

WHO WAS “O GRANDE ROMANO”? GENEALOGICAL PURITY, THE INDIAN “PAST,” AND WHITENESS IN BRAZIL’S NORTHEAST BACKLANDS (1750-1900)¹

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Resumo: Através de evidências extraídas de documentos cartoriais de Teixeira, Paraíba, bem como registros orais de história familiar, este artigo tenta clarificar a obscuridade em torno da origem do “Grande Romano”, a figura principal da “Escola Teixeira”, de natureza política, que floresceu no Nordeste entre meados do século XIX e os dez primeiros anos do século XX. Examina como os conceitos de raça e qualidade por nascimento definiam a branquitude entre membros da elite pecuarista do Nordeste.

Palavras-chave: Nordeste; “Grande Romano”; Raça

Abstract: This article, drawing on evidence from material records in Teixeira, Paraíba, and oral family history, attempts to remove the obscurity surrounding the family origin of the “Grande Romano”, the leading figure in the “Teixeira School” of poetic improvisation which flourished in Brazil’s Northeast backlands from the mid 1850s to the 1910s. In so doing it explores how concepts of social race operated in tandem with those of birth in order to define “whiteness” within the landed elite of the regions interior.

Keywords: “Grande Romano”; Northeast; Race

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Throughout the Brazilian Northeast, no other nineteenth-century popular poet has acquired the regional fame accorded “o Grande Romano,” although his great rival, the slave bard Inacio da Catingueira, ranks a close second. The leading figure in the “Teixeira School” of poetic improvisation, which flourished from the mid-1850s to the 1910s, Romano remains an elusive figure.² His family origins in the environs of what became the Vila of Teixeira (Province of Paraíba) have never been clarified and much of his biography has been lost for having been recounted only by word-of-mouth. The scant biographical information published about him omits reference to his parents’ names, a sure sign not only that he was illegitimate but also that his father was white and the head of a “good” family. Known by a variety of names testifying to his special place in backlands oral tradition, names that continue to perpetuate his renown more than a century after his death, Romano has escaped conventional historical investigation.

Drawing on evidence from notarial records in Teixeira and oral family history supplied by one of Romano’s great-grandsons, this discussion intends to remove the obscurity surrounding Romano’s family origin in Teixeira, thereby clarifying aspects of his social position among his poetic peers. What follows, however, is a preliminary attempt to understand how concepts of social race operated in tandem with those of birth – “*qualidade*” – in order to define “whiteness” (*branquidade* or *brancura*) within the landowning elite of the region’s interior. More properly, whiteness often implied “whitening” (*branqueamento* or *branqueação*), meaning that Romano’s situation provides a rare opportunity for considering how, within the same extended family, a single individual’s incorporation might be both defended and resisted. Because whiteness represented a denial of non-European ancestry, recovery of Romano’s biography also offers a means of appraising notions of “Indianness” – of being Indian – during the first half of the nineteenth century. Romano’s ancestry places an interrogative after what was an official – and a historiographical – relegation of the native population of the Northeast backlands to a distant, “Indian past.” The survival after 1800 of significant remnants of the indigenous population in the central plateau of Paraíba, Pernambuco, and Ceará, is a phenomenon ignored in the histories and genealogies

of the Northeast. Resolving Romano's mysterious family origins and affiliation exposed the important interplay of race, birth, and family affiliation – of what older Brazilians still deem “*qualidade*.” This notion determined individual social position in Brazil's Northeast backlands throughout the last century, when African slavery endured and the indigenous population of the interior had not vanished. The poet's recovered biography, above all, underscores the ambiguity of social criteria in a society where “whiteness” was subject to arbitrary reading and mediation, even within the same elite extended family.

The parentage of Teixeira's great *repentista* has been merely hinted at in published sources. Romano's repertoire of names, however, offers important clues regarding his origins: “Romano da Mãe d'Água,” tied him to his birthplace in the district of the Saco da Mãe d'Água, lying about three leagues (fifteen miles) slightly too the southwest of the town of Teixeira.³ “Romano do Teixeira” significantly linked him to a wider territory, a specific zone of countryside originally identified with the settlement of the same name, which, until it became a town, or *vila*, in 1859, was contained within the of neighboring Patos.⁴ Teixeira's emergence as a *vila* coincided with Romano's early renown as a poetic improviser. But the town's newly acquired political significance also explained a great deal about the family feuding which by the 1860s had rendered the poet's native soil unique in backlands oral histories and caused it to be engraved in collective memory as a bandit redoubt – home to a number of the celebrated outlaws later immortalized as “*cangaceiros*.”

Close contemporaries of Teixeira's most famous bard called him simply “Francisco Romano,” such that, for many. “Romano” [Rumano] came to be the poet's colloquial surname, instead of what was really his second, given name. Furthermore, “Romano” was a name unique in the poet's part of the backlands. One of his sons subsequently became popularly known as “Josué Romano,” for he and some of his brothers used their father's singular given name as a surname, as had their father's notorious brother before them – the *cangaceiro-cantador* “Verissimo Romano.” Contemporaries construed Romano's racial ancestry variously, obscuring even further his conjectured parentage. Immortalized in collective memory by virtue of his unexpected defeat

in the 1874 poetic duel (*peleja* or *desafio*) with the slave bard Inacio da Catingueira, Romano acquired by virtue of that celebrated event the public innuendo of identical servile birth. Thanks to the poetic genre's stylized exchange of personal insult, Inacio's rhymed replies to Romano's taunts of his slave status hurled back at his "white" opponent the blunt insinuation that Romano himself descended from an African slave.⁵ As the underdog, Inacio deliberately derided the reigning "King of the *Desafio*" for denying an African ancestry, one his challenger insisted on ascribing to Romano.

Surviving fragments of the marathon poetic contest in Patos underscore Romano's higher, public status as not only a free man but also one who claimed white ancestry and boasted the ownership of slaves. Inacio's sly rejoinders nonetheless endured in local poetic memory to ridicule Romano's claim to racial superiority, casting public doubt on both his family origins and status as freeborn. Rapid review of a few key lines in the contest conveys the flavor and the substance of Inacio's biting lines:

O senhô me chama negro, Pensando que me acabrunha, O senhô de home branco Só tem os dente e as unha,	You call me slave, Thinking to diminish me, But from a white man You got only your teeth and fingernails.
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Sua pele é muito queimada, Seu cabelo é testemunha.	Your skin is very sunburned, Your hair testifies to the truth. ⁶
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Para o senhô ser branco	For someone supposed to be white,
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Sua cor imita á minha, Seu cabelo é agastado. ⁷ Eu negro e o senhô branco Da cor de café torrado!	Your color duplicates mine, Your hair is riled up. I, black, and you, white – The color of roasted coffee beans!
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Seu avô veio ao Brasil Para ser negociado. ⁸	Your grandfather came to Brazil As merchandise to be transacted.
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Of course, Inacio deliberately employed poetic license in order to darken Romano's skin to match that of his own, ebony, color, but his strophes are arresting. Although their first encounter is believed to have occurred in the 1874 *desafio*, Romano already was well known to Inacio, and, if his verses are to be taken at face value, as an "intimidating" rival. In mocking the champion's claim to whiteness, Inacio's rhyme testified to public knowledge that Romano's father had been white. Irineu Joffily, astute observer of backlands geography and history – possibly an eye witness to the *peleja* in Patos – ascribed drastically different ethnic origins to Romano. He also volunteered the first published reference to Romano's ties to the Caluete family of Teixeira, disclosing another, rarely mentioned, but fuller appellation for Teixeira's poet: "Romano, o Caluête" (alternatively, "Francisco Romano, o Caluête").⁹ Joffily, the first folklorist of his native Paraíba, offered Rodrigues de Carvalho his direct knowledge of Romano in notes he sent to his friend, after the poet's death in 1891: "Romano was at one time a slave of the Caluête family; the color of his skin and hair show him to have been of Indian blood."¹⁰

Joffily's emphasis on Romano's indigenous features also offered matter-of-fact admission that the native population occupying the environs of Teixeira at contact – the Xucurus – had neither been completely exterminated in frontier warfare nor fled south to Pernambuco. His assumption that Romano had once been a slave, presumably, born a slave, is intriguing. The elliptical nature of the remark may very well have followed from firsthand knowledge that Teixeira's indigenous, Xucuru population was still being enslaved during the first half of the last century and probably even after 1850.¹¹ He may well have possessed personal familiarity with Romano's ancestry, including the identity of Romano's mother, for both Joffily's mother and his wife possessed family ties to Teixeira.¹²

Rodrigues de Carvalho, who collected oral tradition in the Paraíba backlands a good decade after Joffily, around the turn of the last century, described Romano similarly, characterizing his skin color as "*atrigueirado*" – wheaten-colored.¹³ The adjective "*atrigueirado*" implied a "golden" caste and was exclusively reserved for emphasizing indigenous, not African, skin color. The description, confirmed

independently by Joffily’s written communication, can be taken as authoritative, for Rodrigues de Carvalho collected oral history in Patos about the 1874 *desafio*. Eye-witnesses to the event who still lived there recounted details about the event, while more than one, but especially “old Manduri,” had written down the verses that the poets made famous in 1874. Manduri, who was the Pernambucano folklorist’s best source in Patos, was the father of a son of the same name who then was making a name for himself as a well-known *repentista*.¹⁴ A friend of Josué Romano, the younger Manduri perpetuated the fame of Romano do Teixeira after his death by singing a famous lament written by Romano’s favorite disciple, Silvino Pirauá de Lima.¹⁵ In addition to meeting the Manduris, Rodrigues de Carvalho may well have become acquainted with Josué Romano or others of his ten siblings, and received from them descriptions of their father’s physical appearance. The oral history he collected on Romano in Patos probably accounts for why the folklorist decided to publish Joffily’s epistolary description that ascribed indigenous ancestry to Romano and reiterated the colloquial nomenclature by which Romano was still recalled – “Romano, o Caluête.” (Not until 1929 would another published reference to Romano as “Caluete” appear – and then altered to fit a standard surname: “Romano Caluête.”¹⁶) Although reference to a Caluete affiliation identified Romano as the son of a white man, Joffily was wrong when he intimated that Romano had been born a slave. That he believed this to have been the case, however, may well have contained a legitimate basis from intimate acquaintance with the circumstances of Romano’s childhood, perhaps direct knowledge of Romano’s mother, a point to which we shall return.

New Evidence From the Paraíba Backlands

Who, then, was “o Grande Romano”? In 1986, I worked in Teixeira and adjoining São José do Egíto in Pernambuco, trying to unravel the mystery of the man still remembered as the founder of the “Teixeira School” of poetic song. Assuming Romano to have been “Francisco Romano, o Caluête,” I had the great fortune to locate the *inventário* and *partilha* – the inheritance documents – of the man who

was indeed Romano's father.¹⁷ It can now be stated for the record that he was Lieut.-Col. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête, whose *inventário* and *partilha* were filed in Teixeira's First Cartório in 1842, by his eldest son, Luis Alves Pequeno [da Silveira]. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête died on June 9, 1839, having fathered seven legitimate children, born between either 1795 or 1799 and 1811, six of whom presented themselves as his successors in 1842.¹⁸ His wife was Maria José Alves Pequena, whom he had married, presumably, around 1794. (See Genealogical Diagram) She predeceased him by at least twenty years, leaving a sizeable estate in 1819 that included one-half of their principal rural property, named Sítio Mulungu, located in the Saco da Mãe D'Água, part of the Serra do Teixeira. Herds of livestock and a dozen slaves rounded off the list of goods that had passed in forced heirship to her children. Romano's father did not remarry.

Summarizing a great deal, the inheritance documents for Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête (1775?-1839) revealed the following points relevant to Romano's identity:

1. After the names of Francisco Inacio's seven legitimate children – his heirs in *ab intestato* succession who would divide his estate in equal portions—the *partilha* listed the name of two more *ab intestato* successors. They were the decedent's natural offspring: "Verissimo Maximo, age ten," and "Francisco Rumano, age seven."
2. The *partilha* confirmed Francisco Inacio's paternity of Romano and Verissimo. But the fact that his youngest sons enjoyed legal status as natural offspring – for he had fathered both as a widower and not as a married man – mattered a great deal. The identity of Romano and Verissimo, as their father's *naturally* illegitimate (as opposed to *spuriously* illegitimate) offspring, legally entitled them in 1842 to be full successors with their seven legitimate half-siblings. Francisco Inacio's estate, consequently, was divided into nine equal portions, one for each of his legitimate *and* natural offspring.¹⁹
3. Absence of any reference whatsoever to the manumission of Romano and Verissimo, as "*filhos naturais*," establishes that both boys had been born free. Otherwise, they could not have legally succeeded as slave offspring. (Had they been born slaves, the *partilha* would have recorded that they had been first set free and then described the

boys as "*libertos*." Consequently, references by contemporaries to Romano's origins as a slave must be rejected – at least to a *de jure* African slavery. But we shall return to this point.

4. It can now be established that "o Grande Romano" was significantly older than published sources have always claimed – 1840 is the earliest year of the poet's birth asserted in print. Inacio da Catingueira, then, bested a veteran *repentista* in Patos, who was five or six years his senior.²⁰ Similarly, it can now be ascertained for the first time that Romano and the soon-to-be notorious Verissimo Maximo were full brothers, an important point for unraveling the poet's maternal ancestry. That Romano was the younger brother, as well as the youngest offspring among the elder Caluete's nine children, and that both he and Verissimo were orphaned very young, are important biographical details heretofore unknown which shed new light on Romano's life and family position.
5. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête had been a prosperous farmer, and, together with his wife, the first settler to establish residence in the Saco da Mãe D'Água. The couple arrived during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when Teixeira's fertile *brejo* zone was first being settled, but more likely only between 1795 and 1800, coinciding with the foundation of their family.²¹ The spacing of their children suggests that probably they did not settle in Mãe d'Água until around 1799 or 1800.²² Francisco Inacio's estate amounted to a gross value of over five *contos* in 1842, an impressive sum at a time when land values were still nominal. After modest debts were paid, each of his nine successors inherited 466\$462 (*milréis*), dividing among themselves not only one-half of Sítio Mulungu but also two more properties in other districts, besides considerable livestock and one dozen slaves.²³ Consequently, Romano really enjoyed much more than the status of being affiliated as a mere *agregado* (a dependent, non-kin household member) to an elite family. What follows establishes that he was indeed a full member of the Caluete family and an offspring exceptionally privileged.
6. The documents disclosed two surprises. Both reveal important aspects of Romano's status within the Caluete family. First, Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête generously favored his two youngest, natural

sons, Francisco Romano and Veríssimo Maximo, over his seven legitimate children. Beyond admitting them to succession as equal heirs, he also bequeathed them the joint legacy of his entire *terça*, one-third of his estate (separate from the *legítima*, the two-thirds that passed in forced heirship for division in nine equal portions). In order to do this, he had to execute a will. In the inventory's preamble, the *inventariante* and eldest son, Luis, referred explicitly to the will that his father had made, but a thorough search of Teixeira's First Cartório failed to uncover it. The inventory made clear, however, that in his will Romano's father had declared paternity of both Teixeira's great *repentista* and his "*cantador-cangaceiro*" brother, Veríssimo Maximo.

The second surprise the documents yielded was the strong inference that Romano's mother had been a free woman of color living in *mancebia* (a consensual union legally construed as concubinage) with Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête, at least from shortly before the birth of Veríssimo Máximo (in 1831 or 1832), until his death in 1839. Although a *partilha* did not serve the purpose of establishing the identity of the mother of the decedent's children, it was used to arrange for payment of the decedent's "active" and "passive" debts, that is, debts he owed to others or those others owed to him. Hence a paragraph was inserted in the *partilha* immediately preceding the section that treated Francisco Inacio's debts, shedding direct light on his connection with the woman who indeed was the mother of Romano and Veríssimo. And it provided her name: Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo. The paragraph referred to "legacies" (*legados*) to be paid from the decedent's *terça*, or one-third of the estate that was subject to testamentary disposition. The legacies, intended for Francisco Inacio's two natural sons, were enigmatically coupled to the intention of the decedent to make "restitution" on behalf of a debt he owed to a woman named Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo. Moreover, "restitution" encompassed the acquiescence of the legitimate offspring to their father's desire to admit his natural offspring to the division of his *legítima*, the two-thirds of his estate passing in forced heirship to his seven older children.²⁴

The specific nature of the restitution Francisco Inacio wished to make to Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo was not mentioned in the inventory, although, most certainly, he would have described it in his will. The inference that she lacked elite status on a par with that of the Caluetes, as well as that she was of color, can be presumed from the absence of any family name or referential kinship term for her, as well as from her relationship of legal concubine, not marriage. From the *partilha*'s direct reference to her by name, from the fact that earlier the *partilha* noted that the decedent had declared paternity of his natural children in a complementary will, and from the legal requirement of a will for disposing of the , it can be assumed that Romano's father had additionally employed his will for the customary purpose of identifying the mother of Romano and Verissimo – and to describing precisely the debt that he owed her.²⁵ Speculation on the identity of Romano's mother irresistibly presented the initial, and premature, conclusion that she had once been a slave or a *liberta* of African or mixed descent. Perusal of the two dozen slaves enumerated in the inventories of both Francisco Inacio and his deceased wife, Maria José Alves Pequena, however, failed to turn up even a remote candidate for her mother. A more haunting possibility turned on the circumstance that she had been a captive Indian woman. We shall consider this point below.

