

The Transcontinental Genealogy of the Afro-Brazilian Mosque

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Fig. 1 Architect unknown, Qde-Omu Central Mosque, 1948, Qde-Omu, Nigeria. Photo by Omoeko Media. CC BY-SA 4.0

1 I will never forget the day when I was speeding on a motorbike through the streets of the Yoruba city of Qde-Omu, Nigeria and almost fell off because the central mosque (Figs. 1 & 2) momentarily made me forget where I was. Its magnificence and stature against the backdrop of the surrounding one-story buildings briefly drew me out of myself. But the building also amazed me because it looked like a Brazilian colonial church until I noticed the crescents and stars and the clear large letters that read “Ode Omu Central Mosque.” I did not know it at the time, but this mosque is just one example of a late-nineteenth to early-twentieth-century tradition of Afro-Brazilian architecture, established by formerly-enslaved architects and artisans repatriated from Brazil, that has roots in

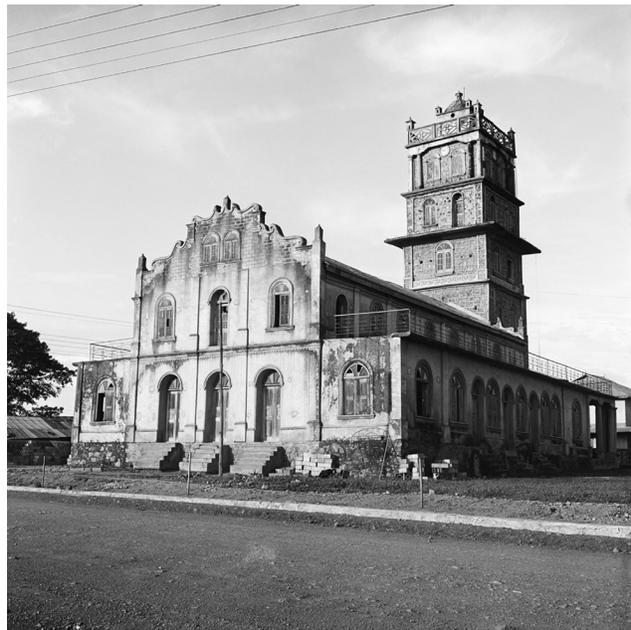


Fig. 2 Qde-Omu Central Mosque. Note the absence of domes and balustrades which were a later addition. Photo by Pierre Verger, ca. 1950s, © Fundação Pierre Verger.

an architectural tradition that emerged in the context of Muslim-Christian encounters in Iberia/the Maghrib. This Afro-Brazilian architectural style found its greatest expression in mosques built all along the western coast of Africa from Lagos, Nigeria to Dakar, Senegal from the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries.

- 2 Despite—or perhaps because of—their similarity to colonial Brazilian churches, these crown jewels of modern West African architecture have not received the attention they deserve in scholarly literature on Islamic art in West Africa even if their beauty and curious appearance make them stand out immediately.¹ The modest literature on formerly enslaved Africans who returned from Brazil to settle in the Bight of Benin affords little attention to the Muslims among them, resulting in a corresponding disregard for these Muslim repatriates’ architectural sensibilities and traditions.² Furthermore, scholars generally divide African architecture into two categories: “traditional” architecture—that which existed before contact with Europeans—and “modern” architecture—that which was introduced by colonial European powers. Afro-Brazilian mosques fit neither category neatly, allowing them to fall through the cracks.³



Fig. 3 João Batista da Costa or Martin and Porphyrio, Shitta Bey Mosque, 1891-94, Lagos, Nigeria. Photograph © Andalu images.

- 3 Although Afro-Brazilian Muslims as a whole have been overlooked in the study of Islam in Africa, one of the most iconic examples of their material culture, the Shitta Bey Mosque in Lagos does often attract attention (Fig. 3). The inauguration of the Shitta Bey Mosque in Lagos in 1894 was as much of a landmark as the mosque itself, receiving official recognition from the British colonial government, and involving the participation of the most prominent Lagosian merchants and religious leaders of all backgrounds. The event included a speech by an English representative of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909), and Mohammed Shitta (ca. 1824-1895), the

patron of the mosque, was awarded the title of “Bey of the Ottoman Empire.” In short, the inauguration “properly dramatized the whole process of the consolidation of Islam in Yorubaland.”⁴



Fig. 4 Architect unknown, Rear façade of the Grande Mosquée of Porto Novo, Bénin, 1912-35, Porto Novo, Bénin. Photo by Babylas, 2009. CC BY-SA 3.0.

- 4 Shitta’s wealth, derived from lucrative international trade and his exposure to Western education and colonial structures, represented new avenues for individual social mobility as well as transnational and religious identification that announced a novel and distinctly modern African Muslim identity. Afro-Brazilian mosques projected this identity in early colonial West Africa through the sheer weight of their aesthetic effect on observers, much as was the case for their antecedents in Brazil and Iberia. In this article, I will examine the genealogy of these Afro-Brazilian mosques, answering some of the most immediate and puzzling questions that they force all who see them to ask. The answers to these questions demonstrate the fluidity of categories such as European, African, Islamic, and Christian, and how West African Muslims effectively drew on an architectural vocabulary with connections to three continents to forge an emergent cosmopolitan identity.
- 5 The first question these mosques raise is, naturally, why do many of them—such as the central mosques of Porto Novo, Bénin (Fig. 4) and Abẹkuta, Nigeria (Fig. 5)—resemble eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial Brazilian churches? As art historian John Picton has argued, there is a profound irony that “a style with its origins in Portuguese Catholicism should have found its most complete expression in the service of Islam.”⁵ The second question is, how did Afro-Brazilian architecture come to cover such a wide and diverse geographical area of Africa? West African communities with vastly different histories with Islam and Portuguese colonialism (or lack thereof), speaking

many different languages, and possessing diverse indigenous architectural traditions, colonial settings, histories, and even ecologies turned to this unique architectural style in the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. I propose that these modern African Muslim communities—often unknowingly and more conceptually than materially—drew on an architectural tradition extending through colonial Brazil to the Iberian Peninsula, where a powerfully affective aesthetic tradition had emerged in relation to Muslim-Christian encounters and rivalries in the region. This architectural tradition, notably employed in religious buildings, acted powerfully on the senses to make a statement about the material success and social status of its patrons.⁶ As Mattijs van de Port astutely observed, “the encounter of the senses with the sensational form produces an experience that comes to inform an embodied understanding of the divine.”⁷ Afro-Brazilian religious architecture was highly successful in its impact on both Muslims and non-Muslims at the beginning of the colonial and modern era in West Africa.



Fig. 5 Architect unknown, Ikija Central Mosque, ca. 1940, Abeokuta, Nigeria. Photo by Agbebiyi Adekunle, 2019. CC BY-SA 4.0.

- 6 As architectural statements, Afro-Brazilian mosques asserted participation in what I call the Muslim Black Atlantic, namely a modernity that was able to project the affluence and prosperity of a confident African Muslim community rooted in their transatlantic experience and transnationalism and primarily found in the new urban metropolises of West Africa. This architectural movement has important parallels to and drew on central features and dynamics of how emergent merchants and rulers in post-conquest Christian Iberia and in colonial Brazil invoked a constantly evolving architectural vocabulary of multiple ethno-religious origins to evangelize and to project their power and affluence in contested and religiously and ethnically diverse settings. In fact, the creative use of this architectural vocabulary at every stage was aesthetically effective precisely because of its ability to evoke a historical memory and experience of power and prestige from a previous setting. These mosques materially and architecturally manifest the legacy of an aesthetic tradition that emerged in the context of Christian-Muslim encounters and rivalries in medieval North Africa and Iberia, was extended to colonial Brazil in the early modern era, and subsequently returned to Africa in coastal colonial ports such as Lagos, Porto Novo, and Dakar.

7 For West African repatriates from Brazil, Brazilian architecture came to signify a modern, but more independent, Yoruba identity that did not necessitate an affiliation with Christianity or Europeans. This identity was able to find fuller expression in independently governed Muslim communities than Christian communities, which were led by European missionaries.⁸ A modern identity rooted in the Muslim Black Atlantic creatively engaged with important transnational, cultural, and economic forces without capitulating to European colonialism and hegemony. The same communities who funded, built, and worshipped in these mosques were also highly active in modernizing reform movements in areas like education and law to create a place for themselves in the new order.⁹ Muslims who repatriated from Brazil had a direct historical connection with Portuguese/Brazilian Catholicism and maintained close and friendly relations with Catholics, making Catholic traditions a source available for architectural and ideological work. Furthermore, the Yoruba traditionally did not operate with the kinds of boundaries in religious identity and activity that are frequently taken for granted in the modern world.¹⁰ For both the repatriates and the broader Yoruba world, the potential religious origins of the architectural form was not a matter of much concern, but the work that could be done by that architecture or the effects that could be produced by it in their particular cultural, historical, and religious context was of paramount importance. The Yoruba enlistment of Catholic Brazilian architecture and willingness to employ the services of skilled artisans of all religious backgrounds to project their social status and cultural authority in a moment of rapid religious, social, and political transition is reminiscent of Portuguese and Spanish engagement with Islamic Andalūsī architecture following the Catholic conquest of Muslim territories in the Iberian Peninsula through the services of their own diverse group of highly prized artisans. The Maghribi, Iberian, Brazilian, and West African religious buildings highlighted in this article are found in three different continents but they are united in the stylistic allusions they make to earlier cultures' power and prestige in an effort on the part of their patrons to project their own power and influence while mediating the diversity and contestations of their contemporary contexts.

