mentioned in documents during this period, yet no mention of the word Angolar is found except for a report written by a local priest in the early eighteenth century. It seems that it was not until much later that the word Angolar was applied to any runaway slave, a usage especially common after the early eighteenth century.⁴⁹ By 1535, marronage had become a growing concern for the plantation owners and a threat to Portugal's economic plan for STP.⁵⁰ In a letter from local authorities addressed to colonial officials in Lisbon, dated 1535, reference is made to "... mocambo ou quilombo com muita gente no mato e fazem quanto dano podem em matar e roubar homes e destruir fazendas ..."⁵¹

In response to slaves raids, the settlers mounted military operations at the time as *guerra do mato* or "jungle warfare". It is not clear what pro-

⁴⁹ In point of fact, earlier on the Portuguese referred to those slaves as *negros levantados* "risen blacks" (Brásio, *Monumenta*, 3 (1953):188), *pretos amotinados* "mutinied blacks" (Brásio, *Monumenta*, 3 (1953): 521), *negraria revoltada* "insurgent blacks race" (Brásio, *Monumenta*, 3 (1953): 594) or *indígenas sublevados* "rebellious natives" (Brásio, *Monumenta*, 3 (1953): 598).

⁵⁰ The first recorded slave rebellion in STP took place on a sugar plantation in 1517, Raimundo Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, [1848] repr. 1963). Unlike later slave uprisings, this rebellion was quickly put under and did not lead to the escape of any slaves.

⁵¹ "... mocambo or quilombo [runaway slaves community, GAL] with many people in the forest engaged in causing as much harm as they can by killing and stealing and destroying plantations" (Brásio, *Monumenta*, 2 (1953) 46-8).

portion of the runaway slaves were recaptured. Those operations must have been successful to some extent since slave attacks became less frequent, though they did not end until the seventeenth century. One finds in contemporary documents frequent mention of jungle warfare undertaken by military garrisons. The following excerpt from a Santomense captain in 1593 is typical: “Sou informado que pello bom modo em que Miguel Telles de Moura, que foi Capitão da ditto Ilha procedeo na guerra do matto que pello Regimento que lhe dar foi continuando, se forao extinguindo de todo os negros alavantados.”⁵²

As stated before, the Angolares’ early history is connected to this unstable situation, which contributed to the diminishing stature of STP in the colonial interests of Portugal along with other factors such as Brazil’s economic development. It is one event in particular which has been singled out in the literature about the Angolares. According to this account, the Angolares, led by their self-proclaimed king Amador, vandalized São Tomé’s port city and kept the local authorities in check for nearly a month. The uprising was motivated by disputes which arose between the Governor and the Bishop, and it has been amply recorded.⁵³ A relatório summarized thus the events of the 1595 uprising:

Capitaneados por Amador, que se fizera elegir Rei, os pretos, amotinados queimaram a cidade de São Tomé, abrasaram as igrejas, profanaram os vasos sagrados, mataram um Padre, destruíram os engenhos de açúcar. Presos finalmente os responsáveis, foram duramente justicados.⁵⁴

The earliest reference to the Angolares by name is found in a report written by a local priest, Manoel Rozario Pinto, in 1734.⁵⁵ In this report not only is there an account of the uprising led by Amador in 1595 but, more importantly, it is the first description of the Angolares as the descendants

⁵² “I am informed that because of the good manner in which Miguel Telles de Moura, who was Captain of the aforementioned island, carried out the war in the forest, the runaways slaves were becoming extinguished” (Brásio, *Monumenta*, 3 (1953): 461).

⁵³ Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico*, 103-10; Fernando Castelo Branco, “Subsídios para o estudo dos “angolares” de S. Tomé,” *Studia* 33 (1971): 149-59; Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island*, 304-10.

⁵⁴ Brásio, *Monumenta*, 3 (1953): 521-3. “Led by Amador who had himself chosen king, the mutinied blacks burned the city of São Tomé and its the churches, desecrated sacred chalices, assassinated a priest, and destroyed sugar plantations. Once taken prisoner, those responsible were punished severely.”

⁵⁵ Castelo Branco, “Subsídios para o estudo,” 151.

of slaves originally brought from Angola who survived a shipwreck on the southern coast of São Tomé in the 1550s. According to this account, the Angolares must have lived an independent life away from the plantations until coming into contact with other inhabitants, probably runaway slaves who had sought refuge inland. The shipwreck scenario was popularized by Cunha Matos,⁵⁶ who used Pinto's *relatório* in describing the Angolares' origin; later authors unquestioningly took Cunha Matos' account as true⁵⁷ and established the beginnings of the Angolares that has been propagated until the present. In this regard, it is likely that the lack of primary sources for tracing the history of the Angolares during their early history, along with the historically attested more widespread assaults carried out by slaves other than Angolares, served to only blur even more the separate identity of the latter.⁵⁸

The number of slave attacks attributable to the Angolares diminishes in seventeenth-century documents. According to the *relatório* dated in 1734, the last Angolar raid took place in 1693 during which Maroons burned many plantations, freed people and fought Mateus Pires, Capitão-Mor de Matos, especially appointed to safeguard the plantations and end up the jungle warfare. This suggests that slave attacks still posed security problems and brought financial losses to plantation owners even at the end of the seventeenth century.⁵⁹ A truce between the Portuguese and the Angolares was reached upon that same year after the raid.⁶⁰

Along with the rift developing between the plantation regime and the minority Angolar group asserting its identity outside that regime, the political rise of a mulatto class, born of mixed European and African parentage, was an important characteristic of this first period (15th-17th c.) that would have repercussions in the social history of STP for centuries to come. Though censuses were not taken until the eighteenth century, a bishop's report written around 1620 gives a population estimate of 15,369. This total includes only the free population of São Tomé since slaves were

⁵⁶ Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico*.

⁵⁷ Castelo Branco, "Subsídios para o estudo," 150.