But to return to the central question: “Who was o Grande Romano?” In light of the disclosures of the inheritance documents, we can now say that he had been born free, of a free mother of color who lived in *mancebia* with his father and undoubtedly enjoyed status as a family *agregada*, if not as a *de facto* “wife.” His white father, Lieut.-Col. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête, had belonged to Teixeira's pioneering, landed elite and claimed membership in its ruling stratum by virtue of his European ancestry, his patent in the National Guard, and the “projection” he gained locally from a sizeable brood of legitimate progeny (especially five adult sons) who bespoke their progenitors' “purity of blood.” Moreover, published secondary accounts confirm the elder Caluête's role as an ally of his more politically influential neighbors several leagues to the south – the Dantas Correia de Góis, a powerful elite extended family living in Teixeira's Imaculada district. Above all, it can now be ascertained that Romano, together with

Verissimo, inherited impressive patrimony, including a preponderant portion of Sítio Mulungu equivalent to forty-three per cent of its inventoried value, as well as ownership of two and two-ninths of their father's twelve slaves and livestock of every type. Hence, the *partilha* accounts for why, when Inacio da Catingueira engaged the poet's arrogance in the Patos *desafio* of 1874, he had to confront Romano's status as a slaveowner. Romano's boast to that effect was not empty, but Inacio cut it down to size, by ridiculing his rival's claim and by adopting his owner's vantage point as his own:

Seu Romano bem que sabe	Sr. Romano, you know very well
Que isso não é bem em comum,	That we don't have that in common,
Meu senhor tem muito escravo,	My owner has many slaves,
Seu Romano só tem um. ²⁶	You have only one.

In a variant text of the *desafio*, Inacio not only defends the "morality" of his identity as a slave and suggests that he is well-treated, but he again deprecates Romano as an individual entitled to merely minimal membership in the slaveowning stratum:

Sr. Romano, eu sou cativo,	Sr. Romano, I am a slave,
Trabalho para o comum,	I work for the common benefit,
Dar descanso a seus escravos	To give his slaves some rest
É gosto de cada um,	Is every owner's inclination,
Meu senhor tem muito negro	My master has many slaves,
E seu Romano só tem um. ²⁷	But you have only one.

Yet the challenger's reference to Romano as the owner of a sole slave may not have reflected merely poetic license turned to deprecation, but an accurate rendering of the champion's actual situation. Originally, Romano had inherited, jointly with his brother, two and two-ninths slaves. But now, twenty-two years after his father's *partilha* was executed, he may well have been divested of all but one of the slaves.²⁸ Declining rates of slavery in the region of the Northeast framed the backdrop of the Patos *desafio* and intensified the adversarial hostility expressed in mutual insult that was so intrinsic to this genre of poetry. Closure of the Atlantic Slave Trade in 1850 had started northeastern

planters on the road to exclusive reliance on a free labor force. By 1874, all backlands municípios had witnessed a striking drop in the proportion of inhabitants held in bondage because, beginning in the late 1850s, an internal slave trade had started to ship many slaves south to São Paulo's expanding coffee fields. Consequently, if Romano's slaves had not been otherwise reduced through death, flight, or gradual manumission, then they may have been sold south to pay debts or support his growing family of five young children.

The “Law of the Free Womb” (Rio Branco Law), adopted in 1871, generated rising expectations of gradual manumission among the slaves themselves, thanks to either self-purchase or indemnization of owners from a new, national “emancipation fund.” It is within this politicized milieu of a declining slave population, and heightened hopes of freedom, that the rhymed exchange over slaveholding in the *desafio* of 1874 must be read. Hence, Romano's poetic disparagement of Inácio depended on his own assertion of hierarchy that spoke as much to the downward mobility of small slaveowners like himself as it did to Inácio's condition as a slave unmindful of his “proper” place in society. When Inácio fought back, he discredited Romano's very status as slaveowner by relying on the Patos audience's direct knowledge that Romano's possession of slaves was more symbolic than real.

The disposition of Francisco Inácio da Silveira Caluete's worldly goods disclosed one poignant detail deserving attention for what it revealed about Romano's singular adult identity as the “King of the *Desafio*.” Among all of Francisco Inácio's possessions, a sole book was inventoried – a Portuguese grammar. In dividing the estate into nine equal portions, Luis the Inventariante bestowed the book on his seven-year-old half-brother Romano, who had reached the age when children learn to read. Why he did so is not known. The inheritance documents revealed that the Caluetes, including Luis' unmarried sister, could all sign their names, so the book went to the only one of their father's offspring still too young to have acquired literacy.²⁹ Probably Romano's father had already indicated to whom he wished the book to go, perhaps using his will to make it a personal legacy for his youngest child.

Rivals subsequently would trace Romano's triumph as the “King of the *Desafio*” to his possession of literacy, something making him

almost unique among the *repentistas* with whom he dueled.³⁰ The slave bard Inacio da Catingueira rued this circumstance more than once, deploring in the Patos *desafio* that he “never went to school” and “was always in the dark about the alphabet.” He singled out Romano’s “devilish readings” as the source of his competitive torment.³¹

Eu bem sei que “ <i>seu</i> ” Romano	I know very well that “Sr.” Romano
Sabe ler, sabe contar,	Knows how to read and how to do sums.
E não é como o Ignacio	And that he’s not like Inácio
Que não sabe assoletrar ³²	Who does not know how to spell.

Romano himself was fond of stylistically dismissing the literacy that signified his competitive advantage, not to mention his status as a member of an elite household:

Tenho trinta e cinco anos,	I am thirty-five years old,
Sou muito pouco corrido,	I am just getting started,
Quasi nada estudei.	I studied almost not all.
Poucos livros tenho lido,	I have read few books,
Vinte cinco cantadores	But twenty-five poetic singers,
De fama tenho vencido. ³³	All famous, have I defeated.

Romano’s verses implied he had attended a primary school, probably organized by the Caluetes themselves, such as the one the poet’s wife attended in the 1860s (for which the schoolmaster was the eldest son of Romano’s half-brother Inacio de Freitas Caluete). Otherwise, in his *desafio* with Inacio da Catingueira he deplored that he had not been able to develop what was albeit a rudimentary possession of literacy into a legitimate instrument for social advancement:

Ignacio, meu pae foi pobre,	Inacio, my father was a poor man,
Por isso eu não estudei,	Which explains why I had no formal study.
Porem, as primeiras letras	The alphabet I nevertheless
Na escola as decorei;	Picked up in school.
Mas, á falta de recursos,	But, without the necessary means,
Meu negro, eu não me formei. ³⁴	Slave, I acquired no higher learning.

In 1987, I presented the above findings and inferences gleaned from the inheritance documents of Romano's father to his great-grandson, Capt. Adelgício Alves da França. He resided in the município of Monteiro (known as Alagôa do Monteiro during Romano's lifetime), adjoining Teixeira on its southeastern border.³⁵ Capt. Adelgício confirmed that Romano's mother had indeed been the Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo mentioned in the of Romano's father, a circumstance which he verified from a notebook in which he had recorded his ancestor's genealogy as it was given in family oral tradition. He also produced a certified copy of Romano's 1891 death certificate, recently obtained for the occasion of my visit. It contained Romano's mother's name, although that document offered a confusion of nomenclature. Oral family memory certainly had not forgotten Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo. Her great-granddaughter, Adelgício's mother, had passed on a description from relatives who had heard it from the woman who today is still called "A Pequena" (Romano's daughter-in-law), a family oral tradition which may have been reinforced by A Pequena's childhood relationship with Joaquina (whose date of death has not been established) as well as Romano's widow (still alive in 1911). Romano's mother continued to live with him when he was growing up at Sítio Mulungu, orphaned of his father. Several distinctive physical characteristics setting Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo apart in genealogical memory had survived among her descendants, so Adelgício could offer precise information on her appearance: She had been "tall," he recounted; the family referred to her color as "cinnamon" (*canela*) – she was "*morena*," he added. And she had "black, long-flowing and straight hair," worn loose (*soldos*). In short, she was remembered, according to the family description, as "*uma india*" – an Indian. "A Xucuru," he explained.

The Xucurus, Teixeira's indigenous inhabitants, are still recalled there as "tall" people, meaning only that the first white settlers implicitly acknowledged their inferiority of stature before the uncharacteristically superior height of the population from whom they wrested the land. Thus Gov. Elias Herckmans' (1596-1644) remarks on the physical appearance of Paraíba's indigenous population living beyond the sugar coast, "in the desert (*sertões*)" of the Borborema Plateau, can be applied,

at least generically, to the Xucurus in Teixeira. Herckmans had in mind the non-Tupi-speaking, "Tapuia" population of the interior, but the fact that Irineo Joffily quoted him in reference to the Xucuru population of both Teixeira and Monteiro offers significant corroborative support for the Dutch chronicler's portrait. Joffily possessed familiarity with the physical characteristics of the Xucurus, so he must have found Herckmans' comments arresting:

This people, the Tapuias, are robust and of very tall stature; they are big-boned and strong, their heads large and broad. Their natural color is wheaten [*bruynachtich*]. Their hair is black and, ordinarily, it hangs down on their chests . . . However, some of them leave their hair short, in the style of our nation. They have very thick and coarse hair.³⁶

The women are only slightly smaller and shorter in stature than the men. They also are wheaten-colored, with very pretty faces, and they wear their black hair long.³⁷

Romano, Capt. Adelgício also confirmed, had continued to live in the household of his father's eldest son and *inventariante*, Luis Alves Pequeno [da Silveira] Caluete. Everything he recounted suggested that his great-grandfather remained a permanent member of Luis' family. Throughout his life Romano always addressed his oldest half-brother as "Pai."³⁸ And Luis' son, "Chico Alves" (Francisco Alves [da Silveira] Caluete), with whom the poet remained very close, Romano continued to call "brother" for the rest of his life. In fact, the circumstance that family oral tradition ascribed to Luis the role of father to Romano caused Adelgício to reject the documentary information that Lieut.-Col. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluete had been Romano's biological father. Even when he was provided with several arguments (legal or substantive) countering his assertion that Luis had been Romano's "true" father, Adelgício would not be budged from maintaining that Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluete could not have fathered Romano. He argued instead that Luis had concealed his paternity of Romano, simply passing off his natural son as his father's when he drew up the

inheritance documents. As for Francisco Inacio’s will, which contained his declaration of paternity, Adelgício dismissed it altogether with the remark, “Well, it wasn’t there, was it?”³⁹

Capt. Adelgício was initially somewhat reluctant to speak of Romano’s *cangaceiro-poet* brother, who had belonged to a notorious band of outlaws, the Viriatos. Whereas Romano had received a grammar book from his father, Verissimo’s personal legacy from Francisco Inacio had been no less portentous for his future direction in life: a *clavinote* – his father’s shotgun. Poetic characterizations of Verissimo, who would “do time” in Teixeira’s jail (one of the first to be built in the province), frequently exploit his reputation for violence. He himself acknowledged his bellicose character in a surviving poetic self-introduction composed for one of his *desafios*:

Sou Verissimo do Teixeira,	I am Verissimo of Teixeira.
Fura pau, fura tijolo;	He can drive his hand through a piece of wood or into a brick;
Se mando a mão, vejo a queda,	When I order my hand, I watch things fall,
Se mando o pé, vejo o rôlo...	If I order my foot, things go flying . . .
Na ponta da língua trago	I can roll off the tip of my tongue
Noventa mil desaforos! ⁴⁰	Ninety thousand impudent deeds!

Interestingly, Adelgício agreed with a published description offered by a Teixeirense historian born in 1890, that Verissimo was a “*curiboca*.” The term historically has served as the equivalent in Paraíba-Pernambuco for what elsewhere was alternatively termed “*cafuso*” or “*cafuz*” – that is, an individual whose physical features demonstrated both indigenous and African ancestry.⁴¹ Verissimo was known to have been of darker color than Romano and he had pronounced African features, Adelgício acknowledged, unknowingly supplying another important clue about Romano’s mother’s identity.

Did Verissimo’s physical appearance make him less acceptable to his Caluete half-siblings, rendering him by early adolescence less acceptable, more marginal, perhaps in a way that Romano – the more attractive *caçula* (“the baby of the family”) – was not? It would seem so. Capt. Adelgício also provided the information that Verissimo had never married, but he supplied the name of his *manceba*, or consensual

partner – Felisbela Maria da Conceição. He affirmed that Verissimo's descendants still lived in Teixeira, adding that he was not in touch with them.⁴² Although family tradition ascribed indigenous ancestry to Romano's mother, given Verissimo's physical appearance as an individual of unmistakably Xucuru and African descent, the conclusion follows that she possessed a mixed Xucuru and African ancestry. All the evidence, including their father's will, points to Veríssimo and Romano having been full brothers. On the face of it, consequently, the circumstance that Romano's mother possessed African as well as Xucuru ancestry would explain why Inacio da Catingueira taunted her son with the accusation that "Your grandfather came to Brazil as merchandise to be transacted." (*Seu avô veio ao Brasil para ser negociado.*) But such a conclusion, as we shall see, is premature. Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo's African ancestry would not necessarily have been a result of her parents' connection to the *senzalas* (slave quarters) of either the Caluetes or any other slaveowning family in the environs of Teixeira. Neither did her African ancestry have to have been traceable to the generation singled out by Inacio da Catingueira, that of her parents – specifically, of her father.

The fact that Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo was recalled in family memory by Romano's descendants as "an Indian" is more to the point. This image suggests that not only her physical appearance but also her ethnic identity demonstrated direct ties to Teixeira's original Xucuru inhabitants.⁴³ Although only oral evidence can confirm it, Joaquina's remembered ethnicity as "Indian" – when, alternatively, she might have been set down in family oral tradition as "*uma cabocla*," "*uma curiboca*," "*uma mameluca*," or "*uma cabra*" – almost certainly had been due to her fluency in the Xucuru language. Published sources virtually make no mention of an indigenous language spoken in nineteenth-century Teixeira. But that circumstance should compel us to inquire further, for common sense says that Xucuru survived after 1800 as a spoken idiom in the Serra do Teixeira. Before filling in this and other awesome gaps in Romano's biography, elicitation of nomenclature, both written and oral, deserves further attention for the inferences it can offer about the poet's construction of his social identity. Careful scrutiny of the long-concealed, father-son connection

between Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluêta and Mãe d'Água's renowned *repentista* raises important questions about the patterns of social relations that characterized Romano's rural milieu.

A Documentary Enigma

Can Francisco Inácio's inheritance documents tell us whether, during his lifetime, Romano was openly acknowledged as his son or if, subsequently, Romano used his father's family name? In the absence of his will, Romano's father's wishes remain unstated, although discovery of a baptismal or marriage entry for the poet in a parish register could clarify this circumstance considerably. Francisco Inácio's remarkable generosity to his two youngest offspring, coupled with the circumstance that his eldest son Luis stood like a father to Romano, both point to the logical conclusion that Francisco Inácio had not concealed paternity before his death and that he had intended his natural sons be treated as members of his own family by his legitimate children after death. This attitude was not uncommon for men who fathered natural children, especially when they remained unmarried or were widowers. Yet two circumstances introduce dissonance into this conclusion, raising a question mark about Romano's relationship to his six half-siblings, at least the three brothers who remained alive after 1854.