Politics of “Islamic” Architectural Aesthetics in Iberia (Eleventh-Seventeenth Centuries CE)

8 The first viewpoint from which we can see a panorama of the transcontinental architectural tradition manifested in Afro-Brazilian mosques is Portugal at the time of the Catholic conquest of Muslim territories in western Iberia (seventh century AH/ thirteenth century CE). Here a new type of Iberian architecture identified by some as “mudéjar” emerged. Mudéjar is a term used to identify Muslims who remained in Iberia following Christian conquests. It derives from the Arabic *mudajjan* meaning “domesticated” or “tamed.”¹¹ Its application to the arts is intended to capture the Islamic styles appropriated by Christians following their defeat of Muslims. In recent years, the utility of this term has been hotly contested among art historians because it assumes that “Christian” or “Islamic” are stable and consistent categories through which we can label particular styles of art or architecture.¹² In what follows, I join Cynthia Robinson in choosing not to focus on “stylistic categories or . . . the futile search for ethnic,

racial or religious ‘origins’ of forms,” as those involved in producing post-conquest Iberian architecture were not terribly concerned with its geographic or confessional origins or influences.¹³ While I will analyze specific features of architectural traditions from Christian Iberia, I am primarily interested in the cultural and religious context and meaning of these traditions, the ways in which they were deployed, and for what purposes. As Wendy Shaw has observed, a preoccupation with form for its own sake “will not tell us anything about how we experience enchantment. It will not tell us how the work produced meaning to the people who have experienced it across time. . . . we will come no closer to understanding how our fascination functions, or how it overlaps or diverges with the encounters of others.”¹⁴ One of the great hidden ironies of Afro-Brazilian church-mosques is that, while they may initially appear to be “European” or “Christian” in form and origin, their own European antecedents drew on a North African architectural history and relied heavily on the labor of Muslim artisans to create them. This pattern of drawing on a powerful artistic legacy of diverse ethno-religious origins to create a new architectural vocabulary in the service of specific political and religious goals complicates the stability of common categories like Muslim or Christian on which the concept of “mudéjar” architecture relies. Simultaneously, it prefigures the way West African Muslims invoked a Brazilian colonial legacy with Iberian roots to create the architectural vocabulary of Afro-Brazilian mosques. As I will argue, awe and the power of experience are more central to understanding Afro-Brazilian mosques than their architectural features alone.

- 9 Although the military forces of Christian kingdoms were ultimately successful in conquering the Iberian peninsula, one could argue that the region’s Islamic architectural tradition subsequently conquered Iberian culture and sensibilities. Since the Umayyad period (92-422 AH/711-1031 CE), Iberia had become “one of the highest cultural centres of western Europe and the Islamic world,” including in terms of architecture.¹⁵ Ascendant Christian states sought to appropriate this status rather than erase it entirely by drawing on and harnessing its architectural tradition to project their own power and authority. During the later periods of the Almoravids (483-542 AH/1090-1147 CE) and Almohads (556-620 AH/1161-1223 CE) (see Fig. 6 for unified region of North African Maghreb and al-Andalūs under the Almoravids), their emphasis on austerity and simplicity eventually gave way to the ornate expression of Andalūsī architecture, influencing much of what would become Iberian architecture in both form and general orientation.¹⁶ The aesthetic legacy of



Fig. 6 Map of Almoravid Empire (1090-1147 CE/483-542 AH).

Muslim al-Andalūs became a fundamental part of a new Christian Iberian artistic sensibility both figuratively and literally as the first churches built after the conquests were converted mosques, and the spatial orientation of these mosques was integrated into the cathedrals of Iberia when they were eventually constructed.¹⁷ The Cathedral of Seville (Fig. 7) is one telling example of this history. The structure was built on the foundation of the central mosque and has been characterized as “possessing the features of a mosque without being one.”¹⁸ In a move which will prove important for Afro-Brazilian mosques, the mosque’s square minarets were transformed into bell towers.¹⁹ The cathedral’s famous La Giralda bell tower, constructed in 1190 CE, is a converted minaret whose square shape, remarkable height, pointed arches, and intricate geometric stone ornamentation make it an excellent example of Maghribi architecture (Fig. 8). It strongly resembles the minaret of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakech, Morocco, built just 30 years prior in 1160 CE (Fig. 9). Although most prominent mosques were ultimately replaced by churches, retaining only the foundation of the preexisting mosque, in Córdoba, the Great Mosque’s architectural structure was almost entirely preserved because of “the great impression that the building had made on its Christian conquerors.”²⁰ The Archbishop of Toledo declared it “the most beautiful mosque in the world”; the thirteenth-century *Primera Crónica Geral* asserted that it “stood out and surpassed all other mosques among the Arabs in effect and grandeur”; and when another bishop proposed its demolition, none other than the ardent opponent of Islam, Queen Isabel (r. 1474-



Fig. 7 Ahmad ben Basso (designer of original mosque), Juan Gil de Hontañón and João de Castilho (architects of cathedral), Cathedral of Seville, 1172-1248, Seville, Spain. Photo © José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro, 2013. CC BY-SA 3.0.



Fig. 8 Ahmad ben Basso, La Giralda Tower, 1184-98, Seville, Spain. Photo © Shmuel Magal, Artstor ID number R90240378.

1504), forbade him from doing so.²¹ Queen Isabel, King Fernando II of Aragon (r. 1479-1516), and even their daughter Juana were all insistent that the mosque structure, and that of Andalūsī palaces, be preserved, demonstrating an appreciation for this Maghribi architectural tradition irrespective of the religion of its patrons.²²



Fig. 9 Architect unknown, Kutubiyya Mosque, 1147-1195, Marrakech, Morocco. Photo by Mikel Santamaria, 2013. CC BY-SA 2.0.

- 10 Some extant churches in Portugal, including the Igreja da Nossa Senhora da Anunciação in Mértola, the Igreja de São Clemente in Loulé (Fig. 10) and the Igreja de Santa Maria do Castelo in Tavira, also include aspects of the mosques that previously existed on their current sites.²³ Many skilled mudéjar craftsmen were involved in this architectural work in Portugal. Muslims were largely tolerated in Portugal for 250 years, enjoying royal protection and facing no official efforts to convert them. Those who did convert were termed *mouriscos*, and both converted *mouriscos* and unconverted mudéjares had a strong presence in important cities such as Lisbon, Santarém, and Alenquer.²⁴ Mudéjar and *mourisco* artisans possessed skills in woodcarving, tile working, carpentry, masonry, and other crafts that made them highly valuable to an ascendant political establishment that wanted to project its grandeur and authority in a way that was legible

to the population it had come to rule, helping to consolidate its control over them. The Portuguese crown heavily patronized Muslim master artisans and those with the skills to recreate Andalūsi aesthetics, even setting up a system of *corvée* labor to ensure that building and maintenance projects effectively leveraged their power for the new monarchs.²⁵

- 11 The courtyard of the national palace in Sintra, Portugal presents a telling example of the continued prominence of the architectural legacy of Andalūsi architecture through the merlons, geometric tilework and arched windows set in *alfizes* (arches placed within a rectangular frame) that were all hallmarks of the previous religious and political order (Fig. 11).²⁶ The old cathedral in Coimbra (Sé Velha in Fig. 12), constructed by the early Portuguese King Afonso Henriques (r. 1139-1185) in the early-mid twelfth century, could easily be mistaken for an Almoravid construction with its arches, crenellations, and even the Arabic inscriptions carved into the stone.²⁷ The nested arches set in *alfizes*, symmetrical segmentation, crenellations, and general rectilinear design are all characteristic of Maghribi architecture dating back to the Almohad dynasty (556-620 AH/1161-1223 CE).



Fig. 10 Converted minaret of Igreja de São Clemente, ca. twelfth-thirteenth centuries, Loulé, Portugal. Note the bulbs and finials at the top which will feature again in Brazilian architecture. Photo by Glen Bowman, 2017. CC BY-SA 2.0.

- 12 Like his Portuguese counterparts, Castilian King Pedro I employed *mudéjares* as his primary craftsmen for palaces and construction projects. According to Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza:

Christians frequently copied and emulated Andalusí buildings. On occasion, they appropriated an entire structure (space, architectural language, and ideological message), as seen in certain royal and noble palaces, especially during the fourteenth century. This is demonstrated in particularly dramatic fashion in the buildings sponsored by Pedro I of Castile (r. 1350-69), whose reign witnessed the construction of the palaces of Tordesillas and the Alcázar of Seville. Pedro I emulated Islamic palaces because he found in them constructions tailor-made to meet his own needs and ideological purposes, complete with throne rooms, halls of justice, grand façades, and patios built for the glorification of the monarch. In

other words, these were palaces befitting the needs of what we recognize today as the genesis of the modern state, that is, a state characterized by the concentration of power in the hands of the monarch and the concomitant weakening of the clergy and nobility.²⁸

Just like their Almoravid and Almohad predecessors, religious and political authorities in newly Christian Iberia were so impressed with the utility of the architectural tradition they inherited, and the sense of beauty and power it conveyed, that they themselves were converted—aesthetically speaking—regardless of their personal or theological perspectives on Islam as a rival religious and political force. Instead, their enthusiastic engagement with Andalūsī architecture was intended to enhance their prestige and authority in a context that was still ethnically and religiously diverse and contested.²⁹



Fig. 11 Courtyard of the National Palace of Sintra, Portugal. Architects unknown, Palácio Nacional de Sintra, ca. 1415, Sintra, Portugal. Photo by Rodrigo Argenton, 2019. CC BY-SA 4.0.