⁵⁸ Seibert reviews the three hypothesis on the origin of the Angolares, that is, shipwreckage, maroonage and their occupation of the island prior to its discovery by the Portuguese (Gerhard Seibert, "A questão da origem dos angolares de São Tomé," paper presented at the Centro de Estudos sobre Africa e do Desenvolvimento, Lisbon 1998).

⁵⁹ Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico*, 124.

⁶⁰ Dias and Diniz, "Os Angolares," 53.

not included in the census.⁶¹ The exodus to Brazil which was already under way in the seventeenth century had mostly involved white planters and their slaves. Therefore, the only Europeans to remain on the island were largely to be priests and government officials, making the mulattos the major racial group by the end of this period. Some were descendants of wealthy families (*crioulos*) that had amassed great fortunes in the sugar business in the mid-sixteenth century.⁶²

Divisions along racial lines became an important factor in São Tomé's society, affecting both church and state. It was not uncommon for mulattos to become priests, and the internal political struggles which plagued the colony for most of its history arose as the result of the local elite's demands to participate more in the affairs of the island.⁶³ Racial divisions went beyond the European-non-European dichotomy, as shown in a letter to the king from mulatto priests (*cônegos pardos*) in 1707 complaining about unsuitability of blacks for the priesthood (*cônegos pretos*).⁶⁴

The early history of the Angolares described in this section was mainly a time of instability, during which they remained outside the mainstream political and economic movements shaping the plantation society. Yet, one can surmise from this background that to a certain degree the Angolares benefited from clashes between the church and the administration, which were at times aggravated by the racial divisions bearing on questions of power, as the dominance of the *filhos da terra*, many of them planters of mixed blood, over slaves, who were landless blacks.

4.2 Normalization (1700-1850)

The 1693 truce aided the normalization of the relationship between the Angolar community on the one hand and the powerful *filhos da terra* and Portuguese officials on the other. Recognition of the distinct identity and rights of the Angolares can be found at the onset of this period (early 18th c.). At that time the Portuguese governor of São Tomé recognized a *capitão-mor* dos Angolares as head of the community of Santa Cruz on the south-eastern region of the island,⁶⁵ a political office which has continued to this day. The religious presence in what one writer called the Angolares' *peque-*

⁶¹ Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island*, 183.

⁶² Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 63.

⁶³ Garfield, *History of São Tomé Island*.

⁶⁴ Cunha Matos, *Compêndio histórico*, 124.

⁶⁵ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 60.

nina republica or “tiny republic”⁶⁶ took longer to materialize, the first church being built in the late eighteenth century.

The relative isolation in which the Angolar community lived throughout the eighteenth century was the outcome of many factors such as geographical distance, the general economic and demographic decline of the island during this period and, consequently, the inability of planters to exploit more land, and the fear of Angolares that remained with the memory of their earlier raids. Despite that isolation, the Angolar emerges from this period better known since historical records became less scanty.

In the early eighteenth century the Angolares occupied the southern part of the island, living in communities along the shore and inland forest. This region contains mountains that posed a natural barrier for contact with the more populated and prosperous northern area, where the capital and plantations were located. This is well documented in a memória written between 1712 and 1718 which, in addition, mentions the traditional shipwreck that might have brought the people living there: “A ponta de Santa Catarina até a da Angra ser deserta de moradores e somente habitam alguns negros gentios que antigamente faziao muito dano. ... se vestem com ela cingindo-se do modo dos negros de Angola, de que é tradição São estes precedidos de um navio que antigamente dera a costa naquelas Praias.”⁶⁷

Even today Santa Catarina in the west and São João dos Angolares in the east are still two of the most important Angolar villages. Though it is not clear how this settlement occurred, its distribution pattern dates back to at least the early eighteenth century.⁶⁸ From early on the Angolares had a subsistence-level economy based on small-scale agriculture and fishing. Their craftsmanship in wood, as demonstrated by their expertise in canoe building, led to their first contacts with the non-Angolar population, a trend which became more pronounced in the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ Two relatórios from 1770 attest to the commercial dealings of the Angolares and their autonomy:

⁶⁶ Negreiros, *Historia ethnographica*, 295.

⁶⁷ Castelo Branco, “Subsídios para o estudo,” 151. “The tip from Santa Catarina to São João has no inhabitants except for some black savages who in the old times used to cause much damage ... they wear it [linen cloth, GAL] wrapped around like blacks from Angola, it being the tradition that they were preceded by a shipwreck on these beaches.”

⁶⁸ Greeff, “Die Angolares”; Costa, “A escravatura”.

⁶⁹ Dias and Diniz, “Os Angolares,” 54.

Do ilhéu Macaco a esta Ponta Azeitona a rumo noroeste há uma légua e meia antes de chegar a esta ponta, está uma enseada aonde os negros bravos que chamam angolas vêm fazer sal ... Também na dita ilha se acham bastante negros Angolis ainda infieis e gentios que vivem na mesma absolutos.⁷⁰

At the end of this period (1850) the Angolares are still perceived as an independent community, though they are legally subjects of the Governor, acknowledge Portuguese sovereignty, and actively engage in commercial transactions. On the other hand, the communities elect their own king (rei dos Angolares) to oversee communal matters. As a matter of fact, during this period of normalized relations between the Angolares and the civil authorities, Angolar villages had neither Portuguese nor Santomense officials to govern them, in contrast to other villages where it was common to find at least a priest and a civil official.⁷¹ The following is an excerpt from a letter from a priest dated 1839:

Ha quatro pequenas povoações, a que chamão os Angolares e que pertencem a esta freguesia. Os seus habitantes São bastante selvagens, e até fogem da outra gente ... São insignes na pesca da tartaruga, cultivão muito terreno ... e os habitantes reduzem a toda a qualidade de taboas, barrotes e vigas, magnificas Madeiras de Amoreira.⁷²

The Angolares emerge from this period as a recognizable group distinct from members of the greater Santomense society, living in expanded communities in the southern part of the island. These were not totally isolated, but contacts with Portuguese officials were kept to a minimum. Notwithstanding the limited commerce established between Angolares and other traders, a sense of their independence was clearly among officials who viewed the communities as being just nominally Portuguese. As shown

⁷⁰ Nazare Ceita, *Ensaio para uma reconstituição*, 8. "From Macaco Islet to Point Azeitona in the northwest, one legua and a half before this point, there is a cove where the so called Angolas come to prepare salt). ... Also on the island of São Tomé there are many blacks called Angolis who still remain unbaptized and primitive, living an independent existence."