First, there is the obvious clue of Romano's name. He does not appear to have used “Caluete” as a standard surname, a practice that paternal recognition customarily sanctioned. (It may yet be possible to locate documents with his signature or parish records indicating the form by which he stated his name – and whether he identified himself as a natural offspring of his father.) The fact that rare, published references offer what is a stylistic idiosyncrasy – “Romano, comma, o Caluete” – is probably accounted for by two factors. “O Caluete” denoted vagueness: “Romano, the Caluete.” It subtly signified a family affiliation, without denoting lineal descent from a specific Caluete, blurring deliberately the filiation of son to father. Furthermore, “the Caluete” may well have been an attribution, a name assigned by others, not a projection of a name by its rightful owner. Then the meaning would be clear: Those who attributed to Romano a family affiliation

with the Caluetes either did not know the specific connection of son to father or they knew, but collaborated discreetly to comply with an unwritten etiquette on illegitimate birth at the time. That is, they may have been privy to the reason why Romano would not be more public in the projection of his father's family name – and they respected it.

The second circumstance introducing dissonance can be found at the end of the poet's life. The very end. His widow of one day declined to state the name of Romano's father when she reported his death for registry by the notary in Patos. The civil obituary entry bore only the name of Romano's mother, confirming the inference from Francisco Inácio's inventory as well as information offered from Capt. Adelgício's oral family history and written notes, that she was Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo.⁴⁴ Omission of his father's name was the decision of Romano's widow, but, presumably, she reflected Romano's preference. In declining to give the name of Romano's father, his wife left the notary no choice but to lower Romano's *qualidade*: He was obliged to enter the information that Romano was “*de pai incógnito*” – of unknown father – the procedural formula indicating a father who had deliberately denied paternity (as well as one whose identity was truly unknown).⁴⁵

Thus did Romano's filiation to his father in legal documents conclude with an ironic twist of the local record clerk, assigning him the status of a spurious, rather than a natural, son. By moving him into the ranks of individuals legally denied paternal recognition (absurdly implying he could not have been his father's legal successor in 1842) – on the very day that he was buried in Patos – his widow and the record clerk stripped Romano of a favored *qualidade*, that of a paternally recognized natural son. Why did they redefine him in the least favorable category of unmitigated bastardy, that of spurious birth, lowering him to a disparaged “*quaesito*” – someone whose father denied recognition. What had happened?

The problem for Romano lay not with his father, who indeed, had raised him to an equivalent social level with his legitimate offspring by virtue of the will he executed in Romano's childhood. Nor did the problem lie with Luis the Inventariante, who not only honored his father's wishes but also enjoyed a genuinely paternal relationship

with Romano as a protective, surrogate father throughout his life. Superficially, the conclusion might be reached that the problem lay with Romano himself. Having inherited a sizeable "stake" in property and slaves (one husbanded by his legal guardian, Luis), Romano took up the guitar and his father's grammar book in order to apply both to his consummate talent for rhyming. Consequently, the life of a poet – either a *cantador* or a *repentista* – might be taken to explain Romano's fall from grace within his extended family. What one folklorist observed at the century's close about the popular poet's questionable standing in backlands society drew directly on Romano's era:

Almost always unemployed, without an occupational niche in the working class, a Bohemian by disposition, a "tough" and a rowdie, seducing women, leading the rabble, this is the troubador of the people, perambulating from small town to small town, foretelling marriages and baptisms, guitar at his chest, knife at his waist, long kerchief around his neck, his hair falling in ringlets on his forehead, and wearing a jacket cut-off at the waist or a deep indigo blue shirt.⁴⁶

Monteiro's most famous, living *repentista*, 92-year-old "Pinto" (Severino Lourenço Pinto), proclaimed the same truth to this author as he lay reminiscing in song, on what in 1987 I was assured by Capt. Adelgício and other close friends was his "deathbed." The Bohemian life claimed such men, who could not support their families on the earnings of a troubador, o Pinto lamented laughingly.⁴⁷

Romano, unlike his illiterate contemporaries and rivals, continued to own modest but valuable rural properties in both Patos and Mãe d'Água. Moreover, he sought to support his growing brood of legitimate children, even making, according to Irineu Joffily, an exodus to southern Pernambuco during the Great Drought of 1877-1879, when, for the first time, the cool uplands of Teixeira were ravaged by that natural catastrophe. In Joffily's view, it was precisely this trek southward in search of the wherewithal to sustain his family that made Romano so well-known and admired throughout the region.⁴⁸ And when death carried him off, Capt. Adelgício said he had been mending a fence on his small ranch in Patos, on a Sunday – a circumstance glossed by

fellow *repentistas* who mourned his passing. (He died immediately, of a stroke, on March 1, 1891.) In other words, Romano, although he did not establish a legitimate family until he was nearly thirty-five, had thereafter devoted himself to providing for his family, notwithstanding his devotion to what was deemed a “Bohemian” vocation. So what really went wrong?

The Indian Past

The answer lies in Romano’s “*qualidade*.” What it lacked was purity of blood. His mother’s physical appearance as “an Indian,” one that belied her dual descent from both Xucuru and African forebears, contained the clue to unlocking Romano’s ambiguous status within his Caluete extended family. Race, not illegitimate birth (or the calling of a popular poet) better accounts for why in adulthood he became identifiable only vaguely as “o Caluete.” Race also underlay the reluctance of his widow to provide the name of Romano’s father for entry in the civil registry of deaths.

The claim to whiteness asserted by the ruling families of the interior of the Brazilian Northeast, one explicitly articulated in the phrase they themselves coined, “*os brancos da terra*” (landowning whites), depended on both a denial of race mixture in the historical past and a customary refusal to permit it in the nineteenth-century present, wherever marriage raised the issue of incorporating individuals whose non-European ancestry could not be effectively denied or dismissed as negligible. Acknowledgment of an Indian past, one admitting the presence of “untamed,” that is, unsubdued or unassimilated, indigenous ancestors, might be given in oral tradition, provided that the indigenous part of local history could be relegated to a distant past. Although a pre-nineteenth-century past was implied, one safely removed to the distance of several generations before 1850, chronological imprecision could be used to relegate to the eighteenth century episodes or ancestors belonging to the nineteenth century. Teixeira’s principal families possessed such an Indian past, one not so distant that their mythic foundation history can be said to have effectively removed it from the nineteenth century. Indeed, its simultaneity with the generations of

Romano's father, and that of his legitimate children, was something that only after mid-century would come to be deliberately overlooked.

Topographical names, like "Batalhão" (Battle) – the original name given to the settlement of Taperoá – or the "Riacho das Mossas [i.e., Moças]," the Stream of the Young Misses," which is mentioned in Francisco Inacio's inventory as a boundary indicator for Sítio Mulungu, served as topographical remembrancers of what was really not a distant Indian past at all, only one maintained in silence or through vague allusion to the eighteenth century. On the banks of the stream subsequently called "Riacho das Moças," the Xucurus were said to have kidnapped two or three young daughters of one of Teixeira's founders, perhaps as late as the 1790s. Their father, Col. Rêgo Barros of Sítio Coronel (several leagues west of Canudos-Teixeira), managed to reclaim them, "at the cost of considerable struggle," one unpublished variant of the legend notes, "but when they had already become the bearers of Indian blood."⁴⁹ This striking episode of Indian men stealing young white women, recounted orally for over a century before being set to print, finds no corroboration in published local genealogies, although published local histories offer distinct variations on the fate of the kidnapped young women. The "shameful" origins of their offspring, for whom *mameluco* physical characteristics would always be a visual reminder, caused them to be "dropped out" in published genealogical memory, given that their mothers were "*moças*," young women who were white, the daughters of a "respectable family."

Until the final decades of the eighteenth century, Teixeira served as a demographic "oasis" for the Xucurus, whose territory historically had extended eastward into Monteiro (in Paraíba) and southward, into the Province of Pernambuco, while the surrounding backlands fell increasingly vulnerable to white colonization.⁵⁰ A local historian of Teixeira, Frei Hugo Fragoso, specifically identifies the Xucurus of Teixeira as declining to make common cause with the Portuguese, who persuaded the Xucuru in Monteiro to take up arms with them against other indigenous groups. This political difference accounted for the isolation of Teixeira Xucurus and their reputation as "hostiles." Their brothers in Monteiro who had allied with the victorious Europeans gained only permanent removal from their homeland in the eastern Borborema

Plateau as reward – and a new identity as “tamed” *caboclos*.⁵¹ The tendency of a still sparsely settled white population to monopolize only the most accessible valleys for their fertile soils and abundant water, however, enabled the some Xucurus in Teixeira to retain fragile niches of survival in the Serra do Macaco (Serra do Teixeira) and, though greatly reduced, to survive into the nineteenth century.⁵²

As small parties of colonists had continued to arrive from the south, especially from the contiguous Pajeú Valley, the Xucurus fought to defend themselves “and many perished” just trying to retain their homes.⁵³ The white interlopers sought to displace them literally in the residential space of their encampments. Isolated ethnically as well as geographically, by the 1790s, Teixeira’s Xucurus were no match for a lengthening stream of settlers: “The project of conquest needed to clear the inhabitants in order to introduce the ‘civilization’ that the white settlers were going to bring.”⁵⁴ Encroachment by neo-European challengers for Xucuru land in the Serra do Teixeira provided the genesis of a myth of the Indian “past,” one uniquely articulated in the petitions colonists drew up in order to request land grants (*sesmarias*) from the Portuguese crown. Teixeira’s most knowledgeable scholar on this process of neo-European displacement summed up the specious logic that “evaporated” a Xucuru presence in official records:

The petitions for *sesmarias* [in Teixeira] originated in the assumption that the lands occupied by the *gentio* (pagan) Tapuia were “unoccupied”; they were lands, according to certain petitions, “that never had been settled (*povoados*) nor cultivated by whites, nor by any people and are only populated by *gentios*.”⁵⁵ In these petitions for *sesmarias* in the Paraíba backlands the objectives given were “to settle the land,” “to populate them with livestock,” “to cultivate *agrestes* and uncultivated land,” “to plant vegetables and fields [of cereals].”⁵⁶

By denying that the non-Christian “Tapuia” could be counted among “any people,” and by asserting what amounted to an “agricultural imperative” justifying neo-European seizure of indigenous land, would-be *sesmeiros* simply dismissed outright the presence of the Xucuru in Teixeira. Small pockets of the indigenous population, no more than

tiny, isolated, extended family groupings, incredibly held out in the face of white settlement, but the Xucurus’ defensive position was one increasingly dependent on a nimble mobility and an intimate familiarity with the mountains, forests, and caves of the Serra do Macaco that now could offer only temporary protection from a moving stream of white settlement. Like the native population of northern California in the 1850s and 1860s, once deprived of encampment and hunting territories, the Xucuru would be hunted down and killed, the survivors subjected to enslavement in the neo-European hamlets taking root throughout Teixeira.⁵⁷

As human plunder, the Xucurus were always susceptible to enslavement, but probably never more so than during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Women would be seized as more highly prized captives than men, if the local stories of their kidnapping are to be given full credit, for the first generation of settlers was disproportionately male and young. Above all, the early interlopers needed slaves if they were to establish permanent farms along what were still heavily forested stream banks, and in order to cultivate subsistence crops for their young and growing families. Romano’s great-grandson tried to account for the uniqueness of the poet’s name by resorting to a lengthy and enlightening discussion of how settler families like the Caluetes abducted Indian women “in bunches” from encampments in the surrounding hills and valleys. Hence, “Rumano,” he speculated, derived from “*arrumar uma mulher*,” the colloquialism meaning to go out with one’s friends and seize a woman. Romano, then, was the offspring of just such a woman – “*uma mulher arrumada*.”

Although I do not accept this explanation as satisfactory for unlocking the puzzling derivation of Romano’s given name, Adelgício’s suggestion that Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo came to live with the Caluetes because she had been kidnapped makes sense. The practice of “wife stealing” (i.e., *raptó*, with or without the woman’s complicity) in the backlands can be documented from the 1660s onward.⁵⁸ What is often not well-documented in elite genealogies is the racial identity of such women, especially when they were Indian. This circumstance, incidentally, explains the frustration of certain regional genealogists who have searched in vain for the names of the parents of either wives

or mothers mentioned in oral genealogies, but for whom a family affiliation – sometimes even a given name – is lacking.⁵⁹

Irineu Joffily stood alone as a scholarly authority in recognizing the continued presence of Paraíba's indigenous population in the backlands after 1800, as one still subject to enslavement, although he did not elaborate. The reaction his assertions have occasioned among twentieth-century historians reflects the perpetuation of nineteenth-century attitudes of denial on the part of the "*brancos da terra*" toward the deeds of their ancestors.⁶⁰ Future investigation in local record offices (*cartórios*), especially in the *livros de notas* registering property transfers, should establish a widespread and substantial presence of Indian slavery in the Paraíba backlands after 1800. For instance, in Pombal, slaveowners registered *cartas de alforria* during the first decades of the last century not only for slaves of African descent, but also for those who were Indians.⁶¹ Alternatively, careful perusal of the very last *sesmarias* granted by the Portuguese crown in the Paraíba backlands, between 1808 and 1822, occasionally confirms that some petitioners for land declined to emphasize "vacancy," instead reporting that "wild Tapuias still can be found," living in the very tracts of the central Borborema Plateau whose ownership they coveted and claimed.⁶²

In 1995, a fifth-generation descendant of a Xucuru woman native to Teixeira narrated the oral tradition that had conserved the memory of her capture and forcible incorporation into one of Teixeira's newly arrived, settler families.⁶³ As a child, Pedro Nunes Filho's father had recounted to him the oral tradition that preserved the moment of his great-great-grandmother's capture by his great-great-grandfather. The story is an invaluable piece of indirect evidence for Romano's biography, because the kidnapped woman was contemporary in age with the poet's mother, and the place where she was seized was perhaps five leagues from Mãe d'Água. Above all, the story makes unequivocally clear that Teixeira's Indian past was contemporaneous with at least the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. Perhaps as late as the 1830s, the decade of Romano's birth, fugitive Xucurus still continued to live in the rock clefts and heights of the Pico do Jabre, not far from the Caluetes' farm in Mãe d'Água. Pedro Nunes Filho's family narrative also conveys significant elements of

fear and force that figured in the process of involuntary incorporation of Xucuru female captives within pioneer families by Portuguese and Brazilian men. Finally, it makes clear that not all such women seized as children were relegated to the status of either de facto slave or recognized concubine by their captors. In becoming the mothers of a first generation of *mamelucos*, some of those captives experienced not only cultural integration into the dominant Luso-Brazilian society but they also achieved the status of legitimate wife and founding mother of acknowledged elite lineages.

Pedro Nunes' great-great-grandfather was a Portuguese immigrant, Antonio Nunes da Rocha, who settled in the vicinity of Teixeira with other relatives who accompanied him, at an as yet undetermined date, presumably in the 1820s. According to the family story, one day he went to the Serra do Jabre to hunt, probably around 1830.⁶⁴ That he chose the most elevated and inaccessible part of the massif to pursue his quarry, the slopes of the Pico do Jabre (1,030 meters), suggests that he did not have in mind merely the hunting of animals. The family story recounts that Nunes da Rocha's dog barked at something in a tree, attracting his attention. The subject of the commotion was a Xucuru girl only twelve years old, who was trying to hide from the hunting party. However, Pedro Nunes offered the conclusion that the girl had been hunted deliberately, using the dogs, and he concurred that she had been treed by one of them. In fact, the family tale even describes the girl as being caught "a dente do cachorro" (by the teeth of the dog).⁶⁵ Retrieved from the tree top, she was taken home by Antonio Nunes da Rocha and "tied up with a rope until she became tame (*até que ela amansar*), underscoring not only her unwillingness to become incorporated in her captor's household but also her determination to escape.⁶⁶

Notwithstanding this terrifying introduction to civilization, the girl subsequently was baptized by Antonio Nunes da Rocha himself, receiving the Christian name "Tereza Maria de Jesus." Furthermore, her captor either married her or, following what was not unusual practice, even among those families of property in nineteenth-century Brazil, he lived with her "in the married state" (*segundo o costume do Reino*) until his death in 1867 or 1868.⁶⁷ Tereza Maria de Jesus, whose Xucuru name was obliterated, even more than Romano's mother, lived

out her life as a legitimate member of her captor's family and became the co-founder of another of Teixeira's elite families, surviving her husband, who was killed by bandits.⁶⁸ Although her experience may have been exceptional, race mixture with the indigenous population was common among the first generations of Teixeira's settlers. The offspring of such unions were not always relegated to the lower ranks of society, despite the privileging of those whose parents were of European or Luso-Brazilian descent and legitimately married. Instead, Tereza Maria de Jesus' example suggests that important differentiation, turning fundamentally on paternal recognition, proved a crucial factor, much as in seventeenth-century São Paulo the offspring of indigenous mothers and Portuguese fathers were either recognized and accepted by their fathers as "*mamelucos*" or rejected as "*bastardos*."⁶⁹

Despite the reality of an Indian presence in Teixeira during the decade of Brazil's independence, little official recognition would be accorded those inhabitants. Twenty years later, Paraíba's governor would report that all of the province's Indians "lived in villages subject to the civil authorities, given that they were civilized, or at least as much as ordinarily are those individuals in the lowest class of the interior's population."⁷⁰ In dismissing their significance in 1845, he nonetheless substantiated that indigenous survivors continued to live in discrete groupings, even speaking distinct languages. His report, which completely ignored the vast backlands, conveyed the erroneous assumption that the limited acculturation taking place had occurred only within "the lowest class." He did not address individual assimilation by incorporation into "a good family," an alternative mode for transforming Indians into "Brazilians." Furthermore, those Indians who still spoke indigenous languages he dismissed as

the remains of some tribes who had formerly inhabited the province, but now were already so degenerated from their originally primitive state that the large part of them do not speak the language of their tribes, making them indistinguishable from the mass of the population, except in the [coastal] towns [*villas*] of Alhandra, Conde, and the former Baía da Traição, where they live in the middle of other races that completely dominate their numbers and importance ...⁷¹

Romano's incorporation within the Caluete family of his biological father, and then of his surrogate father, Luis the Inventariante, represented one assimilationist approach to race mixture contrasting strongly with the Provincial Governor's stress on a "civilizing" process that could do no more than absorb the indigenous population at a mass level. From an elite perspective, a collective consciousness about the Indian "past," as a "closed chapter" in Teixeira oral history, operated to account for how select individuals like Romano gained qualified acceptance as putatively white, at least among some families identified as the *brancos da terra*. Precisely that collective consciousness, in light of Romano's singular gifts, accounts for why he was never labeled "mameluco" (much less *curiboca*) – and why early twentieth-century authors (Rodrigues de Carvalho excepted) intentionally refrained from referring to his physical characteristics at all (leaving the ambiguous implication that he had been white).