- 13 Although the cultural, religious, and political purposes for which Iberian architecture was employed are more important than specific architectural features and their geographic or confessional origins, several of such features are helpful to put Afro-Brazilian mosques in a historical context and trace their genealogy. Naşrid architecture (627-897 AH/1230-1492 CE) brought a focus on exposing the beautiful through harmonious decoration on fragmented surfaces with multiple divisions and subdivisions.³⁰ These subdivisions came to the fore in the prominent feature of the *alfiz*, which would become a hallmark of Iberian architecture (see Fig. 11). Similarly important are the nested arches and neat, symmetrical, and rectangular divisions of the *Sé Velha* in Coimbra (Fig. 12).³¹ Geometric patterns based on rectilinear shapes were another common feature, particularly on the façades of buildings and ceilings, but especially

in towers. Often these squares or rectangles would be surmounted with pyramid tops in the forms of finials or merlons as a transition to the sky (see Figs. 10 & 11).³² This was often the case with the Almohads' uniquely square minarets that were later converted into bell towers (see Figs. 8-10, 13, 14).³³

- 14 The shape and structure of Iberian buildings demonstrated clear engagement with previous architectural models, and so did the ornate decoration of the surface of their walls. Many converted belltowers contained *lacería*, another prominent feature of the new Iberian tradition, “an interlace of bands in geometric forms constituting polygons whose proportions are based on the square.”³⁴ The use of tiles, *azulejos*, was commonplace in churches and secular buildings, and included depictions of people, animals, and nature rather than just geometric patterns.³⁵ The exteriors of buildings were traditionally covered in stucco.³⁶ In the new churches, *atrios*—open courtyards with fruit trees at regular intervals—drew on the linked Islamic concepts of order and perfection as well as the association of gardens with paradise or heaven and their articulation in important mosques.³⁷ The Romans and Umayyads developed a practice of including inscriptions on buildings' façades and entrances, and the Naṣrids made this an essential feature of much of their architecture. Beginning in the thirteenth century, extensive texts were then inscribed on many of the most famous buildings constructed by both Muslim and Christian rulers, such as the Alhambra and palace at Tordesillas.³⁸ Several examples of Arabic inscriptions still exist in Portugal today (see Fig. 15), and fourteenth-century Christian rulers



Fig. 12 Masters Robert and Bernard, Sé Velha of Coimbra (Old Cathedral of Coimbra), Twelfth century, Coimbra, Portugal. Photo by Varun Shiv Kapur. CC BY-SA 2.0.



Fig. 13 Converted minaret of the Cathedral of Córdoba. Architect unknown, 785-786, Córdoba, Spain. Photograph by Heparina1985. CC BY-SA 4.0.

fused the Iberian inscription tradition with medieval heraldry, creating “a phenomenon not found anywhere [else] in Europe.”³⁹



Fig. 14 Architect unknown, Cathedral of Córdoba, 785-786, Córdoba, Spain. Photo by CEphoto, Uwe Arnas.

15 The most defining feature of Iberian architecture, however, is the near-overwhelming use of ornamentation through intricate, prolific designs on various surfaces. This tradition of hyper-ornamentation was employed to produce in observers a “moment of sensorial ecstasy” which could offer glimpses of heaven.⁴⁰ The incorporation of this aspect of the Islamic architecture of al-Andalus into Christian buildings produced a novel and uniquely Iberian tradition. As Luis Afonso puts it, “in no other region of Western Europe do we find such an important role given to strictly decorative patterns on the walls of churches and palaces.”⁴¹ Sing D’Arcy describes this tradition of ornamentation as a *máquina* or a structure intentionally crafted and organized to act on those in its presence or to create an effect on them and their souls, thus doing consequential religious work.⁴² Andalusī architecture conquered Iberian Christian religious and political sensibilities, and Spanish and Portuguese royalty and clergy subsequently



Fig. 15 Arabic inscription from house in Frielas outside of Lisbon. Reproduced from A.R. Nykl, “Arabic Inscriptions in Portugal,” *Ars Islamica* 11/12 (1946): 182.

found it highly effective in expanding and projecting their own power.

- 16 While the specific features analyzed above have clear antecedents in Muslim rule in the region, as Souza points out, “save for certain exceptions, it would never occur to the builders and patrons to ask what the ‘ethnic’ or ‘confessional’ origin of these elements might be, since they had been adopted into the building tradition of the area in question centuries earlier.”⁴³ The Christianity of the new Portuguese and Spanish states did not prevent them from drawing on Islamic architectural antecedents, particularly when specific elements could be employed to consolidate their rule and to project their power, affluence, and prestige in ways that would be legible to their people and their rivals. Arguably, such a dynamic architectural tradition could only be the product of a period of multicultural and interreligious contact, collaboration, and competition, making even the “Christian/European” antecedents of Afro-Brazilian mosques not entirely “Christian” or “European.” As a result, a new identity and style of architecture emerged, not in total rejection of the past, but rather fashioning a new artistic tradition out of it. Unsurprisingly, similar dynamics of employing architecture to project power and inspire awe were enlisted to do religious and political work in the religiously and ethnically diverse and contested colonial Americas as well.

Power and Wealth in Brazilian Architecture (Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries CE)

- 17 Portugal and Spain’s colonization of the Americas brought Iberia’s distinctive architectural aesthetics across the Atlantic, making colonial Brazil the next viewpoint from which we can understand the transcontinental architectural tradition manifested in Afro-Brazilian mosques. The previous Iberian experience with Muslim conversion to Catholicism, including the development of their own specific catechism and indeed architecture, served as a blueprint for the “spiritual conquest” of non-Catholic populations in colonial Brazil.⁴⁴ An important part of creating this new political and religious order and projecting colonial power was establishing a clear link with the imperial center and projecting its prestige. The baroque churches constructed in Brazil in the first centuries of colonization were intended to bombard the senses of non-believers to amaze and convert them by immersing them in the Divine in a more direct and experiential way than could be accomplished by rational argumentation.⁴⁵ Colonial Iberian architecture and buildings should not be interpreted only as human representations of the Divine, but as having their own unique power to move and change people, similar to how the tradition of ornamentation, conceptualized as *máquina* by D’Arcy, functioned in Europe.⁴⁶ While the architectural style associated with Iberia underwent changes in Brazil over the centuries of colonial rule, it had its antecedents in the context of a religiously and ethnically diverse vocabulary of architectural power and agency in post-conquest Iberia. After seducing Iberian sensibilities and being adopted by generations of Iberian Christians, the aesthetic associated with this religious architecture became a dominant presence in Spain’s and Portugal’s American colonies.⁴⁷
- 18 It was in Brazil that many West Africans had their first significant exposure to the affective power of this architectural tradition.⁴⁸ Africans from the Bight of Benin

(present-day Togo, Bénin, and Nigeria) constituted 60% of Africans forcibly brought to the state of Bahia in Brazil, home to the country's highest proportion of Africans and people of African descent.⁴⁹ In Salvador, the capitol of Bahia, it is commonly said that there is a church for every day of the year, and the West Africans brought to this port city both encountered the elaborate architecture of Salvador's many churches and were intimately involved in building them. The abundance of churches in Salvador corresponded in part to the evangelical zeal of the Catholic Church, but also resulted from the staggering wealth of its many plantation owners and merchants who made lavish donations to the Church and funded building projects as a show of piety and prestige. The abundant supply of forced labor and skilled workers meant many lavish churches sprang up on the ugly foundation of slavery and the wealth it generated.⁵⁰



Fig. 16 Central pediment of Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos, Salvador, Brazil. Architect possibly Caetano José da Costa, eighteenth century. Photo by Lazaro Menezes, 2012 CC BY-SA 4.0.

19 In Brazil, the affluence of the plantocracy took the lavishness and ornamentation of the tradition of architecture associated with the legacy of Christian-Muslim encounters in Iberia to new heights.⁵¹ For example, the flat pyramids that often surmounted bell towers were transformed into curved and decorated bulbs, elaborate opera boxes were introduced above the corridors flanking the nave, and the central pediments were augmented both in size and by the addition of detailed vegetal or scrolled motifs (Fig. 16).⁵² The eighteenth-century Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos in Salvador's historic Pelourinho district features this transformation of the Almoahad square minarets into double bell towers surmounted with bulbs and scrolled designs on the pyramidal pediment and is augmented with pastel-colored stucco (Figs. 16, 17). While the bulbs on the belltowers of the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos are more elaborate, they and their surrounding finials bear a strong resemblance to the bulb atop the belltower of the Igreja de São Clemente in Loulé, Portugal (Fig. 10).