⁷¹ Dias and Diniz, "Os Angolares," 72.

⁷² Dias and Diniz, "Os Angolares," 72. "There are four small villages called the Angolares which belong to this diocese. Their inhabitants are very primitive and they even shy away from other people ... they are famous for turtle fishing, cultivate a lot of land ... and the inhabitants make good quality boards, thick planks and beams from the magnificent Amoreira wood."

below, these years in Angolar history contrast strikingly to the events following this period.

4.3 *Diaspora (1850–Present)*

More than in the previous centuries, the Angolares' lives and language were changed by the general economic transformation São Tomé went through after the introduction of cocoa and coffee. Up to this time the colony had not meant much for the Portuguese except for the initial short-lived period of sugar cultivation and the revenues extracted from the slave trade. These were to be overshadowed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries so dramatically as to completely change the demographic make up of São Tomé and its class structure. The beginnings of cocoa and coffee cultivation on a major scale led to increased use of land and human resources, and to capitalist enterprises which most *filhos da terra* were not in a financial position to carry out. As a result, population displacement, foreign indentured labor and a renewal of Portuguese colonial interest in São Tomé's affairs brought about changes whose effects were beyond the Angolares' control.

The demographic profile of STP changed so much within this period of approximately one hundred years that it rendered the country almost unrecognizable. Much of the cultivated plantations which until the early nineteenth century were concentrated in the northern part of the island, expanded southward to accommodate to the expanding and lucrative market for cocoa and coffee. As a result of the economic boom São Tomé coffee planters began occupying inland areas which belonged to the Angolares.⁷³ Many Angolares were relocated to near São João dos Angolares in the southeastern part of the islands, although some of them had lived there prior to this.⁷⁴ By 1884, the dispersal of the Angolares was extended to other coastal communities.⁷⁵ A major force behind the relocation of the Angolares living in fishing communities close to the plantations was that the latter served as convenient outlets for fish and wood. In addition, cocoa and coffee could be transported to the nearest shipping quays by means of canoes, making the Angolares intermediates for the plantations, which were unreachable by any other means. These events brought about changes in the lifestyles of the Angolares. For example, more Angolares turned to the

⁷³ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 60.

⁷⁴ Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 134.

⁷⁵ Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 134.

sea; some, especially those who migrated south, found work clearing the forest for the planters.⁷⁶ But, even among the latter, they kept their relative autonomy by only working temporarily for the planters rather than letting themselves be subjected to the rigid plantation system which ran against the Angolares' grain.⁷⁷

In general terms, the Angolares maintained their independence, which included managing their own administrative affairs. However, as of 1878, their communities were put for the first time under the control of a military commander named by the Portuguese government. An 1878 document attesting to this also provides for the construction of a school for Angolar children.⁷⁸ Around this time (1880) there is an observation which is optimistic regarding the maintenance of their cultural identity:

Assim terminou a autonomia deste povo estranho de negros que todavia está muito longe de uma miscigenação com outros elementos e a dissolução da sua comunidade tribal. Contra isso protegem-os primeiro as suas povoações nas serras florestais e costeiras selvagens quase inacessíveis do Norte e ao outro lado o seu isolamento desconfiado e o seu insistir na sua tribo, a sua língua e os seus antigos costumes e hábitos.⁷⁹

Tenreiro viewed the 1880s as the end of the Angolares' independent existence once their communities began to disperse and enter into contact with the Santomense, and the Portuguese.⁸⁰ This acculturation process continued throughout the twentieth century and has accelerated since STP's independence in 1975 as education and migration increased, especially among young Angolares. Inter-marriage has become more frequent during the last decades, and was attested as early as in the 1950s.⁸¹

The Angolar population throughout this period (1850-present) can only be estimated since censuses sometimes failed to include it as a distinct ethnic category. Towards the end of the last century (1878) it was thought

⁷⁶ Hodges and Newitt. *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 61.

⁷⁷ Dias and Diniz, "Os Angolares," 69.

⁷⁸ Greef, "Die Angolares."

⁷⁹ Greef, "Die Angolares," 5: "Thus ended the autonomy of these strange black people, who still are far from mixing with other people, and their disintegration as a tribal community. Against this they are protected first by their villages in the forest and nearly inaccessible coast to the north and, secondly, their isolation and their insistence on their tribe, language and old traditions and habits."

⁸⁰ Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 134.

⁸¹ Almeida, "Contribuição para o estudo," II.

that the Angolares numbered between 1400 and 1500, in approximately 300 families living in Santa Cruz (the older name for São João dos Angolares).⁸² This estimate does not include those Angolares living elsewhere—for example in Neves—so that the total population must have been greater, though it is impossible to even guess a number. In 1950 a census indicated that there were 4,490 Angolares spread along the coast of São Tomé, mostly engaged in fishing, working independently or for a plantation.⁸³ In a census taken in the 1960s Angolar was said to be spoken by 7,000 people.⁸⁴ The last two censuses⁸⁵ contain only aggregates of all ethnic groups (Santomenses, Tongas, Angolares, Principenses); however, one can draw some tentative conclusions as to the Angolar population by estimating the population of districts known to be occupied primarily by Angolares. This is the case with the Caué district, labeled in the census as aglomeração de Angolares, which encompasses coastal communities such as São João dos Angolares and Santa Catarina. Using demographic data for those and other villages, a conservative count of the Angolares would yield an approximate figure of between 5,297⁸⁶ and 5,398.⁸⁷ The same precautions mentioned before apply regarding the latter two censuses since Angolares dwelling outside the district are not represented in those figures. This is particularly relevant for the many Angolares residing near the predominantly Santomense-speaking capital in the northeastern region of Agua Grande.⁸⁸