Where the "Indian past" implied race mixture for the local elite kindreds who governed the interior of the Northeast, limited acknowledgment of family membership by Indian women (and a rarer marginality for Indian men) occurred in oral history. But when such "membership" could be addressed within the safe context of a local foundation myth, one customarily romanticized and compartmentalized, then chronological vagueness removed any threat of immediate identification as overtly "Indian." Whenever Indian women had been incorporated through marriage as the founding mothers of important lineages, a phenomenon occurring in a number of Paraíba's nineteenth-century *municípios*, then their genealogical presence in given families would be acknowledged according to an encoded formula that usually transformed such non-white ancestresses into women baptized with Portuguese names, whose children or grandchildren would then be readily redefined as white.

The legendary biography of Pernambuco's Arco Verde, the preferred and beloved concubine of Jeronymo de Albuquerque for half a century, is the most well-known example. She served as the sixteenth-century template according to which darker skinned apical ancestresses in the Paraíba-Pernambuco backlands would subsequently receive favorable acknowledgment by their white descendants throughout three

centuries of bloody conquest and settlement. In fact, some of Arco Verde's lineal descendants introduced her template into the Paraíba interior when they colonized it, elevating her as the paragon of assimilation for a frontier society that relied directly on Indian concubinage or occasional intermarriage with indigenous women. In Paraíba, the most well-known case is the seventeenth-century apical couple represented by the Portuguese "Pedro Velho" (Pedro Ferreira das Neves) and the Indian Custódia do Amorim Valçaçar. The major lineages of the "Nóbrega family," an enormous kindred encompassing Teixeira, Patos, and Sabugi, descend from the couple's *mameluca* daughter, Antônia de Morais Valçaçar. Custódia was described as "a Cariri," the daughter of the indigenous chieftain, D. Pedro Valçaçar, who "petitioned the crown for land already occupied by the Cariri Indians, in the [Jesuit] mission of Pilar do Taipu, Sítio Genipapeiro, in the place called Bultrins."⁷² Her legendary identity fit the Indian "princess" model embodied in Arco Verde, as well as a "Pocahontas" template ubiquitous in Northeast Brazil, which received greater emphasis among her descendants.⁷³

"The Seven Sisters" commonly mentioned in the genealogies of Paraíba's backlands elite families were the granddaughters of the "índia" Custódia do Amorim Valçaçar. That is, the seven daughters of Custódia's daughter Antônia de Morais Valçaçar and Antônia's husband, one of the first European settlers in Santa Lusía do Sabugi – Manuel Fernandes Freire. Two of the sisters (Apolônia Barbosa and Antônia de Amorim Valçaçar Filha) married two Portuguese brothers (Rodrigo and Sebastião de Medeiros). The future bridegrooms put up considerable resistance to the match, initially refusing to marry "the granddaughters of an Indian," and notwithstanding that the women's grandfather had been the "Governor of the Cariris."⁷⁴ The Medeiros brothers, who had opened up a large tract of land in the Sabugi district for cattle ranching, refused on the ground that "their elevated social condition" made the women social inferiors – a phrase encoding the barrier of "purity of blood." Their reluctance was overcome, for "such was the pressure on them to marry that in the end they agreed."⁷⁵ One factor persuading them to change their minds must have been the impressive wealth of the brides' family. The children of the Medeiros brothers and their wives, the great-granddaughters of the Indian Custódia, were reaching

marriageable age and bearing children between the 1740s and the 1760s, making them contemporaries of the parents of Francisco Inácio da Silveira Caluete and Maria José Alves Pequena. Their nineteenth-century descendants would trace lineal descent directly from "the Seven Sisters," stopping short of their apical ancestress, the Indian Custódia do Amorim Valçaçar. Thus a customarily Brazilian "shortening" of elite genealogies, implying "shallow descent," received impetus from reluctance to confront an ancestress whose baptismal name had replaced an indigenous one. In Teixeira, no identifiably Indian women appear in published elite genealogies. Still, that possibility should not be excluded, given that, in families such as the Nunes da Rocha, oral elicitation has definitely established their presence.⁷⁶

Genealogical Purity: The Quality of Servile Descent

Thanks precisely to the practice of *de facto* slavery, as well as less coercive forms of assimilation, the Indian population in the environs of Teixeira became more invisible in documents after 1800. Joffily's assumption that "Romano had at one time been a slave of the Caluetes" makes more sense when appraised in light of his recognition that the native population of the backlands was still subject to enslavement during the last century.⁷⁷ (Indian slavery, reintroduced in certain parts of Brazil in the early years of the nineteenth century, was not legally abolished until 1831.⁷⁸ Although not imposed on the indigenous populations of Paraíba or Pernambuco, the authorization that law extended to settlers to hunt down "wild Indians" for the purpose of forced servitude in Bahia and Minas Gerais, must have been taken by many pioneers as a plenary sanction throughout the region.) In any case, it was Romano's mother who raised the issue of a presumed slave status for Romano, because children acquired the free or slave status of their mothers, not their fathers.⁷⁹ Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo, of whom we have only the tiniest glimpse in written records and oral memory (who can be assumed to have been born between 1810 and 1818), probably possessed a parentage proclaiming her free in a *de jure* sense.⁸⁰ But if she had been kidnapped as a child, then she may have been initially regarded as a *de facto* slave by the Caluetes or their

neighbors, simply by virtue of her Indian ancestry and capture.⁸¹ On the other hand, Joaquina's de jure free birth accounted for why her sons Romano and Verissimo would also enjoy de jure free civil status – and could be recorded as their father's successors.

Consequently, the tag line used by Inacio da Catingueira in the 1874 *desafio*, which described Romano's grandfather as an African slave – “*Seu avô veio ao Brasil para ser negociado*” – deserves scrutiny with respect to the poet's mother. Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo, as the physical appearance of her other son – Verissimo – confirmed, possessed African as well as Xucuru ancestry. Inacio may have relied on Romano's physical appearance for the imputation that his maternal grandfather had been African, but it is doubtful he based the conclusion on anything other than a poet's license. First, that Inacio knew for a fact that Romano's maternal grandfather had been an African slave must be doubted. Anecdotal information on Inacio's subsequent *pelejas* with Romano, as well as the Patos *desafio*, tend to confirm the impression that the two poets first met in Patos and that Inacio did not visit Teixeira until after their 1874 contest. He lacked precise knowledge about Romano's mother's ancestry, given that Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo had, in all likelihood, been kidnapped as a young girl and definitively separated from her parents thereafter. Second, the tag line Inacio used in the Patos poetic duel with Romano is found as a formulaic in Inacio's subsequent *pelejas* with other rivals whom he taunted exactly as he had Romano.⁸² Third, Inacio used the tag line about Romano's grandfather having been a slave from Africa because it fit his winning strategy of accusing the “King of the Desafio” of being a hypocrite – a man of color masquerading as “a white man.” In short, poetic hyperbole, not firsthand knowledge, dictated that Romano's indigenous appearance be overlooked in favor of denigrating him on the basis of the lower social status of African slavery.

This conclusion means that Romano's appearance did not resemble Inacio's. Even though others described Romano's skin color as “*atrigueirado*,” or likened it explicitly to the color of the indigenous population, Inacio preferred to call it “sunburned” – *queimado* – comparing his opponent's skin to his own, darker brown, “*pardo*” color.⁸³ The matter of Romano's hair, another intriguing element in the

Patos poetic text, deserves similar caution. When Inacio mocked the hair of the "King of Desafio" as "riled" or "irritated" – *agastado* – he may not have been validating African ancestry. At least he failed to employ the more common adjective (*pixaum* or *pixaim*) in poetic speech for signifying hair associated with such ancestry. Over two centuries earlier, none other than Paraíba's Dutch governor, Elias Herckmans, had found the indigenous population of the backlands remarkable in terms of hair type, "thick and course" (*áspero*) being the descriptive he chose. Ordinarily, European visitors strikingly concurred that the hair of native Brazilians was "very fine" [*lisos*].⁸⁴ In any case, Romano's hair certainly appears to have contradicted his claim to being white. If it would not lie smooth and flat, due to being thick and course, then the "unruliness" of his hair may also have proclaimed the poet's indigenous roots in the Serra do Teixeira.

Ethnographic information pertaining to the Xucurus suggests a much more complex reality for Romano's ancestry, notwithstanding that Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo's father (or her mother) may have been African, and does not lead ineluctably to a presumption of enslavement. Race mixture always had occurred beyond the line of neo-European settlement, being a feature of indigeneous life in the Paraíba backlands since the early 1700s. In 1817, Pe. Manoel Aires de Casal noted the presence a decade earlier of "some whites" and "*mestiços*" (i. e., of African and European descent) living among the Xucurus of the Serra do Ararobá (Pernambuco) as "cultivators of cotton and indigenous food crops," although he did not explain how they had come to be there.⁸⁵ Hohenthal concluded from his fieldwork among the Xucurus of Cimbres and the Serra de Arorobá that "obvious" race mixture between them and the African population of the backlands dated to the early nineteenth century. He also distinguished those who were "curibocas" from those who were "*mamelucos*."⁸⁶ The presence of "Negroes" living among the Xucuru during the early 1950s, whom the local people called "*caboclos*," testified to their having adopted Indian ways, he noted. "As a matter of fact, these Negroes call themselves '*caboclos*,'" he emphasized.⁸⁷ Indeed, the Xucurus among whom Hohenthal lived referred to their Paratio neighbors as "black Indians" (*índios pretos* or *índios macunha*), although the anthropologist confessed he could not

distinguish the latter from the former in any respect, except that “their skin color was a good deal darker than that of the Shucurú.”⁸⁸

The forested slopes of the Serra do Teixeira presented ideal conditions for the survival of runaway African slaves, who would have been easily assimilated among the Xucurus or neighboring indigenous inhabitants. After all, the first *quilombo* formed in the Paraíba backlands (called Cumbe) dates to less than a decade after the fall of “the Black Republic of Palmares” (1694), when Domingos Jorge Velho brought enslaved survivors to the Piancó Valley (perhaps two-days on horseback from Teixeira). Seen against a complex backdrop of a long history of race mixture between Africans and Indigenes, Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo’s dual ancestry was a more mundane phenomenon than historians of Brazil have usually bothered to acknowledge.⁸⁹ Xucuru ethnicity stood out in intergenerational memory as paramount in her case, if only because the Xucuru language continued to be spoken in Teixeira during the nineteenth century, that is, throughout Romano’s lifetime. Although Curt Niemuendajú’s Xucuru informants in the Serra de Ararobá had almost lost the facility to speak their language by 1934, they told him that their bilingual grandparents had still preferred to speak Xucuru rather than Portuguese.⁹⁰ The probability that “o Grande Romano” was bilingual, at least in childhood, may explain why his father left him the sole book in his possession, a Portuguese grammar. And Romano, initially applying himself to the task of literacy as a means of “whitening” his *mameluco* identity, may have discovered that, in mastering a European grammar, he also possessed a singular talent for rhyming. In developing his skills as a *cantador*, he first would have memorized poetic works drawn from an Iberian *romanceiro* tradition, like the popularly recounted *Carlos Magno e os Doze Pares de França*. Only afterward could he have embarked on the innovative road to reinventing a *repentista*’s regional repertoire. The poet’s craft thus became Romano’s idiosyncratic means to gaining acceptance in a white, Portuguese-speaking world, one where the high status placed on even rudimentary literacy “outweighed” the low status of Indian ancestry.

The inheritance documents of Francisco Inácio da Silveira Caluêta’s wife, Maria José Alves Pequena, did not contain the name of Romano’s mother among the slaves they enumerated. Not surprisingly,

neither her inventory nor that of her husband recorded any Indian slaves per se. But the racial marker identifying certain slaves as "*cabra*" should be treated with healthy skepticism, especially because it has yet to be established precisely whether, before 1850, either "*curiboca*" or "*cafuso*" appeared in slave enumerations contained in backlands inheritance records.⁹¹ Although "*cabra*" has been applied in this century to those of African-European ancestry (offspring of parents who had been *mulato* and *negro*), that is, dark-skinned *mestiços*, its regional meaning from the 1700s onward pertained to individuals whose racially mixed ancestry also included indigenous antecedents. Such an identity can be cited as a variant meaning in dictionaries published in the last century; indeed, it appears to be the original meaning of "*cabra*."⁹² The possibility that slaveowning families in the backlands listed Indian – or *mameluco* – slaves as "*cabras*" in *inventários* therefore deserves testing.⁹³ To the extent that the children of Indian women and African slave fathers would be held in a customary, but illegal, slavery, one that their "owners" may have intended be heritable, then it would have been prudent to list such individuals ambiguously as "*cabras*," rather than as *cafusos*, *cafuzes*, *curibocas*, *mamelucos*, or *caboclos*.

In short, "being Indian" in Teixeira before 1818, presumably the latest date when Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo could have been born, still meant being subjected to a de facto or customary enslavement in the eyes of families like the Caluetes. Therefore, Romano's *qualidade*, as the offspring of a Xucuru mother, carried a doubly pejorative evaluation. Physically perceived as non-white, most likely as *mameluco* in appearance, his matrilineage also implied servile descent (whether Xucuru or Xucuru and African), and notwithstanding that his mother enjoyed a favored situation within the Caluete family as his father's *manceba* (consensual partner).

Genealogical Purity: The Quality of Illegitimate Birth

Denial of an Indian past operated as a corollary to the fundamental principle of genealogical purity that backlands elite families invoked to guarantee membership in the rural elite. Whiteness had to be a characteristic putatively ascribed for being inextricably tied to any

legitimate claim to membership in a “good family,” one entitling individuals to everything from political patronage to deferential behavior from the “*povo*,” free and slave. Thus, matrimonial intentions implied genealogical investigations of the partners’ respective antecedents in order to validate possession of the requisite *qualidade*, especially confirmation of “purity of blood” (*pureza de sangue*). “Qualidade,” literally, “quality,” defined the key concept for screening individuals for membership in a “respectable” family. But “*qualidade*” better translated as one’s intrinsic “status condition,” for it encoded implicit markers related to one’s European or non-European descent, to legitimate or illegitimate birth, and, of course, to civil status as either freeborn, slave, or *liberto*. (Where “*qualidade*” carried an occupational implication, usually it was a function of either race or illegitimate birth.) Consequently, to make an issue of an individual’s *qualidade* was to raise suspicions about social status, to suggest inferiority due to criteria tied to race and/or birth.