20 The Igreja da Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Lapinha (Fig. 18), while renovated in the early-twentieth century, manifested an intentional link to the tradition of North African and Islamic architecture of Iberia when Muslim African architect Manoel Firandes was commissioned to design it in the late-eighteenth century. It appeared more like an Andalūsī mosque than a church with its mourisco patterning throughout, use of woodcarving, horseshoe arches, and even the allusion to the Naṣrid and Umayyad periods with the Arabic inscription in the nave which reads, “this is the house of God, this is the gate to heaven.”⁵³

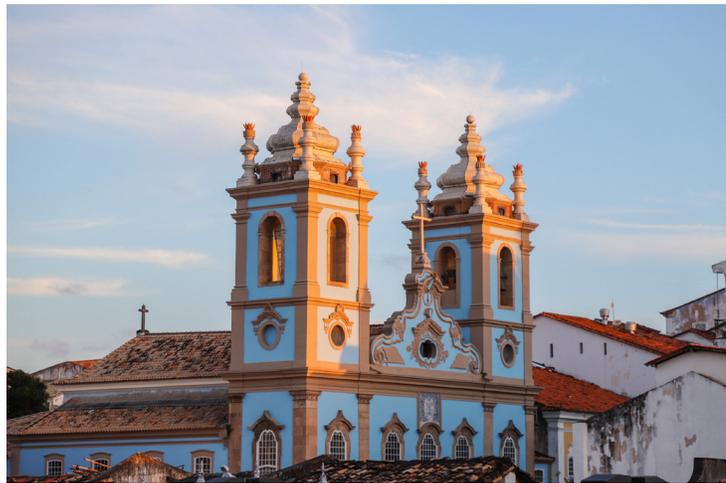


Fig. 17 Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos, Salvador, Brazil. Constructed in the eighteenth century by Africans and Black Brazilians. Photo by Paul R. Burley, 2018. CC BY-SA 4.0.

Henry Drewal has commented on the curious position of this particular church and the Muslim identity of its African architect, remarking that “it stands as a monument to the enormously complex, seemingly incongruous, and fascinating juxtaposition of the contested religious ideologies, racial and class hierarchies, political possibilities, and economic forces that Afro-Brazilians had to negotiate.”⁵⁴ However, most churches in Salvador enlist some of these features in a more subtle manner to work on the senses of those in their presence and constitute more recognizable models for the later church/mosques of West African coastal cities. The seventeenth-century Igreja de Santo Antônio da Barra and the eighteenth-century Basilica of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim include prominent square bell towers, pyramidal ornamented pediments between them, stucco exteriors with rectangular segmentation and alfizes, prominent open spaces within or just in front of the churches (often with fruit trees for shade), and lavish ornamentation in the naves. As was the case in the Christianization of Muslim Iberia, the sensationalism of this architecture was not merely

an overwhelming display of wealth but was employed to do political and religious work. It was designed specifically to impress itself on the senses of non-believers, as Maria Luisa Montes has argued, and to project the prestige and power of both Christianity and the colonial state.⁵⁵ It is this subtle adoption of an aesthetic tradition rooted architecturally in Muslim-Christian encounters in Iberia that constituted the model for the “church-mosques” built later in West African coastal cities.



Fig. 18 Manoel Friandes, Igreja da Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Lapinha, ca. 1860-70, Salvador, Brazil. Photo by Tereza Torres, 2013. CC BY-SA 2.0

- 21 The most arresting example of colonial Brazilian architecture is undoubtedly the early-eighteenth-century church and convent of São Francisco in Salvador (Fig. 19). Although many regard it as the most beautiful of Brazil’s churches, there is little about its exterior to separate it from the countless other churches in Salvador. Its lavish baroque interior, however, leverages the entirety of the Iberian aesthetic tradition as a máquina to its full effect. Before entering the nave, visitors pass through a large cloister courtyard—now paved in with cement—surrounded by walls covered with a vast series of azulejos imported from Portugal, depicting scenes of virtue. They are situated behind a perimeter of columns supporting linked arches and vaulted ceilings. A dark corridor leads into the church proper, where observers are immediately struck by intricate woodcarving, more azulejos, spiral and vegetal designs on the marble floors, niches and alfizes, paintings of biblical scenes, and abundant carvings or sculptures of people, mythical figures, angels, and other creatures. The lacería ceiling is composed of interlocking geometric shapes (including the common Islamic eight-point star) evocative of Andalūsī design, but with the important addition of extravagant gilding and the biblical scenes painted within the geometric shapes (Fig. 20). Everything is covered in gold leaf, leaving almost no empty space. The niches containing statues of the saints are reminiscent of nested arches of the Sé Velha of Coimbra, although the plain stone has been replaced with gilding (compare Figs. 12 and 21).



Fig. 19 Exterior of the Igreja de São Francisco, Salvador, Brazil, 1686-1723. Photo by Willington Da Costa Gomez, 2019. CC BY-SA 4.0.



Fig. 20 Lacería ceiling of the Igreja de São Francisco, Salvador, Brazil. Photo by Paul R. Burley, 2019. CC BY-SA 4.0.

22 The interior of the church defies description as it is deliberately designed to overwhelm the senses.⁵⁶ These individual adaptations of Andalūsī and Iberian art together demonstrate the broader intention and function of the artistic tradition that emerged in the context of Muslim-Christian encounters in the Iberian peninsula. São Francisco stuns and impresses the observer, making it a highly effective “sensation-producing instrument.”⁵⁷ Just as the North African conquerors and subsequent Christian kingdoms in Iberia had done, the Franciscan friars in Salvador sought to project the magnificence of their religious order through the powerful experience generated by their architecture. Even if the church did not inspire Africans in Brazil to convert to Catholicism, the sense of wonder that the church evokes likely left a lasting impression on them. Furthermore, much as in medieval Iberia, the Brazilian colonial architectural tradition occupied a prominent place in a period and region of ethnic and religious diversity and rapid change. As in Portugal centuries earlier, skilled craftsmen of varied religious backgrounds were intimately entwined in the production of Brazil’s architectural heritage. Colonial Brazilian architecture found its highest expression in churches but was characteristic of most buildings in colonial Brazil, and Africans were heavily involved in their production. African laborers and skilled workers constituted the majority of the workforce in Brazil and soon became master artisans themselves. One of the most famous architects in eighteenth-century Brazil was a mixed-race man named Aleijadinho (1738-1814)—sometimes called “the Bernini of the tropics”—who designed and ornamented many famous churches, among them the celebrated church of São Francisco de Assis in Ouro Preto, Brazil.⁵⁸ Many others who were born in Africa picked up this important trade, and, as Muslims likely constituted over half of the population of African slaves brought to Brazil in the first half of the nineteenth century, they undoubtedly formed a significant number of these new craftsmen.⁵⁹ African Muslims likely lacked familiarity at the time of their arrival in Brazil with the architectural tradition associated with Muslim-Christian encounters in Iberia. Nonetheless, having been steeped and heavily involved in creating this tradition, it is little surprise that they found it useful in the highly contested, and religiously, ethnically, and economically diverse environment of the Atlantic port cities when they returned to the West African coast.



Fig. 21 Niche in the Igreja de São Francisco, Salvador, Brazil. Photo by Paul R. Burley, 2019. CC BY-SA 4.0.

Aguda Repatriates and the Rearticulation of the Church-Mosque (Nineteenth-Twentieth Centuries CE)

23 Following a series of ethno-religiously inspired revolts in the nineteenth century, most notably the Muslim-led Malê Rebellion of 1835 in Salvador da Bahia, Brazilian authorities became increasingly suspicious of Africans in general and deported many African Muslims in particular back to West Africa. At the same time, partially in response to rising fear of and prejudice against Africans, increasing numbers of Africans and their descendants in Brazil voluntarily traveled back to West Africa and settled predominantly in coastal trading cities. The vast majority of these returnees had lived in West Africa before being enslaved, but many brought the families they had created in Brazil with them across the Atlantic. The significant presence of returning Brazilians was due to the high number of enslaved Africans forcibly brought to Brazil as compared to other regions, but also because of the aforementioned deportations for fear of future insurrection. In addition, the Brazilian system of slavery made it possible for even enslaved Africans to earn their own money, buy their freedom and operate with a certain level of autonomy. This was particularly the case for the population of urban slaves in places like Salvador who had acquired craft skills and perhaps even a degree of Portuguese literacy. They saw opportunity for prosperity in these new West African metropolises given their place in the modern Atlantic world. Many of these formerly enslaved West Africans repatriated to the Bight of Benin due to the strong and continuous trading links between the region and Brazil. As a result, the repatriates settled in several cities, including Agoué, Porto Novo, Badagry, Ouidah, Little Popo (Aného), Grand Popo, and even Accra, with Lagos becoming the site of the greatest concentration (see Fig. 22). The people now known as the Yoruba were heavily represented in the population of those enslaved in Salvador, and Lagos was both located within the broader Yoruba territory and was rapidly emerging as the most important trading port in the area.⁶⁰ Resettlement in Lagos began in 1840, and by 1887 there were over 3,000 “Brazilians” there; perhaps 8,000 or more returned to the Bight of Benin in total.⁶¹

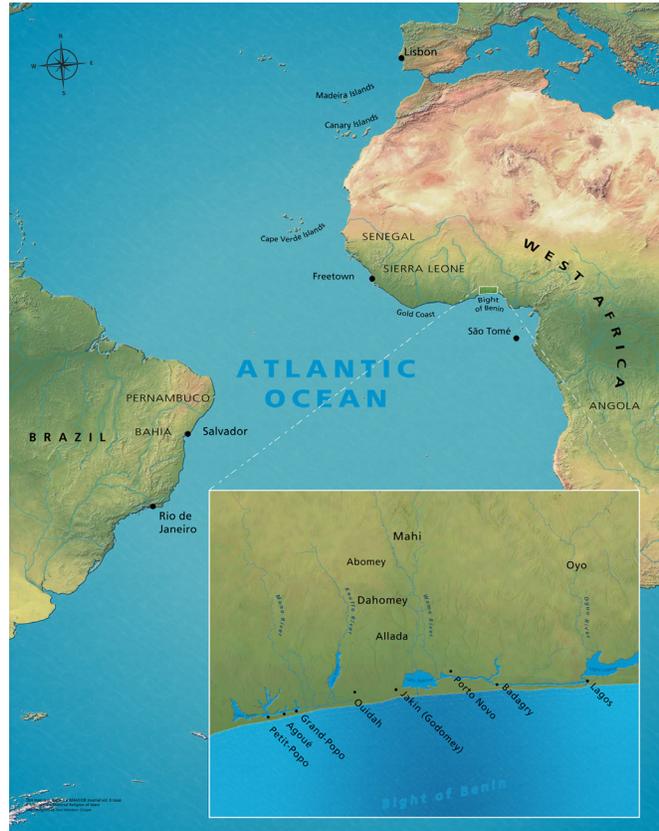


Fig. 22 Map of coastal port cities in the Bight of Benin.