5.0 *The Angolares: A Distinct Speech Community*

In §5.1 certain linguistic facts about AN will be treated more thoroughly partly because of the important role language played in the construction of the Angolar identity vis-à-vis the Santomense-speaking community on the plantations. To the extent that the Angolares form a community whose origins and ethnic makeup are not yet clearly understood, it may prove revealing to do a comparative study of the folklore of the Angolares with

⁸² Greef, “Die Angolares”; Pélissier, *Le naufrage des caravelles*, 221; Tenreiro, *A ilha de São Tomé*, 87.

⁸³ Almeida, “Contribuição para o estudo,” 12.

⁸⁴ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 61.

⁸⁵ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*.

⁸⁶ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1: 12-13.

⁸⁷ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1: 12.

⁸⁸ São Tomé e Príncipe, *Recenseamento*, 1: 91.

other folktales analogues from the African and Portuguese, with a special emphasis on the structure of Angolar fables and where they might come from.⁸⁹ The latter will be discussed in §5.2.

5.1 *The Language of the Angolares*

The linguistic differences between AN and ST can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Santomense and AN diverge somewhat in their phonetics and phonologies; ST has more Portuguese vocabulary than AN and ST's African-derived lexicon is more influenced by Kwa languages (especially Edo), and Kikongo (a Bantu language), while AN has more Bantu influence (especially Kimbundu cognates) than ST;
- (2) Santomense and AN are structurally similar, although specific differences in the morphosyntax between the two creoles do exist.

It is the lexico semantics what sets these two creoles apart. Like other Atlantic creoles, both AN and ST have a lexicon which predominantly derives from a European language, in this case Portuguese.⁹⁰ Angolar has a vocabulary which clearly demonstrates both the Kwa influence it shares with ST but, more significantly, its unique set of Bantu-derived words. For example, a comparative analysis of the Swadesh-core vocabulary list of 100 words for AN and ST in Table 2 gives the following results.

Table 2. Portuguese and African-substrate words in the 100-word Swadesh list for Angolar and Santomense

| | % Portuguese-entries | % African-entries |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Angolar | 77 | 23 |
| Santomense | 89 | 11 |

⁸⁹ The value of this comparative approach in the ethnography of the Angolar people lies both on its theoretical merits as well as the methodological check it provides on the partial conclusions drawn from linguistic and historical evidence. Needless to say that such comparative study would require a larger and more ethnographic-oriented corpus than the one available currently.

⁹⁰ The Atlantic *creoles* were the result of a language contact situation generalized throughout the history of the Atlantic slave trade and the formation of colonial societies in which a European minority held power over a slave majority.

Portuguese is present in all semantic fields of the creole lexicon including numerals, body parts, plants and animals. Even the AN numerals dominated by mostly Bantu-derived words still have Portuguese cognates for “one, two and three” (*uⁿa*, *doo^tú*, *teesi*). To illustrate this point, some examples of Portuguese-derived entries are given in Table 3. Table 3 reflects a trend which is also present in the general lexicon, that is, a kind of etymological asymmetry in AN and ST with respect to the language source. It is more common to find a Portuguese cognate in ST corresponding to an African-derived word in AN than vice versa, as in AN *kikie* vs. ST *piSi*.

The contribution of the three main substrates to the creole lexicon of AN and ST is not uniform, as Table 4 clearly indicates. Santomense’s African lexicon is more equally divided between Edo and Kikongo (37.5 per cent vs. 46.9 per cent) than AN’s, which has a predominance of Kimbundu

Table 3. A sample of Swadesh words in Angolar and Santomense

| | Angolar | Santomense | Portuguese |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| one | <i>uⁿa</i> | <i>uⁿa</i> | <i>uma</i> |
| two | <i>doo^tú</i> | <i>dosu</i> | <i>dois</i> |
| fish | <i>kikie</i> | <i>piSi</i> | <i>peixe</i> |
| liver | <i>inCima</i> | <i>fígaru</i> | <i>fígado</i> |
| to speak | <i>lumba</i> | <i>fala</i> | <i>falar</i> |
| sun | <i>nkumbi</i> | <i>sOLO</i> | <i>sol</i> |
| woman | <i>mEngai</i> | <i>m^wala</i> | <i>mulher</i> |
| hot | <i>keCiru</i> | <i>kenCi</i> | <i>quente</i> |

Table 4. Relative percentage of African lexicon in Angolar and Santomense

| | Edo (Kwa) | Kikongo (Bantu) | Kimbundu (Bantu) |
|------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| Santomense | 37.5% | 46.9% | 15.6% |
| Angolar | 8.8% | 11.5% | 79.7% |

words (79.7 per cent). The diachronic significance of this last fact regarding the development of the two creoles will be discussed in §6.0.