Legitimate birth validated superior *qualidade* and served as the principal means for mediating whiteness within local elite families. It might carry intrinsic prestige, wherever a given family prized legitimacy *per se*, but legitimacy appears to have been more prized for testifying to the genealogical investigations that corroborated at least a putative whiteness. During the first half of the nineteenth century, legal marriage, even at the elite level, did not define a universal norm anywhere in Brazil.⁹⁴ It is therefore important to keep in mind that, where legitimacy was lacking, *qualidade* did not pose an insuperable obstacle. Individual social contexts, in tandem with civil law, offered relief from “bastardy.”⁹⁵ Many fathers, like Ten.-Col. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête, availed themselves of the ample opportunity law afforded for preferentially recognizing their *filhos naturais*. Hence, it was the connection of illegitimate birth to non-white ancestry that presented particularly problematic situations. In cases like Romano’s, where natural offspring became full successors with legitimate half-siblings to a patrimony that presumed membership within the rural white elite, they could also expect to marry within that status group. One problem might arise, however, from the customary reliance on close, consanguineous marriage. Namely, a preferred matrimonial pattern prescribing unions between the children of siblings (so-called cousin

marriage) might lead to intrafamilial tension whenever a matrimonial suit proffered by a cousin also implied crossing the color bar. Then the customary reliance on consanguineous unions would engender a “backfire” effect, due to the objection that legitimate family members in the following generation might be evaluated as non-white.

This was exactly what occurred when Francisco Romano, o Caluête, determined to marry a kinswoman who was white. The outcome for him, as well as his *sertanejo* response to family opposition, proved very different than what Aluísio de Azevedo depicted for Raimundo, the central character in his iconoclastic novel, *O mulato* (1881). Francisco Romano’s dilemma demonstrated a fundamental similarity to the one that *O mulato* depicted – the destruction inherent in the conflict between the concept of “purity of blood,” on the one hand, and that of cultural toleration of illegitimacy, on the other. Unlike Raimundo’s thwarted matrimonial suit, played out in the urban context of a Portuguese enclave in coastal São Luis de Maranhão, Romano’s tortured attempts to marry a “cousin” on his paternal side crystallized the antagonism between different lineages descended from his father within a rural ambience where the customarily sanctioned means for settling such disputes was the blood feud. Where Raimundo finally had to be “killed off” by novelist Aluísio Azevedo, in order to end his novel, “o Grande Romano” lived up to the combative reputation of a *repentista* and showed his mettle as a fighting man. He was no overly refined Coimbra law graduate, but a tough and spirited, even “uppity,” scion of a pioneering backlands family. However tragic his family contretemps, Romano “gave back for every blow he received,” true to the metier of his poetic craft. His biography demonstrated that, however much deficiencies in *qualidade* could be overcome when they derived from illegitimate birth, the same could not be said when they turned on non-European and servile ancestry.

Rapto as Challenge to Racial “Purity”: Feuding, Color, and Caluete Family Ties

Because of Romano’s matrimonial suit, the surviving sons of Lieut.-Col. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête collided directly over

the question of race mixture within their legitimate extended family. Capt. Adelgício recounted the dramatic attempts of Romano to marry Antonia Aquilina da Silveira, beginning in the late 1860s, judging from the fact that the couple's fifth child, Josué Romano, was born in 1874.⁹⁶ Although Capt. Adelgício could not specify precisely the kinship relation of Antonia Aquilina to Inacio de Freitas [Silveira] Caluete (b. 1808), one of the two surviving younger brothers of Luis the Inventariante, she was closely associated with the latter's household. (Her name did not appear in Capt. Adelgício's extensive lists of either the children of Inácio de Freitas Caluete or his son Benjamin.) However, it was Inacio de Freitas' oldest son, Benjamin (Benjamin da Silveira Caluete), who played the key role in the drama of Romano's courtship of Antonia Aquilina. Perhaps slightly older than Romano, Benjamin may well have intended to marry Antonia himself, for his first marriage left him a widower with three children. Known as "Benjamin the Tutor," because he was the family schoolmaster, Benjamin had counted Antonia Aquilina as one of his pupils, a circumstance in family oral history taken to justify his jealous protection of the young woman. But it may have also signified that he exercised considerable authority over her father, very likely a kinsman of either Benjamin's mother or his first wife.

In fact, Teixeira's civil marriage registry revealed that Antonia's full name was Antonia Aquilina da Silveira Belo, which suggests that she was indeed the daughter (or the sister) of Antonio Belo, the man who, in Capt. Adelgício's family narrative, always arrived to reclaim her after Romano had abducted her.⁹⁷ Known in the family of Luis the Inventariante by the profane nickname of "Benjamin Beija-Besta," Inacio de Freitas' eldest son became the individual in the Caluete extended family who most adamantly opposed Romano (his uncle) in his matrimonial suit with the young Antonia Aquilina. In the late nineties, Benjamin fought even harder to prevent his sister's daughter from marrying Romano's son Josué. (See Appendix.)

Capt. Adelgício's family narrative contained the information that Romano had to abduct Antonia Aquilina four times. Finally, Benjamin the Tutor and Antonio Belo relented in the face of both armed opposition and the moral authority of the aging Luis the Inventariante, who still exercised a patriarchal prerogative as Inacio de Freitas' older brother.

Three times, Benjamin's armed henchmen accompanied Antonio Belo to Sítio Mulungu, in order to recapture Antonia Aquilina and take her “home.” Consequently, Romano's persistent suit opened a feud between Benjamin the Tutor and Chico Alves (Francisco Alves da Silveira Caluete), the son of Luis the Inventariante, who was also Romano's foster brother. On Romano's behalf, Chico Alves enlisted political support from the other surviving brother of Luis the Inventariante, his “Uncle Chico Inácio” (Lieut.-Col. Francisco Inácio da Silveira Caluete 2^a). It was, however, Chico Inacio's son Benicio (in Capt. Adelgício's notes “Benissimo”), commanding officer of police in Patos, who applied critical pressure on Inacio de Freitas and Benjamin the Tutor, forcing the suit of the now famous Romano.

Although Capt. Adelgício identified Benicio as “the son of Chico Inacio and his wife, Laurinda,” when Benicio was eventually identified – in his father's 1863 inheritance documents – it was as the then sixteen-year-old son of “Francisco Salça Gadilha, Caluete,” and “Laurinda Francisca Alves Pequena.” His parents resided in Mãe d'Água and each owned parts of Sítio Mulungu. Laurinda's husband's inheritance documents imply that she probably was a daughter of Luis the Inventariante who was “dropped out” of Capt. Adelgício's oral family history, meaning that her son Benicio was really a great-nephew of “Chico Inacio” of Patos, not his son.⁹⁸ Independent confirmation of Benicio's identity as a police officer in Patos during the 1870s, however, comes from genealogist Trajano Pires da Nóbrega, who interviewed Benicio's widow. He corroborates that Romano's kinsman Benicio was one and the same with the individual this genealogist mistakenly identified as “Francisco Benigno” of Patos, fortunately noting that Benigno was “better known as Benigno Caluete” – otherwise, as “Lieut. Benigno Caluete.”⁹⁹

The final confrontation between Romano and the family of Inacio de Freitas Caluete took place at Sítio Mulungu, when Antonio Belo, accompanied by a retinue of Benjamin's armed men, arrived to take the abducted woman home for a fourth time. One sentence has been passed down from Romano and Antonia Aquilina over three generations to Capt. Adelgício. It is the dictum uttered by Chico Alves in defiance of Antonio Belo during their final confrontation over Antonia Aquilina. His

words crystallized for succeeding generations the reason why Benjamin the Tutor and his family opposed the woman's marriage to Teixeira's famous poet : Romano's qualidade was inferior on no other ground but that of his color. Certainly Chico Alves counted fundamentally on the police backing he would receive from his first cousin, Delegado Benício of Patos, for putting an end to the violent skirmishes of rapto (bride abduction) that defined the feud. But it was the oral pronouncement to Antonio Belo at Sítio Mulungu, uttered in the presence of the threatened pair of lovers, that sent a final, defiant reply to Benjamin the Tutor and signaled closure for their feud: "She [Antonia] is white and I am white – and he [Romano] is my brother." Antonio Belo departed without his daughter, thereby assenting to her marriage.

This strong and enduring affirmation of blood kinship has echoed down the generations of Romano's descendants because it dismissed outright the color difference between Chico Alves and his father's beloved half-brother. Valued by Romano's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren for the purity with which it placed family membership – blood – above racial criteria, Chico Alves' dictum offers the best evidence for Romano's enduring family integration within two generations of his father's descendants at Sítio Mulungu. The succinct logic by which Romano's foster brother (and nephew) repelled Antonio Belo's mission to recapture Antonia Aquilina testified to the full family acceptance the poet enjoyed in Sítio Mulungu, first as his biological father's natural offspring, then as a foster son in the nuclear family headed by Luis the Inventariante, and, finally, as a foster brother in the one headed by Chico Alves.

That Romano and Antonia Aquilina da Silveira (who subsequently dropped "Belo") did marry can be verified from Romano's death registry (which listed their eleven legitimate children by name) as well as from the civil marriages of two of the couple's offspring executed before Teixeira's notary. That the poet and Antonia Aquilina established a permanent home in Sítio Mulungu was also confirmed in oral history, both that of Capt. Adelgício and a broader one circulating in Teixeira. If, then, Romano enjoyed status and acceptance within the family of Luis the Inventariante, acquired a wife who is still recalled as white – even fair-skinned (as "alva") – and also enjoyed important political

protection of the police in Patos – then why did his widow declare him to be of “unknown father” in 1891? The answer to this question cannot be developed in great detail here, but two points stand out.

First, Benjamin the Tutor and Chico Alves do not appear to have reconciled permanently following Romano’s marriage. Their feud merely subsided during an interim, for backlands vendettas could be characterized as “normally” cyclical – and notwithstanding that Chico Alves (Francisco Alves [da Silveira] Calute) soon married Benjamin’s sister “Chiquinha” (Francisca Alves Bezerra/Francisca Alves Bezerra da Silveira Caluete). The ages of the couple’s children confirm that the marriage probably occurred in the late 1870s, offering important evidence that Chico Alves and Benjamin attempted to repair their family rift by resorting to a popular device: cousin marriage bonding them as brothers-in-law. But this matrimonial resolution yielded precisely the opposite result, because three decades later the daughter of Chico Alves and Benjamin’s sister Chiquinha fell in love with Josué Romano.

Second, Romano’s impressive political protection in Mãe d’Água eventually waned, meaning that at his death his widow faced a precarious situation, especially with respect to the sons of Benjamin the Tutor. The reasons pertained to both intrafamilial tensions among Caluete cousins – the grandchildren of the first Francisco Inacio – and to interfamilial antagonism between the Caluetes and the Dantas Correia de Góis of Imaculada.¹⁰⁰ Boundary disputes pitted cousins against each other as landed patrimony predictably shrank throughout Teixeira, given rules of heirship imposing “equal shares for all.” Inacio de Freitas’ sons and grandsons (especially the sons of Benjamin the Tutor), overwhelmingly greater in number than the male descendants of Luis the Inventariante, clashed with their cousins in Mãe d’Água over land. Capt. Adelgício’s reference to an exodus on the part of “some of Luis’ relatives” (unnamed), which he attributed to Caluete intrafamilial friction over land, underscored a standard response to such confrontations. Outmigration therefore may well explain why his genealogical notes contained no information on more than one of Luis’ children, suggesting that Chico Alves may simply have been the only one of his offspring to remain permanently in Sítio Mulungu.¹⁰¹ Otherwise, Romano’s dependence on political protection from his half-brother Chico Inacio, a lieutenant-

coronel in the National Guard, ceased to exist. As Capt. Adelgício noted, Verissimo Romano eventually ended up “doing time” in Teixeira’s jail (in the 1870s) after death removed his influential half-brother. Finally, Delegado Benício also appears to have disappeared from the scene by the time of Romano’s death in 1891.¹⁰²

Antonia Aquilina da Silveira’s reluctance to identify her deceased husband as a Caluete, specifically, as the son of the man who was also the father of Inácio de Freitas Caluete and grandfather of Benjamin the Tutor, must be appraised in light of her heightened vulnerability as a widow within the context of growing tensions in Mãe d’Água. She could not afford to alienate further the sons of Benjamin, for now she headed a family of eleven children, most of whom were still legal minors.¹⁰³ Romano’s widow may even have been obliged to turn toward the family of Benjamin the Tutor for assistance, to the same family that had supported her father Antonio Belo and educated her as a child. Judging by events that took place in the mid-1890s, Benjamin and his sons may have started to play a determining role at Sítio Mulungu even before Romano’s death. As Chiquinha’s much older brother, Benjamin possessed customary moral authority to intervene in her family affairs once their father had died. Benjamin in old age would reenact with the daughter of Chiquinha and Chico Alves the role that he had been so frustrated in playing three decades earlier vis-à-vis the abducted Antonia Aquilina. His sons would carry forward into the generation of Romano’s sons the feud that had first erupted between their parents.

In neglecting to name Romano’s “Caluete” father for the notary in Patos, Antonia Aquilina suppressed the only direct evidence that could confirm the poet’s filial bond to a father dead for over fifty years, information possibly still circulating as hearsay. Her denial of Romano’s filiation to a Caluete father, on the same day that she buried her husband, must be read within the context of her (Silveira Belo) family of origin, one integrated within the family of Benjamin the Tutor. She understood that she and her children enjoyed only a truce vis-à-vis the latter, so she kept silent. By making no official declaration that would name Inácio de Freitas’ father one and the same with Romano’s father, she sought to insulate herself and her eleven children from the renewed animosity of those Caluetes still hostile to her and Romano.

Did Antonia Aquilina possess sufficient intuitive understanding of her family's situation to apprehend that her son Josué Romano, soon to become regionally famous as a poet, would reopen his father's feud with the descendants of Inacio de Freitas? Quite possibly. A final point relevant to Antonia Aquilina's suppression of Romano's filiation to his biological father in the Patos death registry, consequently, deserves emphasis as a retrospective inference. The parallel biographies of father and son must be connected. Similar patterns in the matrimonial pursuits of each deserve to be attributed to the common practice of sons' taking wives from the same families that had given their fathers wives. Cousin marriage was still widely practiced in Teixeira after the turn of the last century. Thus it was no coincidence that Josué Romano would want to marry his first cousin, “A Pequena” (recalled as Francisca Alves Pequena by her children), the grandddaughter of Inacio de Freitas – his father's half-brother and the man whose household had once sheltered Antonia Aquilina, Josué's mother. But Inacio de Freitas' granddaughter was also the granddaughter of Luis the Inventariante, above all, the daughter of Chico Alves. The problem was, of course, that the daughter of Chico Alves was also the niece of Benjamin the Tutor. (See Appendix.)

A photograph in the possession of Capt. Adelgício indicated that Romano's irresistibly handsome son was someone construed as “moreno.” As in his father's case, Josué's color similarly defined the reason that his future wife's cousins violently interposed themselves in his matrimonial suit. It made perfect sense that Josué Romano's matrimonial strategy depended on marrying the only surviving child of Chico Alves, who was also the daughter of the man his father had always called “brother.” This time, however, the sons of Benjamin would pursue Josué Romano even more relentlessly than their father had chased Romano and Antonia Aquilina. Legitimate, the son of a white mother, Josué Romano would soon discover that his efforts to “marry white” would need to surpass those of his parents, sending him to jail in Teixeira and Patos before he could claim A Pequena as his legal wife in 1905. To be accepted as putatively white in the late 1890s would be harder than in the late 1860s, legitimacy notwithstanding. But this is the story of another serial abduction, another family feud

with Benjamin the Tutor, and another political era. It must be recounted elsewhere. Except for an important postscript. On the day of his marriage to A Pequena, Josué Romano reversed his mother's suppression of Romano's Caluete filiation fourteen years earlier. He identified himself to Teixeira's notary as the legitimate son of Romano do Teixeira by proudly declaring his father's full name: "Francisco Rumano da Silveira Caluete, deceased."¹⁰⁴

The more glorious surname that Teixeira's great poet had made uniquely his own is the one that has endured in oral tradition: "Romano." Antonia Aquilina's notarial subterfuge of silence, in a culture where the advantageous manipulation of family names was part of the political art of survival, suggested a nomenclature that her sons could subsequently appropriate. Her tactful silence before the Patos notary meant that Romano's descendants – including Josué Romano – would henceforth delete "Caluete" within the poet's lineage.¹⁰⁵ By the same token, Josué's wife obliterated those surnames precisely connecting her to the family of Benjamin the Tutor ("Silveira" and "Belo"). The nickname by which she is still universally known in Teixeira – A Pequena – proclaimed her descent by virtue of a sole, matrilineally heritable surname, one bilaterally derived and traceable to Sítio Mulungu's founding ancestress, the dead wife of Romano's widowed father: Maria José Alves Pequena (d. 1819).¹⁰⁶

Whiteness and the 1874 *Desafio*: "‘Senhor’ Romano..."