24 Although they faced certain difficulties, the repatriates often occupied a privileged

position because of their exposure to the Western world and consequent greater ability to understand and interact with Europeans, as well as their familiarity with colonial projects of modernization and novel sociopolitical and economic structures, their ability to ply trades useful in that environment, and their knowledge of at least one if not multiple European languages. Christianity—or at least a intimate familiarity with Catholicism—had also become a part of their identity, even if they did not practice it themselves. Many who were Muslim before being captured were baptized in Brazil, and as with many Yoruba lineages at the time, it was not uncommon for families to have members who practiced Islam, Christianity, and traditional religions.⁶² In fact, the Yoruba name for these Afro-Brazilian repatriates and their descendants—Aguda—is the same as the word used for “Catholic” and is still used to this day to describe Afro-Brazilians regardless of whether they are Muslim, Christian, and/or practice traditional religions—categories that were often not mutually exclusive. The area of Lagos where the Afro-Brazilians settled is known as Popo Aguda or “Brazilian quarter” and white and mixed-race Portuguese and Brazilians were also lumped into this category, making it highly polysemic in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and religion. The common experience of, if not commitment to, Portuguese Catholicism was one of the major factors that united the Aguda as a community and fostered their close and generally cordial relations.⁶³

- 25 Although Lagos had already attracted a significant number of Muslims before the arrival of repatriate Muslims from Brazil, these returnees, alongside Muslims amongst the repatriates known as the Saro from Sierra Leone, a British colony for liberated slaves, quickly made up a significant and perhaps the most dynamic part of the early Muslim community there. In fact, in 1868 there were an estimated 8,422 Muslims living in Lagos, almost twice the number of Christians.⁶⁴ Almost one in three inhabitants of Lagos at the time were Muslim. Lagos was annexed by the British in 1861, but even including Christian Sierra Leonean and Brazilian repatriates, there were still significantly more Muslims. This makes the relative lack of scholarly attention paid to them curious, but while Muslims may not have featured as prominently in the colonial and academic records, their architectural legacy is a testament to their presence and prominence in what was emerging as one of the primary economic hubs in all of West Africa.⁶⁵
- 26 The Brazilians and Sierra Leoneans were the first in Lagos to build mosques out of non-perishable materials, constructing the Brazilian Olosun Mosque, which opened in 1856, and the Sierra Leonean “Blessed Mosque” (later called “Horobay Mosque”), which opened in 1861.⁶⁶ Before the Aguda and the Saro returned to the Bight of Benin, mosques were generally built, like the majority of other buildings, with mud and thatch. The need for periodic upkeep was an intentional aspect of traditional art and architecture in much of West Africa.⁶⁷ Although in Lagos Muslim returnees augmented the extant Muslim population and added to the myriad architectural styles present in the city, they were the first Muslims to settle in most of the other coastal port cities in present-day Bénin and Togo, quickly building the first mosques and producing the chief imams and religious leaders of the growing community for generations to come.⁶⁸
- 27 These rapid and ambitious construction projects were built on the basis of the Aguda experience in diaspora. A great number of Aguda became involved in the lucrative

transatlantic trade in West African and Brazilian goods such as woven fabric, kola nuts, rum, and at times even the slave trade itself, and many of the wealthiest families in the area made their fortunes by leveraging their networks in Brazil and the West African coast. It was primarily wealth from their participation in Atlantic trade that financed the construction of mosques and interestingly continued the long tradition of Islam spreading along trade routes and through merchants, albeit through a completely new set of trade routes that was primarily dominated by Europeans.⁶⁹ The class of affluent Muslim merchants contained some of the most prominent patrons of architecture and of the craftsmen who created it. Again mirroring the historical context of post-conquest Iberia and colonial Brazil, demand for master craftsmen in trades like carpentry, bricklaying, and architecture was high in Lagos as the Afro-Brazilian population sought to signal their success and prestige through the familiar architectural vocabulary of colonial Brazil.⁷⁰ Approximately a third of the Afro-Brazilian population in the late-nineteenth century were artisanal workers; the most prominent of these master craftsmen were Senhor Lazaro Borges da Silva, Senhor Francisco Nobre, and João Batista da Costa, whose work survives to this day.⁷¹



Fig. 23 João Batista da Costa or Martin and Porphyrio, Shitta Bey Mosque 1891-94, Lagos, Nigeria. The British Museum, Arthur Henry Prest Collection, "Mahomedan Mosque Lagos," Af, A46.42.

Mohammed Shitta Bey, the Afro-Brazilian Church-Mosque, and the Muslim Black Atlantic

- 28 The Saro and Aguda felt the need to mark their presence, experience with, and prominence within an expanding modern and transnational sphere, and thus turned

to an architectural style that could accomplish this by demonstrating their affluence, transnational connections, and new sociopolitical position in the region. Post-conquest Iberian rulers turned square Andalūsī minarets into bell towers and transformed *musallās* (rooms for performing prayers) into naves, and Afro-Brazilian architects, in turn transformed the bell towers they had encountered in Brazil into minarets and transformed the nave into a *musallā* by removing the pews. What would have been the apse in a Catholic church became the *miḥrāb* indicating the direction of prayer, and the second-floor galleries where the wealthy attended mass were reserved for women.⁷² Perhaps the most central and iconic features of these new mosques were the pyramidal central pediments surmounted with elaborate arabesque, geometric, or floral motifs, and the segmented pastel-colored stucco façades with pilasters separating a series of arches that were either blind or contained windows or doors. Balustrades, drawn from domestic architecture in Bahia, were a common feature, and in Yoruba mosques a single central tower was often preferred to the double tower that was more common in colonial Brazilian churches and later mosques in Francophone West Africa.⁷³ Although certain internal features were retained, such as the rectangular or square floorplan, the galleries, and the vaulted ceilings, the main focus was placed on the ornamentation and coloring of the exterior, which was best positioned to make the desired extroverted statement.⁷⁴ The Shitta Bey Mosque, inaugurated in 1894, is the best-known example of an Afro-Brazilian church-mosque—a West African mosque whose design draws heavily on colonial Brazilian churches. It beautifully demonstrates the dynamics and purpose of the Afro-Brazilian architectural movement in the Muslim Black Atlantic (Fig. 23).

29 Mohammed Shitta was a Saro returnee who had made a vast fortune as a member of the emergent class of Atlantic merchants and is credited with the enormous feat of bankrolling the construction of the Shitta Bey Mosque in 1891.⁷⁵ The main architect and builder is believed to be the Afro-Brazilian João Batista da Costa, although there is some debate about whether he or two other Aguda artisans named Martin and Porphyrio were in charge of the mosque's construction.⁷⁶ Among the attendees at its inauguration on July 4, 1894 were the British colonial governor, Sir G. T. Carter (18480-1927); the President of the Liverpool Muslim Association and representative of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909), Abdullah Quilliam (1856-1932); and the most prominent merchants, religious leaders, and traditional title-holders. West African Muslims in Sierra Leone and Lagos had cultivated relations with Muslims in Great Britain for some time by the 1890s, and it was through this network that the Lagosian community was able to petition the Ottoman sultan for a representative at the opening of their mosque. The request increased the Sultan's interest in Islam in Africa and resulted in his sending Quilliam as his representative to Lagos through Sierra Leone.⁷⁷ Quilliam was welcomed as a "white brother" and put the increasingly prominent Muslim community in Lagos on the map so to speak for the Ottoman state, the British administration, and the broader Lagosian and Yoruba society.⁷⁸ Quilliam bestowed the honorific title "Bey" from the Ottoman sultan on Mohammed Shitta by inducting him into the order of the Medjidie of the third class in recognition of his efforts in support of Islam in West Africa.⁷⁹ As T. G. O. Gbadamosi has argued, this "was not only a personal distinction, it was also Islam's debut and stature in Yorubaland that was being granted international recognition."⁸⁰

30 The many fascinating players, features, and forces involved in the creation of the Shitta

Bey Mosque make it the perfect example of the aspirations and self-identification of a new imagined community of the Muslim Black Atlantic.⁸¹ Paul Gilroy has made a convincing case for imagining a “Black Atlantic” identity centered on the Atlantic Ocean and the interplay of connections between Africa and its diaspora in a hostile modern colonial environment that undergirds the philosophy, art, and social structures it generated.⁸² While many scholars have made good use of this analytic framework, oftentimes filling in the gap left by Gilroy with respect to religion, the identity and activity of African Muslims during the colonial era has largely been ignored.⁸³ Mohammed Shitta Bey, the mosque he sponsored, and the emergent identity of Lagosian Muslims was deftly articulated through a network and history of engagement with religious, architectural, economic, and political forces from around the Atlantic world and beyond and simultaneously offered an alternative means of engaging with West African modernity outside of colonial European structures. Rather than merely participating in a broader Atlantic world and culture, members of the Muslim Black Atlantic created their own identity rooted in their particular practice of Islam and experience with the modern forces in the Atlantic world, which then had a strong influence on the broader non-Muslim community as well.