The heterogeneity of the origins of the AN and ST lexicon can be clearly seen in a core semantic area such as that of numerals. The numeral system of AN is unique in that numbers are not derived from Portuguese with the

exception of “one”, “two”, “three”, “fifty”, “one hundred” and “one thousand” (see Table 5). Furthermore, AN compound numbers follow closely the Kimbundu pattern which uses the conjunction *ni* “and” (AN *ne*) to link the two numbers, as in AN *kwin ne dooTú* “twelve” (lit. ten and two) vs. Kimbundu *kuizi ni kiiadi*;⁹¹ this is quite unlike the single Portuguese morpheme *doze*. Multiples of ten in AN are also derived from Kimbundu except for “fifty” and “hundred” which are from Portuguese. In Kimbundu multiples of ten are based on the plural marker *ma-*, the numeral *kuinbi* “ten” and the number, as in *ma+kuinba+tanu* “fifty” (lit. PL+

Table 5. Angolar numerals

| | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----|------------------------|------|------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>u'a</i> (Ptg. <i>um</i>) | 11 | <i>kwin ne u'a</i> | 30 | <i>meetatu</i> |
| 2 | <i>dooTú</i> (Ptg. <i>dois</i>) | 12 | <i>kwin ne dooTú</i> | 40 | <i>makewana</i> |
| 3 | <i>teesi</i> (Ptg. <i>três</i>) | 13 | <i>kwin ne teesi</i> | 50 | <i>singweta</i> ¹ |
| 4 | <i>kuana</i> | 14 | <i>kwin ne kuana</i> | 60 | <i>meeTamanO</i> |
| 5 | <i>tanO</i> | 15 | <i>kwin ne tanO</i> | 70 | <i>meeTambari</i> |
| 6 | <i>TamanO</i> | 16 | <i>kwin ne TamanO</i> | 80 | <i>makenake</i> |
| 7 | <i>Tambari</i> | 17 | <i>kwin ne Tambari</i> | 90 | <i>makeuvwa</i> |
| 8 | <i>nake</i> | 18 | <i>kwin ne nake</i> | 100 | <i>Tén</i> ² |
| 9 | <i>uvwa</i> | 19 | <i>kwin ne uvwa</i> | 700 | <i>TamanO Tentu</i> |
| 10 | <i>kwine</i> | 20 | <i>makeri</i> | 1000 | <i>milE</i> ³ |

¹ Ptg. *cinquenta* “fifty”; ² Ptg. *cem* “one hundred”; ³ Ptg. *mil* “one thousand”

ten + five); this construction does not apply to Kimbundu *kita* “one hundred” (see Table 6). Interestingly, AN *dooTú* “two” and *teesi* “three” have Portuguese etyma, yet AN *makeri* “twenty” and *meetatu* “thirty” reflect in compound forms the corresponding Kimbundu numerals for two and three, namely, *kiiadi* “two” and *katatu* “three”.

Unlike AN, in ST all numerals are derived from Portuguese. However, ST's numeral system shows a formation pattern which resembles Kikongo more than Portuguese.⁹² Kikongo *ye* “and, plus” is used as a connecting particle, e.g. *kumi ye mosi* “eleven” (literally ten plus one) and ST *des-k(u)-ua* id. (Portuguese *onze*). In Table 7 ST and Kikongo numerals are listed. For numerals 1 to 6 only the Kikongo stem is given since they take different

⁹¹ Heli Chatelain, *Grammatica elementar de Kimbundu ou Lingua de Angola* (Ridgwood, NJ: Gregg, 1964 [orig. 1888-9]), 52.

⁹² Ivens Ferraz, “The Origin and Development,” 72.

concord particles depending on the noun being modified; numerals 7 to 10 are invariable.⁹³

A comparison of the numeral system of AN and ST brings to the fore an important fact about their lexical and semantic makeup, namely, the influence of their substrates in a core area of the vocabulary, affecting both form and the meaning of the word, as in AN *kúaná* from Kimbundu *kwana* (lexical borrowing), or simply meaning alone, as in ST *des-k(u)-ua* “ten and one” from Kikongo *kumi ye mosi, idem.* (semantic calque), in contrast with the one-word Portuguese number *onze*.

Table 6. Kimbundu numerals (based on Maia 1964a)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----|----------------|----|-------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| 1 | <i>kamue</i> | 6 | <i>samanu</i> | 11 | <i>kuinbi ni kiiadi</i> | 60 | <i>makuinbasamanu</i> |
| 2 | <i>kiiadi</i> | 7 | <i>sambari</i> | 20 | <i>makuinbari</i> | 70 | <i>makuinbasambari</i> |
| 3 | <i>katatu</i> | 8 | <i>nake</i> | 30 | <i>makuinbatatu</i> | 80 | <i>makuinbanake</i> |
| 4 | <i>kwana</i> | 9 | <i>vwa</i> | 40 | <i>makuinbauana</i> | 90 | <i>makuinbiuvua</i> |
| 5 | <i>tanu</i> | 10 | <i>kuinbi</i> | 50 | <i>makuinbatanu</i> | 100 | <i>kita</i> |

Table 7. Santomense and Kikongo numerals

| Numeral | Santomense | Kikongo |
|---------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>uⁿa</i> | <i>-mosi</i> |
| 2 | <i>dósu</i> | <i>-ole</i> |
| 3 | <i>tléSi</i> | <i>-tatu</i> |
| 4 | <i>kwátlu</i> | <i>-ya</i> |
| 5 | <i>sínku</i> | <i>-tanu</i> |
| 6 | <i>séSi</i> | <i>-sambanu</i> |
| 7 | <i>sEtE</i> | <i>nsambwadi</i> |
| 8 | <i>oto</i> | <i>nana</i> |
| 9 | <i>nOvE</i> | <i>vwa</i> |
| 10 | <i>déSi</i> | <i>kumi</i> |
| 11 | <i>des-k(u)-ua</i> | <i>kumi ye mosi</i> |
| 20 | <i>dósu déSi</i> | <i>makumole (lit. tens two)</i> |
| 24 | <i>dósu déSi ku kwatlu</i> | <i>makumole ye ya</i> |

⁹³ Ivens Ferraz, “The Origin and Development,” 72.