Genealogical purity continued to be an issue among Romano's descendants in the early twentieth century. Although an Indian past definitely had receded by the 1890s, the national context for race in which Romano had sung the memorable 1874 *desafio* in Patos continued to prevail during the first decades of the Republic, precisely when his son Josué became entangled in a feud for wanting to marry "white." The backlands, like the rest of Brazil, had become a world where social distinctions based on color had been turned upside down. Upward mobility for people of color had become a fact of life by the 1870s, meaning that racial tension defined a new and important variable in rural society. From the 1870s onward, greater opportunity for manumission fostered

a public perception that slave emancipation would be inexorable. The new social reality was simply that the free – even the slave – population of color in Paraíba's backlands no longer could be subjected to the predictable control which the "*brancos da terra*" had formerly claimed to exercise. Banditry represented the phenomenon that best summed up the white population's lost monopoly on violence after 1850. And, judging from the racist assumptions articulated by writers as disparate as Irineu Joffily and Pedro Batista, the cangaço was perceived as emerging in the 1860s and 1870s as the phenomenon that best expressed the new, aggressive mobility of men of color. What remained less clear in the minds of such writers was why, typically, leadership of the *cangaço* was occupied by men who were white.

The biographies of both "Francisco Romano, o Caluete," and his poet offspring, Josué Romano, suggested that to be "half-white" was not to be white at all. Putative whiteness implied a sliding scale within the same extended family grouping, one that by the century's end reflected a much greater propensity to reject members possessing non-European antecedents than at the century's beginning. For that matter, illegitimacy, as a principal element in *qualidade*, also underwent restrictive redefinition, as early as 1847, but definitively in 1916. A rewriting of succession's legal rules for "bastardy," within a social context where attitudes about color were also being recast to privilege genealogical purity, meant that in the Old Republic (1889-1930) putative whiteness would admit less deviation from a racial construct that would be more Eurocentric, exclusionary, and racist. What would still matter, however, would be the *presumption* that one was white. The Indian past, safely elided, could now be creatively recalled, for making exotic reference to one's remote ancestors.

After well over a century, Chico Alves' enduring protestation – "She is white; I am white; he is my brother" – must nonetheless echo historiographically. His affirmation of brotherhood with Romano looked backward, to a simpler time and a simpler society, when incorporation of racially mixed relatives caused fewer strains than at the century's end. "Blood" for many Brazilians like Chico Alves was not fundamentally "*limpeza de sangue*." Rather, "blood" signified the primordial bond of an intimate family tie, the intrinsic meaning of "*os*

laços de família” on which pioneers like Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluete and Maria José Alves Pequena had founded a new society. Ostensibly a neo-European society, the central backlands of Paraíba and Pernambuco was fundamentally a collaboration of races and cultures drawn from three continents. This circumstance, of course, means that the *Desafio de Romano do Teixeira com Inacio da Catingueira* must be read according to terms that neither poet would have acknowledged, nor that the critical literature devoted to the *literatura de cordel* has thus far taken into account.¹⁰⁷ Although we may conclude that Inacio’s taunts successfully exposed Romano’s hypocrisy of claiming to be white, the poetic genre of singing “*de repente*” and “combating” an opponent through the *peleja* lacked the power to communicate Romano’s personal tragedy. His family history shows him to have embodied a cipher for how *qualidade* operated in the second half of the last century.

In poetically deriding Inacio de Catingueira’s *qualidade* as black, slave, and (implicitly) illegitimate, Romano was merely reasserting his own personal claim to putative whiteness, one accepted by few of the *brancos da terra* who witnessed the Patos *desafio*. That his inscription within the extended family of his Caluete half siblings had narrowed definitively, once he reached adulthood and struggled to marry white, confirmed for a wider society what Romano had already sadly learned by 1874. Despite the protection of his “brother,” Chico Alves, and the latter’s forceful defense of Romano’s matrimonial ambitions, the feud between the grandsons of Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluete forever fixed Romano’s racial identity as less than white. Above all, o Grande Romano emerges in the Patos *desafio* as an individual whose acclaimed artistic identity was fated to clash with his “base” *qualidade*. This personal contradiction accounted for a painful, emotional irony in the verses the two poets “hurled” at each other during the June Feasts of 1874. Now their rhymed responses give new meaning to Romano’s boastful arrogance as a white man before his black rival. In mocking Romano as “*meu branco*,” Inacio da Catingueira confirmed what their audience already understood, that the celebrated King of the Desafio had been denied such an identity, and by his own half-brother and nephews.

Romano do Teixeira remained elusive biographically for embodying a Caluete family tragedy and for bearing personal witness

to racism at a point when the backlands was being rapidly transformed by manumission. What has been lost about his life story attests to the power of elite families to rewrite their own genealogies, as well as to decree the downward mobility of certain, less desirable, family members. The emergence of o Grande Romano from biographical obscurity, therefore, suggests that his role as the founder of the "Teixeira School" of *cantoria* deserves reappraisal as a unique accomplishment by an innovator who placed European poetic structures uppermost and consigned the formerly familiar rhythmic accompaniment of the African tambourine to cultural extinction.¹⁰⁸ Precisely because so much of his life belied the ideal of putative whiteness to which he so keenly aspired, Romano do Teixeira accomplished a creative *tour de force*, recasting what was a received European poetic tradition along new lines, those that proclaimed a Brazilian cultural unity for white and colored, free and slave, coronel and *cabra*. By fixing a commonly acknowledged troubador legacy "de repente" within what formerly had been a more culturally diverse and eclectic poetic repertoire circulating in the backlands. Romano defined an important turning point in regional popular culture. He assimilated the European poetic structures of *desafio*, *martelo*, and *romanceiro* to an American ambience by revising notions of verse and meter, by inventing literally thousands of rhymed couplets as the formulaic legacy for the generation of his son, and by imposing the definitive instrumentation of *violão* and *rabeca* on the percussive rattle of Inacio da Catingueira's tambourine.¹⁰⁹

Notas

- ¹ This article originally appeared in *Journal of Latin American Lore*. A short version of this article was presented for the panel on "Perceptions of Race: Discourse and Practice of Racial Classification in Colonial and Nineteenth-Century Brazil," at the XIX International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Washington, D.C., September 29, 1995. I am grateful to B.J. Barickman and Muriel Nazzari, panelists, for offering comments helpful for revisions. Johannes Wilbert offered invaluable bibliographic reference on the anthropological literature for the Xucurus. The assistance of a Fulbright Senior Research Grant for undertaking field work in the Paraíba backlands, Campina Grande, João Pessoa, and Recife,

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² On Teixeira's historical role as a nineteenth-century gathering point for poetic singers – and the “cradle of the *literatura de cordel*” – see Linda Lewin, “Oral Tradition and Elite Myth: The Legend of Antônio Silvino in Brazilian Popular Culture,” *Journal of Latin American Lore* 5 (Dec. 1979):157-204.

³ For a detailed map situating Teixeira, the hamlets of Catingueira and Mãe d'Água, see *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁴ Under Provincial Law No. 4, Teixeira was raised to *vila* on 29 Sept. 1859 (dismembered from Patos). Until 6 Oct. 1857 (Provincial Law No. 16), when Teixeira was made a parish in its own right, the *povoação* (settlement) had been part of the parish of Patos. Teixeira was first known as “Canudos,” after the reeds which grew at the site of the spring that determined the location of the first Portuguese nucleus of colonization, a spot previously occupied by the indigenous population. Teixeira apparently took its name from Corporal Antonio Teixeira de Mello, who on 14 Feb. 1755, received a *data de sesmaria* (a section of a land grant) “for land in the Serra do Borborema.” Antonio Xavier de Farias, “Teixeira,” unpublished typescript, n/d [1913], citing “Governo da Paraíba [Gov. Liz Antonio de Lemos Britto], Nov. 1753 to April 1757 [i.e., *sesmaria* records for those years], p. 3.

⁵ For a preliminary exploration of Inacio's biography, see Linda Lewin, “Slavery, Race, and Racism in Nineteenth-Century Brazilian Popular Culture: The 1874 Desafio of Romano do Teixeira and Inacio da Catingueira in Patos,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Ethnohistory, Tempe, Arizona, 11 Nov. 1994.

⁶ Cited in Francisco Linhares and Otacílio Batista [Patriota], *Antologia ilustrada dos cantadores*, 2nd ed. (Fortaleza, Ceará: Edições Universidade Federal do Ceará, 1982), p. 348.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 349.

⁹ [José] Rodrigues de Carvalho, *Cancioneiro do norte* (Fortaleza: Editores Miltão Bivar & Cia, 1903), p. 165.

¹⁰ “Romano foi escravo da família Caluête, a côr da pelle e os cabellos demonstravão-se elle de sangue indigena.” Ibid. Joffily, who died in 1902, was obliged to abandon plans for a chapter of his book that would have addressed the poets known popularly as “*repentistas*” – and, indubitably, Romano and Inacio. Irineu Joffily, *Notas sobre a Paraíba* [Facsimile edition of the 1902 original edition] (Brasília: Thesaurus Editora, 1977), p. 160n. During Joffily’s absence from Campina Grande, public health authorities burned his notes on poetic singers of the Paraíba backlands, after an outbreak of bubonic plague caused inspectors to enter his library and discover that rats had built a nest in the box containing a large quantity of annotated material pertaining to *cantadores*. Ibid., pp. 366-67 (G.I. Joffily’s note to p. 160).

¹¹ Following seventeenth-century Gov. Elias Herckmans, Irineu Joffily perpetuated the erroneous assumption that the Xucurus were “da raça Cariri,” that is, a sub-group of the so-called “Cariris,” a generic designation for the diverse indigenous populations of the Borborema Plateau. “Notas de viagem da Villa de São João do Cariry e do Monteiro,” *Rev. do Inst. Hist. e Geog. Paraibano* 2(1910):232-33 (reprinted from *Gazeta do Sertão* [Campina Grande, Paraíba], No. 9 (1889) and ff.); reproduced in Geraldo Irineu Joffily, *Um cronista do sertão*, Edições da Comissão Cultural (Campina Grande, Paraíba: Prefeitura Municipal de Campina Grande, 1965), p. 117. An outstanding exception was Joffily’s contemporary, Maximiano Lopes Machado, who, by means of an early eighteenth-century primary source, pointed out “the mistake of those who by chance suppose that the Sucurus were Cariris.” *Historia da Provincia da Parahyba*. 2nd ed. [orig. pub. 1912], 2 vols. (João Pessoa: Editora Universitária/ UFPb, 1977) 2:345.

¹² Native to the Paraíba interior, Irineu Joffily (1843-1902) was born in Pocinhos and lived and died in Campina Grande. He was intimately acquainted with Teixeira’s history, poets, and repertoire of local legends, having perfected his knowledge of the backlands during countless trips on horseback throughout the interior. His key source for Teixeira’s oral and legendary history was his friend, the *vila*’s parish priest, Canon Bernardo de Carvalho Andrade (1833-1908). G. Joffily, *Cronista sertão*, pp. 9-10, 25, 32. Joffily’s mother (Isabel Americana de Barros) and his wife (Rachel Olegaria [Torres?]) came from families in Taperoá (then Batalhão), the município neighboring Teixeira on the east.

¹³ Rodrigues de Carvalho, *Cancioneiro*, p. 165.

¹⁴ As a child, Celso Mariz (b. 1886) recalled seeing “Old Manduri,” ([Manuel] Romualdo [da Costa] Manduri), earning his living as a merchant in his Patos general store – “the old *caboclo*, full of life,” a venerated veteran of the Paraguayan War (1865-1870). Celso Mariz, *Cidades e homens*, rev. ed. (João Pessoa: Governo do Estado da Paraíba, 1985), pp. 36-37.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁶ Coriolano de Medeiros, Preface to Francisco das Chagas Baptista's, *Cantadores e poetas populares* (Parahyba: Tipografia da Popular Editora, 1929), rendered Romano's surname "Caluête," presumably from first-hand knowledge – and respect. Born in neighboring Taperoá, Coriolano converted the family name to a conventional surname by omitting the article and the comma, probably after hearing older people refer to the poet as "Romano, o Caluête." Francisco das Chagas Batista (1882-1930), a Teixeiraense, published a direct assertion about Romano's parentage, but not his civil status: "Romano, a native of the Saco da Mãe d'Água, in the município of Teixeira, where he always lived, was the natural son of one of the members of the Caluête family." *Cantadores e poetas populares*, p. 57. Luis da Câmara Cascudo, the fourth author to refer to Romano in print as a "Caluête," retrieved the stylistic idiosyncrasy of an article and a comma associated with the poet's name, but omitted reference to Romano as illegitimate. *Vaqueiros e cantadores: Folclore poetico do sertão de Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte e Ceará* (Porto Alegre: [Ed. Globo], 1939), p. 250-51.

¹⁷ I am very grateful to Sr. Raimundo Xavier, Notary of the 1^o Cartório, Teixeira, Paraíba, for granting me access to these records and generously helping to search for specific documents in July 1986.

¹⁸ Of Francisco Inacio's five sons, the second – Antonio Alves da Silveira Caluete (who would have been 38 years of age) – was deceased (with heirs) in 1842. The oldest son, Luis Alves Pequeno [da Silveira] Caluete (age 41), and the fourth son, Inacio de Freitas [Silveira] Caluete (age 34 or 35), were married – as was the older of two daughters, Ana Joaquina de Freitas (to Luis Alves Pequeno). She was listed as eldest in both of her parents' inventories, but with an age disparity – 20 in 1819 (born 1799) and 47 (born 1795) in 1842. The third and fifth sons, Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluete 2^o (age 37) and José Gomes da Silveira Caluete (age 32), were unmarried in 1842. The seventh child, Maria José Alves Pequena 2^o (age 34) died a spinster in 1853, by which time two more of her siblings were also dead: Ana Joaquina de Freitas and José Gomes da Silveira Caluete.

¹⁹ Natural offspring, the children of merely "illicit" unions in canon law (i.e., of parents between whom the Church did not prohibit marriage), enjoyed equality of succession rights (if recognized) with legitimate half-siblings in Brazilian inheritance law. On the rules of both *ab intestato* and illegitimate (i.e., testamentary) succession, with reference to Francisco Rumano and Verissimo Maximo, see Linda Lewin, "Natural and Spurious Children in Brazilian Inheritance Law From Colony to Empire: A Methodological Essay," *The Americas*, XLVIII,3(Jan.1992):351-96 (esp. p. 369).

²⁰ It can now be authoritatively stated that Inacio da Caatingueira was thirty or thirty-one in 1874. His name appears in a slave registry undertaken in 1876, in compliance

with Art. 8 of the "Law of the Free Womb" (Decree-Law No. 2040 of 28 Sept. 1871): "Classificação dos escravos para a Cidade Município de Piancó pelo fundo de emancipação," unpublished ms. (58 pp.), p. 56. Prof. Emeritus, Diana Soares Galliza, UFPb (João Pessoa), kindly offered me her copy of this rare, surviving census in (Jan. 1996).

²¹ Antonio Xavier de Farias listed them as fifth in a group of five key founding families of Teixeira, tersely noting the result of his efforts: "About their origins, we could learn nothing." "Teixeira," p. 6.

²² A gap of six years may have existed between the couple's eldest child (Ana Joaquina), born either in 1795 or in 1799 (given age disparities in her parents' inventories) and the second eldest (Luis), born in 1801. Even if Ana Joaquina and Luis were born in 1799 and 1801, respectively, there was still a three-year gap between Luis and the remaining five children, all of whom were born between 1804 and 1810, at regular intervals of twelve to eighteen months apart. The gap(s) suggests that the parents were separated for a long interval of several years, corresponding to when Francisco Inacio carved out his farm from the forest of Mãe d'Água. Therefore, he may not have brought his wife and daughter to join him in Teixeira until 1799 – or after the birth of Luis. (See n. 19 for the names and ages of all seven offspring.) The ages of the one dozen slaves owned by Maria José, enumerated in her *partilha*, indicate that most of them were still children in 1819, again suggesting the Caluets arrived in Mãe d'Água no earlier than 1799. (Two slaves were born in 1799 and 1800; the other ten after 1803.)

²³ *Partilha* of Lieut.-Col. Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête. After small debts, funeral expenses, and a sum to provide for masses for the decedent's soul were subtracted, the net value of the estate assigned to the *legítima* (two thirds) was 4:198\$159. The *terça* constituted another 922\$520. Even though the land at Sítio Mulungu was prime land, a land market was just emerging in the 1840s. Hence the total value of all the shares of Sítio Mulungu (one-half the property's size) and that of another estate, Santa Clara – 119\$131 – was worth less than the value of one prime adult male slave (400\$000 to 200\$000).