- 31 Mohammed Shitta Bey and the Shitta Bey Mosque beautifully illustrate the type of modern identity asserted by members of the Muslim Black Atlantic. Shitta Bey’s transnational identity as a Sierra Leonean returnee emerged from the experience of diaspora as a result of the slave trade, and the impressive sum required to construct the mosque was derived from Atlantic trade. Additionally, the title “Bey” connected his family to the preeminent Muslim power on the global stage at the time. Shitta Bey’s remarkable wealth was both novel and distinctly modern as indicated by another of his monikers *Olowo pupa* or “owner of yellow/gold money.” He earned this title because cowrie shells were still widely used as a form of currency in Yorubaland, but he was distinguished by the amount of wealth he held in new gold coins.⁸⁴ Construction of the mosque itself relied on cordial relations with Catholic craftsmen and workers, demonstrating how “people of different religions worked together to erect sacred houses of worship for each other.”⁸⁵ At the same time, Mohammed Shitta’s titles of “Bey” and *Şeriki Musulumi* (a kind of secular leader of the Muslim community) demonstrated the modern Lagosian Muslim identity in a more contentious manner. Shitta Bey acquired these titles respectively from the authority of the Ottoman sultan and popular support of the Lagos Muslim community on the basis of his wealth, success as a merchant, and the philanthropic work it allowed him to do. His rapid rise to prominence caused friction with King Oyekan of Lagos (r. 1885-1900) because his titles were acquired outside of the traditional political structures of authority the king controlled. Although the two men were good friends, the introduction of new, modern avenues of authority and power based on transnational linkages, wealth from Atlantic commerce, and popular support rather than the traditional ruler caused enough friction for the colonial governor to step in to mediate and resolve the matter. Nonetheless, Shitta Bey and Lagosian Muslims were still great supporters of the king, and thus posed a robust challenge to the dichotomy between the traditional and modern as well as demonstrating their willingness to collaborate with non-Muslim authority figures.⁸⁶ Finally, Shitta Bey was deeply engaged in modernizing projects in Lagos. He led a group that petitioned the

colonial government for reform in the judicial system, he provided street lamps for his quarters when the government delayed in constructing them, and he was amongst the leaders who pushed for an independent administrative council for Lagos which would create room for greater African participation in governmental affairs.⁸⁷

- 32 The construction of the Shitta Bey Mosque and its sociopolitical ramifications augmented the respect its patron earned from Lagosian Muslims, colonial administrators, and others besides. The specific features of the Afro-Brazilian architectural tradition contributed to this result. Most notably, the high central pediment with scrolled ornamentation and its segmentation by pilasters that rise into finials on the tiled and multicolored stucco façade show the influence of colonial Brazilian architecture. Other prominent features include the two oculi in the top two central sections, the arched doorways, and the mihrāb on the balancing rear façade which is placed right where the apse would have been located in a Catholic church.⁸⁸ The quadrilateral shape is reminiscent of cathedrals from the Iberian Peninsula built figuratively and literally on the square foundation of earlier mosques.⁸⁹ As the most prominent early example of the increasingly popular regional mosque-church model, the Shitta Bey Mosque manifests a subtle and ironic history of African Muslim participation in the Atlantic World. The craftsmen, features, and politico-religious function of Andalūsī architecture—and mosques specifically—were integrated into a new Iberian architectural style and aesthetic. The Portuguese then built opulent churches in this style in Brazil, whose model was itself repurposed for mosques, this time on the coast of West Africa. In this monumental architectural statement and achievement, the architects, as Ikem Okoye puts it, “invented a new form of the mosque for West Africa.”⁹⁰ In the process, Shitta Bey “[t]ransformed the underdeveloped swamp of Olowogbowo [where the mosque was located] into an ideal urban enclave projecting Islam as a religion that could catalyze the emergence of an African Muslim elite,” and, I would add, made a claim for a new type of modernity.⁹¹
- 33 This dazzling display of affluence from sources independent of the British colonial structure was a physical embodiment not only of divine beauty as was the case for its antecedents in Brazil, but also a novel model of success and modernity over which Europeans held no monopoly. This was not entirely new to the broader Muslim world in the nineteenth century. The Muhammad ‘Ali Mosque in Cairo similarly drew on certain modern features and styles—including a clock, an element also frequently found in the oculi of Afro-Brazilian mosques (see Figs. 2, 4, and 27)—to make a political statement and claim a place in the modern world. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri rightly asserts that this claim interrupts the teleological, Eurocentric, and often Christo-centric narratives about modernity which were dominant at the time and which scholars have only more recently worked to dismantle.⁹² Titilola Euba described the Shitta Bey Mosque as “a forceful contradiction to the alleged inferiority of the Negro Race” in colonial Lagos, and in what was very likely a slight against British colonial and church architecture, the *Lagos Weekly Record* reported that it was “the finest specimen of ecclesiastical architecture in West Africa.”⁹³ The striking beauty of Afro-Brazilian architecture was employed precisely to put forward this alternative narrative of success, prosperity, and transnationalism in a Muslim Black Atlantic context, and to carve out a distinctly Muslim space in Lagos’s emerging modern society.

The Broad Appeal of Brazilian Architecture in West Africa

- 34 Although the Shitta Bey Mosque is perhaps the most well-known example of Afro-Brazilian architecture in Lagos, it was just one of many buildings constructed in the region in this style. In the latter half of the nineteenth century in Lagos, Afro-Brazilians began to build numerous houses and religious buildings inspired by the colonial Brazilian architectural style in which their master craftsmen had been trained prior to their repatriation. The broader indigenous population soon enlisted the services of these craftsmen, and Brazilian architectural styles took Lagos, the Yoruba interior, and huge swathes of the West African coast by storm. The fabulous success of this architectural style begs the question, as Marianno Carneiro da Cunha puts it, “[h]ow is it possible that such foreign tastes should have been accepted so easily and in such a way, that around 1926, the new town of Irawo in the north of Yorubaland was built entirely according to the new style and techniques,” particularly when indigenous and British or French colonial models were also available at the time?⁹⁴
- 35 In the context of nineteenth-century Lagos, colonial Brazilian architecture and culture demonstrated the prestige of international connections and networks while being “built with African money and with African hands without any help from outside [meaning Europeans],” as the *Lagos Weekly Record* stated after the opening of the Shitta Bey Mosque.⁹⁵ Because the British had freed the Saros from Atlantic slave ships and provided their education in Sierra Leone, the Saros were indebted to and under the influence of the British colonial establishment. The Aguda, however, as Olabiyi Yai writes, “owed no debt of gratitude to their former masters (the Portuguese or the Brazilians) nor to their new ones (the British and the French [in the case of Bénin]).”⁹⁶ Despite being inspired by Brazilian colonial architecture, the Afro-Brazilian style was thus understood as being independent from the Portuguese, and, more importantly, from the British. A Yoruba saying emerged at this time: *Aguda ko je l’abe Geṣi, owo lo pa won po* (the Aguda do not owe their daily subsistence to the British, their relationship is based upon exchange of money), contrasting the Aguda with the Saros and highlighting the former’s financial independence.⁹⁷ Furthermore, as modern developments such as capitalism, greater notions of individualism, transnationalism, social mobility, and the renegotiation of traditional power structures began to make inroads into Yorubaland, the demonstration of personal will and success found expression in the extravagance of the Brazilian architectural tradition.⁹⁸
- 36 In contrast to the intentional exuberance central to colonial Brazilian architecture, British colonial architecture was understood to be “monochrome” and restrained.⁹⁹ The British unsuccessfully endeavored to promote their own architectural style, which was not adopted by the Yoruba. Adedoyin Teriba asserts that Aguda craftsmen likely constructed the pediments and curved features on building exteriors to form the ornate façades of Afro-Brazilian architecture as an intentional “contrast to the rectilinear quality of most of the Europeans’ structures,” making them more appealing on aesthetic and ideological grounds.¹⁰⁰ Architecture became a central battleground in the complex and highly contested environment of colonial Lagos, and Brazilian architecture soundly defeated British models in the competition for Yoruba sensibilities. The Brazilian option in essence allowed the Yoruba to “accept some of the white man’s ways without

succumbing totally to them.”¹⁰¹

37 Furthermore, the heavily ornamented nature of the Brazilian style of architecture had close parallels with the ample decoration characteristic of certain forms of traditional Yoruba art and architecture. This shared interest in the ornamented surface would have made Brazilian architectural styles readily intelligible to those who had never left Yorubaland. The decorative features of traditional chiefs’ and kings’ palaces often included, for example, beautifully carved wooden posts that functioned as support columns for the roofs around central courtyards (see Fig. 24). It was also common to have highly decorated doors on important buildings. The higher degree of ornamentation present in royal buildings was intended to display the wealth, power, and prestige of the rulers. Furthermore, intricate designs on fabric and on palace walls were also a common feature of traditional Yoruba aesthetics. All of these found parallels in the ornate columns and façades, embellishment, floral and vegetal motifs, and general luxuriousness of Brazilian architecture.¹⁰² In a subtler way, the sheer height and multiple stories of religious and secular buildings in the Brazilian model played on the importance of elevation in the traditional cosmology of the Yoruba. Proximity to the sky was indicative of spiritual elevation and divinity, and in addition to palaces standing taller than the surrounding buildings, the thrones of kings are always elevated on a platform.¹⁰³ Although not derived from a similar source, these aesthetic elements of Brazilian and Yoruba art and architecture converged and reinforced each other in the emergent architecture of colonial Lagos.