5.2 *The Oral Tradition of the Angolares*

It is possible to identify in the Angolar oral tradition two types of narratives: the real and imaginary life threatening situations the sea poses to the Angolar fisherman and the morals with which fables are endowed and where a turtle or a falcon commonly played the trickster's role. These two traditional narratives assume several motif types, all of them expressing in one way or another not only the Angolares' quintessential belonging to the sea, but also their desire to have a more favorable reality.⁹⁴

The most frequent fable characters are domestic animals such as roosters and hens; prey birds as the falcon, and the tortoise.⁹⁵ The presence of animals in folk tales is a common trait, both European and non-European in origin. In the case of Angolar, we will attempt to isolate likely cultural sources for the Angolar fables. As mentioned above, the trickster personified by a tortoise or a falcon is a constant presence in the Angolar fables, in which it interacts as a mediator with other animals and humans, exhibiting the trickster both humanity and animality.⁹⁶ The trickster is quite ubiquitous in folktales in cultures worldwide; its presence in Europe and West Africa has been amply documented, not to mention the New World to which European expansionism and African slavery led to the

⁹⁴ Many of the leitmotifs and characters of the Angolares' fables are shared with the rest of the population. This is the case with the turtle-trickster (*teteuga*), probably the most common animal figure in the oral tradition of São Tomé (see below).

⁹⁵ For the analysis, I will rely on the folk corpus collected in three sources: (1) the *Fablier de São Tomé/Fabulario de São Tomé* (Paris: Edicef, 1984), a French-Portuguese collection of Saotomense fables, and (2) the Angolar folklore gathered by António de Almeida and Maria Emília de Castro e Almeida, "O galo, a galhina e o falcão. Fábula angolar," in *Actas da Conferência Internacional dos Africanistas Ocidentais, São Tomé* (Portugal: CCTA, 1959), 5: 187-92), and Philippe Maurer, *L'angolar: Un créole afro-portugais parlé à São Tomé* (Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1995). Some of the folktales contained therein express similar motifs and characters despite their being presented as either Angolar or Santomense.

⁹⁶ That the roles played by the trickster are not always clear-cut had been noted by the great Franz Boas who observed that in the case of North American Indian cultures the trickster "combines in one personage no less than two and sometimes three or more seemingly different and contrary roles" (quoted in Robert D. Pelton, *The Trickster in West Africa: A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 7). For Claude Lévi-Strauss (*Structural anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 226), the equivocal nature of the trickster's personality results precisely from being a mediator and, consequently, as having to assume a midpoint between two extremes. Likewise, in Turner's view: "this coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single representation characterizes the peculiar unity of the liminal: *that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both*" (the italics are mine) (Victor W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 99).

diffusion of many trickster-dominated stories across the Atlantic. A case in point are the spider-trickster Ananse (also Anansi, Miss Nancy, Aunt Nancy, Compay Araña in Puerto Rico, etc.) and the tortoise stories (the *jicotea* or *hicotea* versions of the Afrocuban and Afropuertorican tradition) which are common in different European-speaking areas of the Caribbean and Caribbean-influenced regions (e.g. southern United States, Guyana, Puerto Rico, Cuba, etc.).⁹⁷

Despite being extended throughout the West African region and areas historically and culturally related in the New World, the Ananse folktales are totally absent in the Angolar and Santomense oral literature. This is surprising in view of the significant contribution of West Africa to the formation of creole culture in São Tomé. However, this nonexistence of Ananse or a spider-trickster becomes especially illuminating when one notes that it has no foreign analogue neither in Portuguese nor in any other European culture.⁹⁸ On the contrary, the Angolares share with both the West African and Portuguese oral tradition the trickster role played by the tortoise (AN *teteuga*, Portuguese *tartaruga*) in several fables (the Hare and Tortoise race).⁹⁹ In the Angolar fables the tortoise persistingly offers his services to the king (AN *ale*) in order to solve a problem, this despite the king's rejection. Nonetheless, more often than not the tortoise's intentions are strictly personal. Folk narratives in which the king finds himself at the

⁹⁷ Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah dialect* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974 [orig. 1949]), 58; Julia Cristina Ortiz Lugo, *De arañas, conejos y tortugas: presencia de Africa en la cuentística de tradición oral en Puerto Rico*. San Juan (Puerto Rico: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 1995), 27-32.

⁹⁸ In *Tradições populares de Portugal* one can read about spiders in popular superstitions (José Leite de Vasconcellos, *Tradições populares de Portugal*, intro. by M. Viegas Guerreiro, second rev. and enlarged ed. ([Lisbon] : Impr. Nacional-Casa da Moeda, [1986]), 167-68), but none in oral narratives. More generally, the use of spiders in folk narratives is absent from the European tradition (see Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Fables and Epigrams* (London: A. Applegath, 1825)). Likewise, according to May Augusta Klippe, the tale type of the trickster can be found in European analogues (tortoise, wolf, etc.), but lacks any one resembling the Ananse spider (May Augusta Klippe, *African Folktales with Foreign Analogues* (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1992)). A thorough comparative study of oral literature in West African and European folklore as a means to throw light on Angolar ethnography was not within the scope of this paper, though it is hoped that this approach will be applied more extensively in future studies of the Angolar tradition.

⁹⁹ "This animal frequently found on São Tomé beaches has the qualities for which it is known. It appears regularly in traditional stories and it always calls the reader's attention for its intelligence and cunning" (*Fablier/Fabulario de São Tomé*, 35; the translation is mine).

mercy of the shrewdness of the tortoise are quite common in West Africa, as in the one in which the tortoise is asked to find a suitable candidate for the king's daughter but ends up marrying the daughter himself (southern Nigeria).¹⁰⁰ It is quite possible that the convergence of the tortoise as the trickster type in both African and Portuguese folklore accounts for its vitality in Angolar folklore.

Finally, the role of the falcon as a witch doctor in the Angolar fable collected by Almeida and Almeida represents the mirror image of the Ananse case in that the falcon does exhibit folktale analogues in West African culture,¹⁰¹ but not in the Portuguese oral tradition.¹⁰²

In the following section the sociohistorical, linguistic and ethnographic data presented up to now will be used to explain the development of the Angolares outside the plantation system.