²⁴ *Partilha* of Francisco Inacio da Silveria Caluête, p. 14 (*verso*). I am grateful to Robert Slenes, with whom I consulted in interpreting this key paragraph, for confirming the interpretation offered herein (Palo Alto, California, 5 Jan. 1994). The key part of the paragraph reads as follows: "...having given attention to the payment of the bequests as well as to the restitutions that the deceased had left in his will, because all the [legitimate] heirs now find this debt [owed] to Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo ... to be repaid [to her] on behalf of the Deceased ... they should inherit, moreover, in nine equal parts, conforming to the number of heirs of the Deceased ..." Grammatical imprecision complicated translation, meaning that "atenção a dívida de Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo really referred to "a dívida [do Defuncto] á Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo ..."

- ²⁵ Luis the Inventariante declared at the opening of the *partilha*: “[My] father having died on June 9, 1839, and with the will (*testamento*) that I present... leaving seven legitimate children and two natural children, whose names and ages I have declared in the List of Heirs...” Usually, wills were filed together with the inventory and *partilha*. The fact that the will could not be discovered in Teixeira’s *cartório*, but that inventory and *partilha* had been conserved intact, therefore raises the suspicion that someone deliberately removed it.
- ²⁶ “Francisco Romano e Ignacio da Catingueira,” in Rodrigues de Carvalho, *Cancioneiro* [1903], p. 179. These stanzas were collected in Patos from “Sr. Romeu Mariz” (*ibid.*, p. 165). Note colloquial usage of the singular “*muito escravo*” as a collective noun.
- ²⁷ Cited in Luiz Cristovão dos Santos, *Brasil de chapéu de couro (folclore)* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1958), p. 147.
- ²⁸ From their father’s *terça*, Romano and Verissimo each inherited one-half ownership of two slaves (valued respectively): Tertuliano (400\$000) and Rufino (180\$000). Each brother also succeeded to one-ninth of Feliciano (400\$000), jointly divided among all nine heirs. *Partilha* of Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête, pp. 26 (both sides). In the absence of any age data, Tertuliano and Feliciano appear to have been in their prime (15 to 35 years old). Rufino probably was a child or young adolescent – since neither Francisco Inacio or his wife had owned slaves who were aged or infirm. Hence, in 1874, Rufino would have been the only slave still to be in the prime of life, confirming Inacio’s accusation.
- ²⁹ In 1819 the older children had signed their mother’s *inventário*, including Ana Joaquina (whose husband would in 1842 legally have to sign for her), testifying to the Caluetes’ familial possession of that rarest of resources in the backlands: literacy. *Inventário* and *partilha* No. 5: Maria José Alves Pequena (8 Nov. 1819), 1^o Cartório Civil, Teixeira, Paraíba.
- ³⁰ On Romano’s “rummaging through books,” in order to stump his rivals, see Lewin, “Elite Myth,” pp. 172-73 and 177-78.
- ³¹ “Francisco Romano e Ignacio da Catingueira,” in Rodrigues de Carvalho, *Cancioneiro*, p. 180.
- ³² “Martello de Romano com Ignacio,” in Chagas Baptista, *Cantadores*, p. 58. In “*seu*” [Sr.], Romano puns both the form of address required of a slave to a white man (*Senhor*) second-person formal pronoun (*o senhor*).
- ³³ “Peleja de Romano com Carneiro,” in Chagas Baptista, *Cantadores*, p. 72.
- ³⁴ “Martello de Romano com Ignacio,” in *ibid.*, p. 58.
- ³⁵ Interviews with Capt. Adelgício Alves da França, Monteiro, Paraíba, June 13-15, 1987. I am extremely grateful for his collaboration and willingness to have the

oral information he supplied about both his great-grandfather Romano and his grandparents, Josué Romano [da Silveira] and A Pequena, published herein.

- ³⁶ “Este povo de Tapuias é robusto e de grande estatura, os seus ossos são grossos e fortes, a cabeça grande e espessa; a sua cor natural é atrigueirada (*bruynachtich*), o cabelo é preto, e de ordinario o trazem pendente sobre o pescoço . . . Contudo alguns deixam cortar todo o cabelo ao modo da nossa nação. Tem cabelo mui grosso e áspero. Elias Herckman[s], *Descrição geral da Capitania da Paraíba (1639)* (João Pessoa: A UNIÃO Editora, 1982), p. 67. “*Bruynachtich*” is perhaps best translated as “brownish.” (On Joffily’s use of Herckmans, see “Da Vila de São João do Cariri à do Monteiro (Notas de viagem),” in *Notas sobre sertão* (1976), Pt. II, p. 397.)
- ³⁷ “As mulheres são, indistintamente, pequenas e mais baixas de estatura do que os homens. São também de cor atrigueirada, mui bonitas de cara, e trazem compridos os seus cabelos negros.” *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- ³⁸ The *partilha* also provided that Romano and Veríssimo’s legal guardian would be their half-brother Luis the Inventariante, who jointly managed their inheritance portions amounting to 43 per cent of Sítio Mulungu. Although Luis did not award himself a share of the home property (taking land in two other properties), he probably had already received a share of Sítio Mulungu from the distribution of his mother’s *partilha* in 1819. The share that belonged, *per stirpes*, to the deceased Antonio Alves da Silveira was assigned from Sítio Mulungu, although his offspring did not appear for the *partilha*. Hence, Luis gained control of over one-half of his father’s 50 per cent of the family home property, independent of legal ownership. In 1854, he succeeded to one-third of his deceased sister’s (Maria José Alves Pequena 20) 1819 and 1842 portions. As administrator of Sítio Mulungu (managing of Romano’s and Veríssimo’s shares), he became de facto successor to his parents, in keeping with the custom that the eldest son replaced the father as family patriarch.
- ³⁹ I have referred to Adelgício’s insistence that Luis was Romano’s biological father because, as my collaborative informant, he deserves to be heard on this point. (He had never been told that anyone other than Luis had been Romano’s biological father.) No evidence existed in his family’s oral memory for the view that Luis had “rigged” the *partilha*, substituting his father as the progenitor of Romano in order to conceal his paternity. Instead, family oral history, probably because Adelgício’s mother had been orphaned at around six (and her only sibling at twelve), conflated Luis’ social role as patriarch with a biological paternity that had never existed – a misconception perhaps dating to Romano’s lifetime.
- ⁴⁰ Luís da Câmara Cascudo, *História da literatura brasileira*, v. VI: *Literatura oral* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editora, 1952), p. 372.
- ⁴¹ The only published reference to Veríssimo’s physical appearance, by Gustavo Barroso, employs the racist jargon much in vogue in the early twentieth century: “The most interesting specimen in the gang of the Viriatos was the *curiboca*

Veríssimo, a strong man, with a thin beard, a pronounced prognathism, almost macrocephalic. He was the hero of the attacks of the Viriatos against the famous Padre Custódio, who always defended himself like a lion." *Heróis e bandidos (os cangaceiros do norte)* (Rio de Janeiro: Liv. Francisco Alves, 1917), p. 198.

⁴² "Joaquim (Romano) de Cruz, aged fifty," encountered in Teixeira's civil marriage registry (entry no. 100), who married Maria Rosário da Conceição, on 2 Feb. 1907, probably was a son of Veríssimo (named after Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo). The notary placed "Romano" in parenthesis because the groom declined to state his father's name, giving "[Felisbella?] Maria da Conceição" as his mother.

⁴³ Orthography for "Xucuru" varies greatly. See H. Hohenthal, "Notes on the Shucurú Indians of Serra de Ararobá, Pernambuco, Brazil," *Re. do Museu Paulista*, VIII (1954):95 and n7.

⁴⁴ Certified copy (7 June 1987) of the death registry entry for 2 March 1891, for Francisco Rumano, 2^o Cartório Civil (Namerico Wanderley), Patos, Paraíba; *Ofício de Notas, Livro de Óbitos, C-D1*, p. 28.

He concurred, however, that the name of Romano's wife (Ana Aquilina da Silveira) had been mistakenly substituted in the death registry for that of his mother, and vice-versa, "Joaquina Maria do Espírito Santo" also having been converted to "Joaquina Maria da Conceição," presumably a confusion with Veríssimo's *mancebia* – Felisbela Maria da Conceição. The Patos death registry corroborated the poet's 1842 age of seven, recording his age at death as fifty-six.

⁴⁵ Capt. Adelgício supplied information on Romano's final resting place. He is not buried in "Romano's Tomb" in Teixeira (which contains the bodies of Josué Romano and A Pequena), as the cemetery caretaker maintains. Romano was buried in Patos' "Old Cemetery" [Cemitério do Prado]. Constructed in 1858 to meet unprecedented mortality due to the arrival of cholera in the early 1850s, it no longer exists. According to Capt. Adelgício, the land was requisitioned by the government for "um espaço cultural" in the 1970s or early 1980s, and "everything was thrown out," that is, bulldozed away – including Romano's remains.

⁴⁶ Rodrigues de Carvalho, *Cancioneiro*, p. 165.

⁴⁷ O Pinto died on 18 Oct. 1990, at the "official" age of 96. Widely assumed to be older, admirers put Pinto's true age closer to one hundred, making him the last great, regionally acclaimed *repentista* to have been born in the nineteenth century. His friend and erstwhile *repentista* rival, Lourival Batista (great-grandson of Ugolino do Teixeira), died on 12 May 1992. Pedro Nunes Filho, letter (Recife) of 13 March 1996.

⁴⁸ Joffily, cited in Rodrigues de Carvalho, *Cancioneiro*, p. 165.

⁴⁹ José Obrigo [José Nunes da Costa], "Árvore genealógica," p. 2. This unpublished genealogy "recycles" the incident as its author found it recounted by P. Baptista in

Cônego Bernardo (pp. 12-13). I am grateful to "Zé" Obrigo for permitting me to copy and to quote from his unpublished family genealogy (conversation with the author, São José de Egito, Pernambuco, Jan. 1986).

⁵⁰ Joffily correctly noted that the Xucuru were "a large, indigenous nation inhabiting the banks of the Sucuru River, a tributary of the Paraíba River." Their home territory encompassed the district of Teixeira, especially "the shady forests on the outskirts of [the town] and Poços [site of the public reservoir], where numerous artifacts have been found [in the nineteenth century]." Irineo Joffily, "Notas de viagem da Villa de São João do Cariry e do Monteiro," *Rev. do Inst. Hist. e Geog. Paraibano* 2 (1910):232-33 (reprinted from *Gazeta do Sertão* [Campina Grande, Paraíba], No. 9 (1889) and ff.); in Geraldo Irineo Joffily, *Um cronista do sertão*, Edições da Comissão Cultural (Campina Grande: Prefeitura Municipal 1965), p. 117.

⁵¹ Fr. Hugo Fragoso, O.F.M., "O vigário Bernardo, reflexo da face do povo teixeirense: O bom samaritano dos flagelados da seca," in Severino Vicente da Silva, ed., *A Igreja e a questão agrária no nordeste: Subsídios históricos* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1986), p. 90; Celso Mariz, *Apanhados históricos da Paraíba* (Parahyba: Imprensa Oficial, 1922), p. 57.

⁵² Unlike his contention that the Xucurus belonged to the "Cariri nation," Joffily's description of their territorial range can stand, even as a corrective to anthropologist H. Hohenthal, who was not aware that Teixeira once had been part of the Xucurus' historical territory. His informants in Pernambuco failed to list sites in Teixeira, explaining why Curt Niemuendajú had also ignored Teixeira as a historical Xucuru homeland. "Notes Shucurú," p. 106. (See *Mapa etno-histórico de Curt Niemuendaju (adaptado do mapa do Curt Neimuendajú [de 1944])*. Hohenthal explicitly rejected Xucuru occupation of southern Paraíba, except Monteiro, contradicting Paraíba historian Estevão Pinto, who had listed tributaries draining either the Borborema Plateau, along the Rio do Meio, Rio da Serra Branca, Rio de São Jorge, and the Rio Taperoá, or the headwaters of the Rio Piranhas as sites (in *Os indígenas do nordeste*, 2 vols. [Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo: Biblioteca Pedagógica Brasileira & Cia. Editora Nacional, 1935 & 1938] 1:135-39.)

⁵³ Fragoso, "Vigário Bernardo," p. 90.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91, citing "Documentos históricos da Biblioteca Nacional, 23:403-405."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ R.A. Anderson, "Fighting the Mill Creeks, 1857-1865," in Robert F. Heizer and Theodora Kroeber, eds., *Ishi, the Last Yahi: A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 32-60; and Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi in Two Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), Ch. 5.

- ⁵⁸ The most likely explanation for Romano's name – which was pronounced and spelled "Rumano" – is that it represents a corruption of the name of a pioneer and principal founder of the settlement that later became the *vila* of Teixeira: Manuel Lopes Romeu. On "M. Lopes Romeira," see Coriolano de Medeiros, *Dicionário Coriográfico do Estado da Paraíba* (Rio de Janeiro: Dept. de Imprensa Nacional, 1950), p. 259; on "M. Lopes Romeiro," see P. Baptista, *Cônego Bernardo* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, n/d [1933]), p. 13; on "M. [Raposo] Lopes Romero," see J. Obrigo, "Árvore genealógica," p. 1.
- ⁵⁹ See T.P. da Nóbrega, *Família Nóbrega*, for examples (esp. pp. 13 and 29). Of course, many anonymous wives and mothers were white.
- ⁶⁰ Joffily connected the four principal *entradas* colonizing the interior of Paraíba in the seventeenth century to "the enslavement of the Indians" [o cativeiro dos índios] and the latter to the cattle ranches established as a result. Geraldo Joffily, quoting *Notas a Paraíba*, in *Um cronista do sertão*, p. 105. For a dissent, see Wilson Seixas, "Pesquisas para a história do sertão da Paraíba," *Rev. do Inst. Hist. e Geog. Paraiban*, 21(1975):57.
- ⁶¹ Information provided by Diana Soares Galliza, based on her doctoral research in Pombal's *cartório*; conversation with the author (João Pessoa, Paraíba), 27 Dec. 1995.
- ⁶² Sesmaria No. 1128, (22 July 1818) [for Poço do Cedro, south of the headwaters of the Paraíba River, probably in Taperoá or Monteiro, a site where Joaquim José Viana had established his cattle ranch around 1808], cited in João de Lyra Tavares, *Historia territorial da Parahyba*, 2 vols. (Parahyba: Imp. Oficial, 1909) 1:525. NOTE: "Tapuia" designated "untamed" Indians – generically, non-Tupi speakers.
- ⁶³ The following two paragraphs draw on two letters (15 Nov. and 1 Dec. 1995, written from Tokyo) to the author by Pedro Nunes Filho, as well as her personal interviews with him on 5, 6, and 7 Jan. 1996 (Recife), and 14 Jan. 1996 (Cabedelo, Paraíba), for which permission to quote was given (letter of 1 Dec. 1995 and personally on 7 Jan. 1996). He reviewed the draft of these paragraphs on his account of Tereza Maria de Jesus on Jan. 14, confirming permission for it to be published. I am grateful for his collaboration, which may inspire others to enter similar stories in a formal historical record.
- ⁶⁴ The fact that Pedro Nunes' widowed great-great grandmother remarried in 1867 (José Pereira de Sousa, as documented in Teixeira's parish marriage registry), makes it more likely that her tentative birthdate was 1818 or 1819, meaning that she would have been twelve in 1830. (The birthdate of her grandson, son of Bernardo Nunes da Rocha – Antonio Nunes de Farias – could be determined: 29 April 1869.) Author's interview with P. Nunes F., 7 Jan. 1996 (Recife).
- ⁶⁵ Interview with Pedro Nunes Filho, 14 Jan. 1996 (Cabedelo). The family narrative also relates that the child was so frightened that she urinated on her captor from the tree perch. PNF, letter of 1 Dec. 1995, p. 2 (cited with permission).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Teixeira's parish registers date only to 1842, so Pedro Nunes has encountered no record of the marriage of his great-great grandparents. Registers for the parish of Patos (to which Teixeira belonged until 1857) or in the diocesan archive in Serra Branca (Paraíba) may contain a confirming entry.

⁶⁸ Pedro Nunes' family notes, including documentation related to Antonio Nunes da Rocha's purchase of Sítio Boa Vista (in Teixeira), indicate that the latter was still alive on 1 Dec. 1866, when he paid (4:500\$) for the property. At registration of sale (25 Feb. 1871), his widow and co-owner (*sesmeira*) had remarried.