Fig. 24 Carved pillar of royal palace in Idanre, Nigeria. Photo by author, 2013.

38 Colonial Brazilian architecture in Lagos played the same role this style of architecture had played in medieval Iberia and colonial Brazil: it conquered the senses of would-be conquerors. Much as the church and convent of São Francisco has been described as “playing . . . [observers] against their very own understandings,” the Brazilian architecture employed in Lagos garnered praise from Europeans, including the British colonizers, despite their racial prejudice.¹⁰⁴ The Governor of Lagos, Sir Henry McAllum (1852-1919) reacted favorably, for example, to the Pro-Cathedral of the Holy Cross, designed and constructed in part by Aguda master craftsmen Francisco Nobre and Marcos Cardoso. A.B. Laotan describes his response in this manner:

One day as he [Sir Henry McAllum] was going round the town on sight-seeing, he came to Oil Mill Street, right in front of the old Pro-Cathedral. His attention was arrested by the twin towers of the church. After silently admiring the beauty of the architecture, he was curious to know who built the towers and was told that one was built under the supervision of a European priest and the other by an African repatriate from the Brazils. He was so impressed that he remarked to his attendants: 'If Africans from Brazil could do such a work, why could not Government select some intelligent young men to be sent to England for training?'¹⁰⁵

Despite the severely prejudicial worldview of McAllum and his implied racial hierarchy, the “arresting” beauty of the Brazilian architecture produced by Africans changed his perception of what they could accomplish and did in fact motivate him to establish a training program to send Yoruba craftsmen to England. Governor McAllum was far from the only European to be struck by the beauty of Afro-Brazilian architecture. The Scottish traveler John Duncan (1805-1849) found its presence in Ouidah (in present-day Bénin) to surpass even the French and English architecture present in the city.¹⁰⁶ Much as I was in Ode-Omu, European administrators and travelers were at times literally arrested by Afro-Brazilian architecture. However, for them this was in part because it disrupted their assumptions that they were the primary or only vectors of “civilization” and their teleological supposition that Africans’ intellectual and artistic abilities were less than their own and would take time to reach the level of Europeans’.

- 39 The success and prestige of the Aguda in late-nineteenth-century Lagos, embodied in their architecture, transformed them into a “bourgeoisie that rivalled the colonial society.”¹⁰⁷ It thus constituted a problem for the British and the racial and civilizational hierarchy undergirding their colonial project. As Tundonu Amosu observes, “the Brazilians had been able to attain a level of sophistication equal if not superior to that of the local British residents. This they went on to demonstrate through ostentatious spending as their parties dazzled the local people and aroused the envy and suspicion of the British who deeply resented such shows by those they considered inferior to them.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, the Afro-Brazilians and their architecture not only posed a subtle challenge to the ideological basis of the colonial administration, it also presented an alternative, and frequently more attractive, cultural model that the indigenous population could engage. The clear preference and demand for Brazilian architecture in Lagos was so high that apprentices were sent back to Bahia to train as architects, masons, carpenters, and bricklayers.¹⁰⁹ As they returned, the use of Brazilian architectural styles for religious and secular buildings began to spread inland while British architecture failed to leave a strong imprint even on Lagos.¹¹⁰ The Aguda sought to match and exceed the buildings of their interlocutors, and in this the Brazilian architectural conquest was a resounding success.
- 40 Yai has referred to the particular disposition of Afro-Brazilian culture in the Bight of Benin as *lusotropie*. Yai’s neologism combines the prefix “lusu”—meaning Portuguese—with “tropie” from the Latin “tropus” and original “Greek trope” meaning “manner, style, or way” that is also related to the English word, “trope.” It also makes an allusion to the blending of ethnic and religious cultures from Muslim North Africa, European

Iberia and sub-Saharan Africa present in Gilberto Freyre’s concept of “Lusotropicalism” without embracing its problematic biological determinism. Yai understands lusotropie to encapsulate a tendency to look to a glorious past to draw inspiration for and confidence in a prosperous future, defining it as, “a self-image arising from the local history of the group at the same time that it refers to the luso-world that people are conscious of . . . as well as a projection of self toward the future, a utopia based on these references, this past, simultaneously real and invented.”¹¹¹ Just as the Portuguese in Brazil alluded to their imperial heritage and prestige through their material culture, the Aguda displayed their connection to a mythic—but not necessarily false—history and heritage of affluence in Brazil as a means of creating a prosperous position in a new, modern West Africa. This “Janus-faced” nature of Aguda culture allowed it to occupy a generative middle position of embracing past tradition and contemporary innovation while also embracing diversity of identity as a means of drawing upon a number of traditions (Muslim, Christian, indigenous, European, African, and Brazilian—which could encompass them all to a degree) with which it had extensive contact. This outlook was highly attractive to the heterogeneous residents of modern, colonial Lagos regardless of religious affiliation and fit their architectural needs quite well.



Fig. 25 A Brazilian house, built ca. 1875 in Lagos, Nigeria. From John Michael Vlach, “The Brazilian House in Nigeria: The Emergence of a 20th-Century Vernacular House Type,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 97, no. 383 (1984): 8.

- 41 This style of architecture, called “Brazilian” in contemporary Lagos, quickly became *the* style of choice for the Yoruba, especially for the aspirational and newly wealthy. The Brazilian model for houses, called the *sobrado*, took over both Lagos and its hinterlands, further increasing the demand for Afro-Brazilian craftsmen (Fig. 25).¹¹² Rather than the traditional one-story buildings with plain mud walls and a central courtyard surrounded by a series of rooms that share walls but not doors, the *sobrado* boasted colorful stucco

exteriors with ornate windows on multiple stories and a central hallway connected to individual rooms.¹¹³ As new economic opportunities emerged, flamboyant displays of wealth became more common, and merchants often gained more prominence than traditional chiefs who lived in single story houses, the rapid changes in modern Yoruba life made the *sobrado* and Afro-Brazilian architecture the style of choice for new leading figures.¹¹⁴ The embellishment of even just the exterior of a building in this fashion became a mark of social status throughout Yorubaland and could be found as far north as the city of Jos in central Nigeria in the 1950s.¹¹⁵

42 The best example of Afro-Brazilian houses becoming a mark of social standing is the “*Ẹbun House*” built in 1913 by renowned Aguda carpenter Balthasar dos Reis and Nigerian national hero, patriot, and architect Herbert Macaulay (1864-1946) for wealthy auctioneer Andrew Thomas (b. 1856), Macaulay’s cousin (Fig. 26). Thomas and Macaulay were both Saro returnees, but like many other Saros, Thomas opted for his home to be built in the Brazilian style, in a manner that could communicate the way he had been blessed by God (the name *Ẹbun*, engraved over the entrance to the house, means “gift” in Yoruba). Teriba has elsewhere provided a thorough analysis of the house and the Afro-Brazilian context of its construction, but what is most significant about it for my purposes is the effect it had on Lagosians at the time.¹¹⁶ Many called it *Ile Awoṣifila* or “the house that makes you lose your cap when admiring its height,” indicating that it projected greatness and acted quite directly on those who viewed it.¹¹⁷ Noting how, by the first half of the twentieth century, prominent figures of varying backgrounds, like Andrew Thomas, enthusiastically adopted this style of architecture for their residences, John M. Vlach concluded, “undeniably, the old architecture of Brazil [had] become the new architecture of the Yoruba.”¹¹⁸



Fig. 26 Herbert Macaulay and Balthasar dos Reis or João Batista da Costa, *Ẹbun House*, ca. 1913, Lagos, Nigeria. Photo by Pierre Verger, © Fundação Pierre Verger, ca. 1970s.