*6.0 The Emergence of the Angolares as a Distinct Ethnolinguistic Group*¹⁰³

Although it was not until after 1570 that São Tomé's economy began to decline, partly as the result of plantation raids carried out by runaway slaves, maroonage had become a growing concern for the plantation owners and a threat to Portugal's economic plan for STP as early as 1535. Linguistically speaking, this historical period coincided with the formation of the Angolares as a distinct ethnolinguistic identity through the slaves whose linguistic input in the development of AN must have been highly variable both in terms of the kind of ST acquired on the plantation and their native languages (Kwa, Bantu). Closer contact with the African languages spoken in the maroon communities and the absence of Portuguese speakers

¹⁰⁰ Klippe, *African Folktales*, 392. Fables of the clever tortoise have been copiously recorded elsewhere; see Heli Chatelain, *Contos populares de Angola* (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1964 [1894]), collection of Kimbundo folktales.

¹⁰¹ Almeida and Almeida, "O galo, a galhina."

¹⁰² The Angolar falcon resembles, at least superficially, the raven (also a beast of prey) of some North American Indian mythologies. See Almeida and Almeida ("O galo, a galhina," 189), for a brief exposition of the possible African sources for the Angolar falcon fable in Angola. In the *Fablier/Fabulario de São Tomé*, 108-16) there is a fable in which the falcon performs a similar but less conspicuous function.

¹⁰³ In assessing the role of external and internal factors underlying the emergence of the Angolares, suffice it to mention Weinreich's pioneering work in contact linguistics. Weinreich theorized the question of contact-induced language change as the interaction of structural (language dependent) and non-structural (language independent) factors. Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974 [orig. 1953]).

among the Maroons were crucial factors in the differential restructuring which those ST variants underwent *vis-à-vis* the changes of ST on the plantations.

Despite the linguistically divergent paths AN and ST might have taken, the historical setting delineated in §3 makes explicit the “non-structural factors” responsible for the genetic relatedness between AN and ST by their connectedness throughout the first stages of their development as the basis for their sharing many linguistic features. The Angolar community must have been from its beginnings made up of runaway slaves who spoke both African languages and the ST of the plantations. By the mid-sixteenth century ST was likely to have been the native language of those children born on the plantations, and also the vehicle of communication (non-native) for slaves having no other common language. This was the case for slaves from linguistically different regions such as Benin (Kwa languages) and the southern Congo area (Bantu). Furthermore, the number of free Afro-Portuguese who achieved preeminence in the nascent Santomense society was not insignificant, and they too were an important factor in stabilizing the creole.

Portuguese cognates amount to approximately 90 per cent of ST’s vocabulary, which is 10 per cent higher than in AN’s. Portuguese influence on AN was drastically reduced during its early stages since the Maroons had had little contact with Portuguese and the ST they spoke was greatly simplified compared to the variety spoken by slaves who had lived longer on the plantations. As in ST, the AN lexicon derived from Kwa languages reflects this early period when the two creoles were not differentiated yet. Nonetheless, Kwa contribution to AN’s African-derived lexicon is significantly lower compared to the same contribution to ST’s (8.8 per cent vs. 37.5 per cent, see Table 4); the same differential substrate contribution is observed regarding Kikongo (11.5 per cent vs. 46.9 per cent). The considerable Kimbundu influence on AN offsets the lesser contribution of Kwa languages and Kikongo. The question is this: how did Kimbundu-derived words finally become a significant portion of AN’s lexicon? The mechanism that may explain Kimbundu’s contribution to AN’s lexicon is partial relexification.

Relexification is a process of linguistic change by which either all or part of the lexicon of language A is translated word for word into the lexicon of language B via massive borrowing and calquing. In this process a new variety C is created which has the structure of A but all or part of the

lexicon of B. Relexification can occur when languages come under pressure from languages which are more prestigious but speakers have no real opportunity to become bilingual, so they acquire the vocabulary but not the grammar of the more prestigious language. The extent to which relexification proceeds depends on several factors such as the typological distance between the high (more prestigious) and low languages (less prestigious), the social distance between their speakers and the role of the two lexicons in contact. For example, words which are closely related to the traditional culture of the low language (myths, diet, religion, *etc.*) will resist relexification more strongly than those seen by the low language speakers as being connected to the high culture.

Partial relexification in the context of the genesis and development of AN must be understood as a two-fold mechanism:

- (1) as a linguistic mechanism of restructuring the form of the creole spoken in the maroon communities under the increasing influence of Kimbundu. By the time Kimbundu-speaking slaves began to be imported, it is quite possible that nativized ST had attained a level of stability which hampered further substantial influence. Also, Kimbundu influence on the ST spoken on the plantations was probably minimized due to the opposing effect exerted by Portuguese and the stabilizing ascendancy of the sociolect spoken by the creole-speaking Afro-Portuguese. Finally, the institutional nature of the plantation system, with well-defined and rigid social classes and unchangeable roles, became an additional check to any major change in ST once it stabilized.¹⁰⁴
- (2) as a boundary maintaining mechanism separating the Angolares from the Santomense speakers, and free Afro-Portuguese as well as the

¹⁰⁴ The term “restructuring” is used to signify, broadly speaking, changes in the language (grammatical, lexical or phonological). In the context of AN, restructuring is restricted to two of its many possible forms: (a) restructuring of ST due to contact with Portuguese, its lexifier language, and (b) restructuring of AN due to simple contact influence, primarily from Kimbundu. Since after a period of confrontation with the plantations (1500-1700) the Angolares went through a period of relative stability (1700-1850), one may also see an additional restructuring mechanism in the form of internal changes. That is, AN and ST drifted naturally apart, in the same way normally transmitted languages change over time in order to make up for structural imbalances that are internally induced without any external interference. The language situation is equated in a way to dialectal differentiation as the result of geographical displacement or social fragmentation.