⁶⁹ Muriel Nazzari, "Vanishing Indians: Changing Racial Categories in Colonial São Paulo (1765-1825)," pp. 9ff., paper presented at the XX International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Washington, D.C., September 29, 1995, under revision for publication.

⁷⁰ Report of provincial governor [not identified by name] to the Imperial Government, s/d [1845], excerpted in Irineu Ferreira Pinto *Datas e notas para a história da Paraíba (Reprodução da edição de 1916, com estudo introdutório do prof. José Pedro Nicodemus)*, 2 vols. (João Pessoa: Ed. Universitária/ UFPb, 1977) 2:172.

⁷¹ Ibid., 2: 273. He made one exception, the settlement of Preguiça (in Mamanguape), "where Indians still rarely preserve, already disfigured, some of the habits of the savage life." Ibid.

⁷² T.P. da Nóbrega (drawing also on João de Lyra Tavares *História territorial da Parahyba*, describing Dom Pedro Valcaçar as "Governador dos Índios Cariris)," *Família Nóbrega*, p. 9-10.

⁷³ The classic Pocahontas template for Paraíba occurred in Pilar and provided the foundation legend for the Lins Family of Itaipu [Taipu]. Oral family history recounted to this author in Taipu in 1978 and 1987 explained that the first Lins had been an injured, shipwrecked soldier – "Linz," a "German" or a "Swiss," – who was saved and cared for by the daughter of the local Indian chief. But Pernambuco's genealogist, Borges da Fonseca, documented the late sixteenth-century marriage of Cibaldo [Sibaldo] Lins to Brites de Albuquerque, the legitimized, *mameluca* daughter of Jeronimo de Albuquerque and "Princess Arcoverde" [D.Maria do Espírito Santo Arcoverde]. He also tentatively identified Cibaldo and his brothers, Conrado Lins and Cristovão de Mello, as the sons of a Florentine nobleman, although Lins descendants described them as French to Pernambuco's genealogist. *Nobiliarquia pernambucana* [1748], 2 vols., in *Annaes da Bibliotheca Nacional*, v. XLVII (1925) and XLVIII (1926) (Rio de Janeiro: Bibliotheca Nacional, 1935) 1:382, 211, 362, respectively.

⁷⁴ T.P. da Nóbrega, *Família Nóbrega*, p. 11.

- ⁷⁵ Ibid. Genealogist T.P. da Nóbrega proved unrestrained on the point of Portuguese pretentiousness to purity of blood. Analyzing the inventory of Maria José de Medeiros (1748-1842), better known as "Babanca," he objected that she was unable to sign her name, notwithstanding that her father (Sebastião de Medeiros) "carried the *eczema of fidalguia*." Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁷⁶ Genealogical data for Teixeira do not become fully comprehensive until the mid-nineteenth century. The founding generation (1760s to 1790s) is more easily assimilated to a near-legendary origin rather than precisely enumerated within a structured genealogical relation affixing dates. Nevertheless, among the early Carvalhos of Riacho Verde, Felizarda Carvalho married Geraldo [Ferreira das Neves] Filho ("Geraldinho"), the son of one of the Seven Sisters (Catarina Freire Valcáçer), daughter of the *mameluca* Antonia de Moraes Valcáçer and Geraldo Ferreira das Neves. Ibid., p. 30n. On the "invisibility" of Brazil's indigenes in nineteenth-century accounts, see B.J. Barickman, "'Tame Indians,' 'Wild Heathens,' and Settlers in Southern Bahia in the late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *The Americas*, 51 (Jan. 1995):325-26, 366-67.
- ⁷⁷ Joffily's career as local judge whose bench was in Campina Grande (and a brief novitiate as a public prosecutor in São João do Cariri in 1867), would have acquainted him with de facto Indian slavery in the backlands. Geraldo Irineu Joffily, "Apresentação," *Notas sobre a Parahyba*, p. 19.
- ⁷⁸ Decree-law of 27 Oct. 1831, *Colleição das leis do Imperio do Brazil*, 1ª Pte., p. 165.
- ⁷⁹ None of the slaves belonging to Francisco Inacio da Silveira Caluête's wife (listed in her 1819 inventory) bore the name "Joaquina Maria do Espirito Santo." Nor were de facto Indian slaves listed (as heritable property), after the manner Nazzari described for São Paulo, i.e., by the legal subterfuge of "*forros*" (free persons)." Muriel Nazzari "Transition Toward Slavery: Changing Legal Practice Regarding Indians in Seventeenth-Century São Paulo," *The Americas*, XLIX,2 (Oct.1992): 131-55.
- ⁸⁰ The list of one dozen slaves distributed by the 1819 *partilha* of Maria José Alves Pequena (ibid.) confirmed that none was described as either "African" or "*pardo*" (dark brown, mulatto). Eleven were racially mixed and one (Antonia) was an eight-year-old girl lacking a racial description, who may have been Xucuru; eight were "*mulato*"; three were "*cabra*" (i.e., partly indigenous). That eight of the twelve slaves were children under fifteen, twenty years after Maria José and Francisco Inacio had established themselves in Mãe d'Água, may reflect the practice of kidnapping and enslaving Xucuru children.
- ⁸¹ Nineteenth-century Indian hunters in Bahia carried out exterminating attacks on villages of "wild" Indians ("*matar uma aldeia*"), in which most adults would be disarmed and slaughtered, their ears taken as trophies and their skulls exported to Europe for anthropological purposes. Young boys were sold as slaves, reserving, in the words of Teófilo Ottoni, "a few pretty Indian girls as booty." Barickman, "Tame Indians," p. 361.

- ⁸² See, for example, a fragment of Inacio's *desafio* with the *moreno* slave José Patrício, in which he used exactly the same words to insult his opponent. Cited in Leonardo Mota, *Violeiros do norte: Poesia e linguagem do sertão cearense*, 4th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Liv. Ed. Cátedra, 1976), p. 78. It cannot be determined if Inacio himself invented this taunt or whether he simply rendered unforgettable what had already circulated orally prior to the 1874 contest.
- ⁸³ Inacio da Catingueira was described as "not, properly speaking, a *negro*, but, rather a *mestiço* of dark color and fine skin, with curly hair, a small goatee, black like his hair, and a finely clipped moustache . . . with dark, intelligent eyes . . ." Pe. Otaviano [Moura de Lima], *Inacio da Catingueira* (Rio de Janeiro: n/p, 1949), p. 15. In Piancó's 1876 slave census, he was "*pardo*." Classificação Piancó, "p. 56.
- ⁸⁴ Augusto de Saint-Hilaire, *Viagens pelo distrito dos diamantes e litoral do Brasil*, Leonam de Azeredo Pena, trans., *Brasiliana*, v. 210 (São Paulo: Cia. Editora Nacional, 1941), p. 309. Saint-Hilaire took special care to point out that the skin of American Indians "is not copper-colored, [but] closer to a bistre tone (*do tom bistre*)," i.e., ranging from yellowish to brown, in line with Herckmans' "*bruynachtich*." Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ [Manuel] Aires de Casal, *Corografia brasílica (facsimile da edição de 1817)*, 2 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Saúde/Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1945-1947), 2:191.
- ⁸⁶ Hohenthal, citing Aires de Casal and ethno-linguistic evidence, distinguished more recent race mixture among the Xucurus from that "taking place in the early nineteenth century." "Notes Shucurú," pp. 141, 193.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 103.
- ⁸⁸ The Paratio of the Serra de Ararobá, he affirmed, "looked no more Negroid than the others [i.e., the Fulniô and Xucuru], underscoring the general admixture of African and native American ancestry characteristic of the Pernambuco-Paraíba backlands. Ibid., p. 108.
- ⁸⁹ See Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), Ch. 5 (esp. pp. 105-106).
- ⁹⁰ "Notes Shucurú," p. 102 (citing Niemuendajú). Hohenthal concluded that as late as the 1860s and 1870s Xucuru was still being spoken in the Serra de Ararobá and Cimbres (p. 105).
- ⁹¹ On manumission within the post-1850 slave population of African descent in the backlands, see Diana Soares Galliza, *O declínio da escravidão na Paraíba, 1850-1888* (João Pessoa: Ed. Universitária/UFPB, 1979), esp. Ch. II. In Bahia "*cafuso*" and "*curiboca*" were not applied to the offspring of African-Indian parents until the eighteenth century. Previously, "*mameluco*" was applied to both the latter as well as

to offspring of European-Indian parents. Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 62.

- ⁹² During the latter nineteenth century, one meaning of “*cabra*” applied to individuals lacking Indian ancestry: “[Cabra:] mestiço de mulato e negra, e vice-versa.” Beaurepaire Rohan, *Dicionário do vocabulário brasileiros*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Livraria Progresso Editôra, 1956), p. 55. But Rohan ascribed the etymological origin of “*cabra*” to “*caboré*,” a term indicating parents who were Negro and Indian. Moreover, “*caboré*” was used during the nineteenth century in Brazil’s northern provinces as a synonym for “*cafuz*,” “*cafuso*,” and “*carafuzo*” (in Bahia, “*cabo-verde*”). Rohan specifically referred to usage in Pernambuco (Paraíba) and Rio Grande do Norte where, significantly, “*caboré*” meant “wheat-colored” skin (*pessoa trigueira*). Finally, “*caboré*” was also a synonym for “*caboclo*.” Ibid., pp. 54-55. In Bahia, “*cabra*” similarly denoted African-indigenous ancestry. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, p. 250.
- ⁹³ For example, the four slaves left by the father of Teixeira’s politician-priest, Canon Bernardo, included a male “*cabra*” born in 1800 and three individuals curiously described as only “*criados*,” instead of in racial terms. The latter, two elderly men and one woman (born between 1806 and 1831), are nevertheless enumerated under the heading “slaves,” a deviation meriting comparison with other inventories. *Inventário and partilha* of Bernardo de Carvalho Andrade, 28 April 1871; 10 Cartório, Teixeira, Paraíba.
- ⁹⁴ See Linda Lewin, “*Surprise Heirs*”: *The Changing Inheritance Rights of Illegitimate Offspring in Imperial Brazil (1770-1889)*, Ch. 4 (“Illegitimacy and the National Elite”), in progress.
- ⁹⁵ See Linda Lewin, “Repensando o patriarcado em declínio: De ‘de pai incógnito’ a ‘filho ilegítimo’ no direito sucessório brasileiro do século XIX,” *Ler História* [Lisbon], 9 (1995):121-33.
- ⁹⁶ Registro de Casamentos, B-1 (1890-1917), entry no. 71 (7 Jan. 1905); 10 Cartório (Civil), Teixeira: Marriage of Josué Romano Alves Lustosa and Francisca Pequena da Silveira. The groom gave his age as thirty. (NOTE: Inclusion of “Lustosa” may have been a poetic flourish.)
- ⁹⁷ The civil marriage registry for one of her daughters, Maria Joaquina Silveira Bello, revealed Antonia Aquilina da Silveira [Belo]’s fully extended family name. The bride gave her father’s name as simply “Francisco Rumano da Silveira,” omitting reference to a “Caluete” affiliation. Ibid., entry no 162 (30 Sept. 1911). See n104 (above).
- ⁹⁸ Inventory and *partilha* of Francisco Salça Gadilha [Gadelha], Caluete; No. 51 (5 Oct. 1863); 10 Cartório, Teixeira. His two children and heirs were “Benecio” Gomes Salça Caluete (age 16) and Francisca Belmira Alves Pequena (age 13). The name of the deceased is the only other encountered instance of the insertion of a

comma to set off a Caluete family affiliation from an individual's name. Romano may have borrowed the unconventional punctuation from him, for the out-of-place comma may have denoted analogous status for Benício's father as another fully integrated illegitimate member of Luis' extended family.

⁹⁹ *Família Nóbrega*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁰ A cryptic comment to this effect was offered by Antonio Xavier de Farias: “. . . [a família] Caluête, que teve sua interferência, antigamente, nos negócios políticos da terra, nos tempos de cel. Ildefonso [Cavalcanti de Albuquerque Ayres] e ainda depois [i.e., in 1862 and afterward] . . .” “Teixeira,” p. 6.

¹⁰¹ Adelgício indicated that some of the grandchildren of Francisco Inácio da Silveira Caluête migrated to São João do Cariri. But his 1842 *partilha* suggests that more may have gone to Cabaceiras, because several of Luis' siblings had inherited portions of Faz. Santa Clara in that *município*. The 1863 *partilha* of Francisco Salça Gadilha, Caluete, indicates that his widow Laurinda (Chico Alves' sister?) owned more land in Cabaceiras than in Mãe d'Água.

¹⁰² On May 24, 1876, Benício was gravely wounded while accompanying (the assassinated) Capt. José Dantas Vasconcelos, brother of Dr. Manuel Dantas Correia de Góis, in a foiled attempt near Patos to arrest the Teixeira outlaw Liberato de Carvalho Nóbrega. T. da Nóbrega, *Família Nóbrega*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰³ The legitimate children of Antonia Aquilina da Silveira [Belo] and Francisco Romano, o Caluete, were Francisco, Joaquim, Jovelino, Antonio, Josué, Luis, Ludgeria, Ermelinda, Ana, Maria, and José. Certified copy of Romano's death certificate, 2 Mar. 1891 (above).

¹⁰⁴ Registro de Casamentos, B-1 (1890-1917), entry no. 71 (7 Jan. 1905); 1^o Cartório Civil, Teixeira. The marriage automatically legitimized the couple's older child, João Pequeno Romano, born 4 April 1903.

¹⁰⁵ The joint *inventário* and *partilha* of Josué Romano (d. 1909) and A Pequena (d. 1915), filed on 28 July 1938, listed the couple as “Josué Romano da Silveira,” and “Francisca Alves Pequena,” nomenclatures attributed posthumously by the couple's children, their *inventariantes*. At marriage, they had used different names (see n. 100). Josué's use of “da Silveira” was maternally and paternally derived. He appears to have colloquially dropped “Silveira” and never to have used “Caluete” – names used by the children of Inácio de Freitas Caluete and Maria das Dores Silveira.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* The (post-1938) compiler of the *cartório's* notarial catalog listed A Pequena by a different nomenclature, coupling it to the bride's universally circulating nickname: “Francisca Gomes Romano Pequena – A Pequena.” *Ibid.* This variant suggests that A Pequena may have adopted “Romano” as a widow (after 1913). “Gomes” may derive from José Gomes da Silveira Caluete (b. 1811), Luis' brother. A Pequena's

daughter, Neuza Alves Pequena (mother of Capt. Adelgício), perpetuated the old matronymic (i.e., feminized “Pequeno”) used by Caluete women as a surname. Neuza’s brother, the only son of Josué Romano and A Pequena – João Pequeno Romano – established “Romano,” as his surname, although his male descendants have subsequently discarded it. (See Appendix.)

¹⁰⁷ Orígenes Lessa says of Romano and Inácio that “in the end, the two are *mulatos*, except that one is considered white and the other black.” In reading Romano’s poetic lines simply as those of a “racist,” Orígenes declined to connect the racism in Romano’s verses to his own non-white antecedents. *Inácio da Catingueira e Luis Gama: Dois poetas negros contra o racismo dos mestiços* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, 1982), p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ In southern and central Brazil, the *desafio* remained faithful to its Portuguese roots. But in the Northeast, “inexplicably, the song is independent of the musical accompaniment ... The guitars and rebecs play exclusively during pauses in the *sextilhas* [six-line stanzas], when no one is singing ... [and] the human voice is isolated throughout the combat... This peculiarity is absolutely typical of the interior of Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, and Ceará.” Câmara Cascudo, *Literatura Oral*, pp. 371-72.

¹⁰⁹ Rodrigues de Carvalho’s 1903 list of prominent popular poets revealed several to be of indigenous extraction. In Paraíba, he singled out José Antonio da Cãohan: “Tall, thin, fine features, red [*vermelho*]; he plays the guitar with great agility and possesses a good and well-tuned voice... counting many disciples” The Cearaense Bem-te-vi (Antonio Rodrigues), a *mameluco*, he noted, “reads poorly and does not use alcohol, a remarkable circumstance.” Considered “invincible” for having memorized the names of all the plants, rivers, and fishes, seemingly drawing on a personal reservoir of indigenous *arcana*, Bem-te-vi used rhyme to contrast the name of the reigning champion, the black, Alagoan poet, Madapolão, with his skin color – a technique he used to defeat him. *Cancioneiro*, pp. 176 and 201-202.