Portuguese¹⁰⁵. Even to this day, the Angolares are proud of their independent lives outside the plantations and look down on the native ST-speaking population because of their slave ancestry.¹⁰⁶ As for the Afro-Portuguese, they became associated with economic power, which ultimately derived from the Portuguese Crown. The Afro-Portuguese spoke the local creole,¹⁰⁷ which must have induced the marginal Angolares to have a suitable expression of group solidarity. Such means of communication would have been difficult to achieve via the use of ST, the language of the Afro-Portuguese group, locally born slaves and plantation slaves in general.

While it is impossible to know whether some Maroons spoke ST natively, one can still safely conclude that it must have been a vehicular language for communication among slaves with different linguistic backgrounds, the same role it played on the plantation. On the other hand, the African languages spoken by the runaway slaves were always a potential source for introducing changes in ST. Most importantly, the differences between AN and ST seem to suggest a partial relexification which operated mostly on the level of lexicon and phonology of ST, rather than grammar, and to which the Maroons must have contributed significantly in the shaping of AN, along with speakers of Kimbundu, the main African lexical donor.

That AN has a grammar resembling ST shows that the latter was never displaced by the African languages spoken by runaway slaves joining the maroon communities throughout the first two centuries which lasted their isolation. Yet it must have always been under the linguistic influence of those same runaway slaves whose competence in ST ranged from locally born native speakers to non-native speakers, who used the creole to communicate with speakers of different linguistic backgrounds more recently arrived, to runaway slaves with the least competence in the creole. In this respect, the Kimbundu-speaking slaves, being the last Maroons to

¹⁰⁵ Dell Hymes, "Introduction," in Dell Hymes, ed., *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 73; R. R. Mehrotra, *Sociology of Secret Languages* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977), 4.

¹⁰⁶ The Angolar attitude is reminiscent of the situation among the Surinam Maroons looking down on the coastal creoles (*baka nenge*: "the white man's blacks") who are the descendants of slaves who did not run away.

¹⁰⁷ Hodges and Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, 19.

add significantly to the formation of the Angolares as a separate group, contributed to the final development of AN.

As mentioned in §5.0 Kimbundu-derived lexicon in AN is found in many semantic fields and makes up much of the 100-word Swadesh list. Its presence in basic fields such as body parts, numerals and natural elements suggests several possibilities which are not necessarily exclusive of each other:

- (1) First, Kimbundu speakers outnumbered slaves speaking other African languages and/or their language was spoken alongside ST for a longer period of time;
- (2) Secondly, Kimbundu speakers gained higher social prestige within the maroon social organization;
- (3) Thirdly, the kind of ST spoken by the Maroons was equally necessary as a lingua franca;
- (4) Fourth, language transfer from Kimbundu to AN must have occurred as Kimbundu speakers learned ST and their children grew up using ST influenced by Kimbundu;
- (5) Fifth, Kimbundu input into AN must have taken place at a stage in which ST was still in need of expansion to meet the growing communicative demands close maroon life required. This is suggested by the AN numbering system which, except for a few Portuguese-derived numerals, derives from Kimbundu.

A further reason for the influence of Kimbundu during the formation of AN was the Maroons' need to hinder communication in the presence of outgroup members. The Kimbundu-derived lexicon present in today's AN but absent in ST, must have been borrowed into ST as a means of masking meaning from non-Angolares. According to this view, ST underwent partial relexification towards Kimbundu, motivated by an attempt to make the language incomprehensible to outsiders. This fits what we know about the AN communities and slaves rebellions which spanned almost two centuries (1500-1700). It is conceivable that this period of instability in the social organization of the Angolares led, in turn, to more linguistic changes in AN vis-à-vis ST. Eventually, the language situation changed once the plantations and Maroons had come to co-exist peacefully and life away

from the established plantation order forged the Angolares' distinct identity which was to remain unchanged throughout the ensuing times of peace (after 1700).

7.0 Conclusion

In light of the known sociolinguistic history of São Tomé and the lexicosemantic makeup of AN vis-à-vis ST,¹⁰⁸ one can conclude runaway maroon slaves formed their own communities at a relatively early period of São Tomé's colonization in the sixteenth century (1535-0). Due to the isolation of these maroon communities, their language kept the general structure of ST which, at the time these first communities were beginning to form, was likely to have been a nativized language for some plantation slaves. Modern divergences between AN and ST are the outcome of the lexical expansion and restructuring which ST underwent as the result of closer contact with the Portuguese spoken on the plantations, *e.g.* changes in the grammar and the pronunciation which AN kept from early ST. On the other hand, AN is the result of the partial relexification that ST underwent in the maroon communities due to the influence of Kimbundu spoken by runaway slaves who escaped from the plantation beginning in 1535. In this respect, the Angolares' existence away from the plantations was more likely to favor the maintenance of African languages longer than life on the plantations, where exposure to Portuguese and the increasing role of ST as the medium of communication among slaves forced them to give up their African languages faster. According to this scenario, the rise of the free Afro-Portuguese, with planters and slaveowners in their ranks, during the time of São Tomé's economic depression and isolation from Portugal (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), fostered the establishment of ST as the common vernacular for both slaves and non-slaves. Against this setting, one may understand AN as the linguistic result of the Maroons' need to develop a communicative behavior which would act as an in-group boundary maintenance mechanism, to provide symbolic and psychological value for the Angolar community and, at the same time, make it incomprehensible to outsiders, like a secret language. The development of a secret and symbolic language became thus truly advantageous for

¹⁰⁸ Additional linguistic evidence in the syntax and phonology of AN further supports this view on the formation of Angolar. Maurer, *L'angolar*; Gerardo A. Lorenzino, "The Angolar Creole Portuguese of São Tomé (West Africa): Its Grammar and Sociolinguistic History," Ph.D. dissertation, University of New York (1998).

the survival of the Angolares whose existence was under constant threat by the more powerful plantation society.