43 The integration of Afro-Brazilian culture and architecture into the emergent elite class of Lagosian Muslims was neither fully “Christian” nor “Muslim,” neither “indigenous” nor fully “colonial”—although one could argue that it contained elements of all of these—but rather provided an interstitial third space of sorts. The religious identity and internal power structures of the Muslim community allowed it to “offer an acceptable alternative way of life based on the . . . traditional way of life, a middle course between the latter and the utterly foreign western [sic] way of life brought in by Christianity.”¹¹⁹ As Muslims, Aguda repatriates were unwilling to be fully assimilated into (Christian) European culture or colonial British models of modernity but had gained a broad enough

understanding of the dynamics of the colonial world to, for instance, confront the British administration in 1894 with a request for their own Islamic courts in accordance with British policy for Muslims in India.¹²⁰ Despite the pressures they placed on the colonial administration, Lagosian Muslims nonetheless enjoyed a good reputation with the administration, and, as Euba puts it, “with the exception of the missionaries, white opinion was unanimously in favour of the Muslims [over the Christians].”¹²¹ Architecture naturally played a central role in fostering this positive image, perhaps best demonstrated in the construction projects financed by Shitta Bey in various places in West Africa.¹²²

The Spread of Afro-Brazilian Architecture in Africa

44 To understand how the Afro-Brazilian architecture celebrated in the Shitta Bey Mosque spread in the broader region, it is useful to examine another mosque, the Lagos Central Mosque (Fig. 27), which was also designed by the Afro-Brazilian architect João Batista da Costa and finished by his apprentice Sanusi Aka in 1897. A minor, but fascinating aspect of this magnificent structure, whose Brazilian architecture was sadly replaced in the 1980s, is the Arabic inscriptions placed over every door on the east, west, and north façades, similar to the inscriptions placed above the two central sections of the Shitta Bey Mosque (Figs. 28, 29). Many Aguda houses boasted inscriptions, sometimes in Latin script, sometimes in Arabic script, and sometimes in both, and while not all mosques followed this trend, a few did, like the Holy Koran Mosque in Lagos (Fig. 30).¹²³ Many Aguda houses introduced entablatures above their doors as well as “architraves, mullions on the surface and shield-like engravings.”¹²⁴ The shield-like engravings are almost certainly borrowed from the Iberian tradition of heraldry that replaced Arabic inscriptions above doors, demonstrating either a conscious or unconscious allusion to the Maghribi and Iberian heritage of the architectural tradition.



Fig. 27 João Batista da Costa and Sanusi Aka, Lagos Central Mosque, 1897, Lagos, Nigeria. Photograph taken in 1981, from John Picton, “Keeping the Faith: Islam and West African Art History in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, eds. Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 221.



Fig. 28 Inscriptions on Shitta Bey Mosque. Photograph © Andalu images.



Fig. 29 Inscriptions on North Façade of Lagos Central Mosque, Lagos. Photograph taken in 1981, from John Picton, "Keeping the Faith: Islam and West African Art History in the Nineteenth Century," in *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, eds. Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 221.

45 According to Teriba, the north façade of the Lagos Central Mosque “shows a greater homage to Brazilian Baroque façades” than did the Shitta Bey Mosque, and became the model for numerous other congregational mosques in the broader region.¹²⁵ Indigenous patrons, impressed with this architectural model, employed Afro-Brazilian architects or their apprentices to recreate its style inland, even in areas where few, if any, Afro-Brazilians lived.¹²⁶ This architectural movement was not limited merely to the Yoruba interior, although that area boasted the highest concentration of such church-mosques. At the beginning of the twentieth century, several other Muslim communities in the coastal cities that constituted important nodes in the Muslim Black Atlantic also built mosques in the same style. European visitors praised the central mosque in Agoué much as they had applauded the Shitta Bey Mosque in Lagos, and after some debate, the Lagosian model was adopted for Ouidah and Porto Novo (Fig. 31).¹²⁷ Some master artisans split time between Lagos and other regions such as the French colony of Dahomey (present-day Bénin), and their apprentices spread out as far inland as Hausaland in Northern Nigeria and along the coast as traditional rulers, chieftains, merchants, and other prominent figures sought to increase their own prestige through this style of architecture.¹²⁸



Fig. 30 Holy Koran Mosque, 1915, Isale-Eko, Lagos, Nigeria. Photograph taken 1961, from John Picton, “Islam, Artifact and Identity in South-western Nigeria,” in *Islamic Art and Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa*, eds. Karin Ådahl & Berit Sahlsröm (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 73.

46 Cleo Cantone has suggested the possibility and importance of Afro-Brazilian repatriates traveling up the coast of West Africa from the Bight of Benin to Senegambia as an explanation for the significant number of church-mosques in that region.¹²⁹ Noting the strong presence of the double square minaret/bell towers, she suggests that they could have their origins either in Maghribi or Luso-Christian traditions. Both traditions may well have influenced this trend, and I would argue that they need not be mutually exclusive as the Iberian model itself drew on the Maghribi tradition.¹³⁰ A. Rahman I. Doi has identified the influence of Maghribi architecture in the common presence of square towers in both mosques and rulers’ palaces as far south as Northern Nigeria, indicating a remarkably dynamic interplay and movement of these architectural features in the region for centuries.¹³¹ It is clear that a significant number of Yoruba merchants originally from the Bight of Benin operated in places such as Dakar, St. Louis, Kaolack, Bathurst, and Georgetown in the late-nineteenth century, making both the transmission of this architectural style and influence from North Africa highly likely. The French

could have been another vector of transmission as they would have been aware of the presence of Afro-Brazilian mosques in the colony of Dahomey. However, some of the examples in Sénégal predate those in Agoué and Porto Novo. Portuguese traders and their Luso-African descendants had been present in the broader West African region for three centuries and could constitute another source, but it is curious that these types of mosques emerged only during the late-nineteenth century, precisely when West Africans began returning from Brazil in large numbers and are known to have financed and constructed the other mosques in the same style.¹³² More research is needed to determine precisely how this style was brought to the Senegambia, but whatever the case and means of transmission, from the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries, Afro-Brazilian mosques based on the model of Brazilian churches spread via the Muslim Black Atlantic as the ideal medium for the expression of a bold new identity in a modern context of inter-religious existence and political contestation.



Fig. 31. Grande Mosquée de Porto Novo, 1912-1935, Porto Novo, Bénin. Reproduced from Barry Hallen, "Afro-Brazilian Mosques in West Africa," *Mimar* 29 (1988): 21.

- 47 Although identity formation in the Muslim Black Atlantic differed from post-conquest Christian Iberia as did individual architectural elements/styles, both these periods faced a similar religious, social, and political context marked by rapid change, assertion of new forms of power, and heterogeneous populations. These similar contexts resulted in significant shared features in the articulations and purpose of their respective architectural traditions. The architectural traditions of both settings did not fit neatly into current and easily identifiable binary categories such as Christian/Islamic, Western/Eastern, European/African, or even colonial/Indigenous as the architects and craftsmen who produced Afro-Brazilian mosques were not tied to the colonial establishment in West Africa even if they did learn their trade in colonial Brazil. Furthermore, much as patrons and builders in medieval Iberia were not concerned

with the origins—ethnic or confessional—of elements within their architecture, the architecture of the Muslim Black Atlantic demonstrated a similar willingness to work across ethnic, social, and religious lines.¹³³ While most Afro-Brazilian craftsmen were likely not intimately familiar with Maghribi architecture, the Iberian architectural vocabulary they inherited contained some of its features because the Portuguese intentionally invoked Andalūsi aesthetics in a similar way and for similar purposes that Afro-Brazilian Muslims invoked the aesthetics of colonial Brazil. In the choices made by figures like Mohammed Shitta Bey and Pedro I of Spain centuries prior, one can see a panoramic view of an architectural style that had its roots in Andalusia and Muslim North Africa but was consolidated in the context of inter-religious and multiethnic encounters in Iberia and conveyed divine beauty to its audience while simultaneously projecting power, social authority, and affluence.

Afro-Brazilian Mosques Today



Fig. 32 Map of West African Cities with Known Examples of Afro-Brazilian Mosques

- 48 To return to my own experience of being stopped in my tracks by the sight of an Afro-Brazilian mosque, many such edifices still exist today. In a recent survey, Reyhan Sabri and Oluseyi A. Olagoke found at least ten mosques in Yorubaland constructed in this style, although they are in various states of disrepair, and concerns remain over their future (Fig. 32).¹³⁴ The dominance of Afro-Brazilian identity and architecture in the Muslim Black Atlantic dwindled in the middle of the twentieth century as the commercial ties between the Americas and West Africa died off and African colonies gained independence.¹³⁵ The latter half of the twentieth century was characterized by

a turn toward the Middle East for a sense of transnationalism and an alternative form of modernity as it represented a greater source of non-Western affluence, power, and religious identity. This can be observed in the addition of domes, cupolas, and slender minarets—sometimes even to Afro-Brazilian mosques (see Fig. 1). In the 1980s, the Afro-Brazilian Lagos Central Mosque was replaced with a structure that incorporates these features in place of the previous Afro-Brazilian aesthetic in order to accommodate more worshippers and because the Afro-Brazilian structure “looked like a church.”¹³⁶ As demonstrated by the negative perception of the Lagos Central Mosque’s church-like qualities, the present era has also witnessed a hardening of religious boundaries. Unlike in the past, the Yoruba are now more concerned with the origins of specific architectural forms than with their effect, or rather concrete form and religious and geographical origins have largely come to dictate their effect rather than the qualities of the structures themselves. Many Yoruba Muslims now prefer their religious architecture to be more “mosque-like” and representative of an “authentic Islam,” and the colonial style of the Afro-Brazilian church/mosque has increasingly been replaced by a more “Islamic” aesthetic that is oriented toward the Maghreb and Arabia.



49 I share Sabri and Olagoke’s view that “the loss of this cultural heritage is not merely a loss to Nigeria, but to Africa in general, as well as to the Islamic and Western world” in large part because of the sheer beauty of these buildings, but also because this style represents a fascinating and dynamic history and identity that is sadly little-studied and therefore is less commonly recognized and its significance not properly understood.¹³⁷ The intercontinental genealogy of the Afro-Brazilian mosque is a testament, as van de Port puts it, to the way “buildings tend to survive their makers (and their culture) and thus come to mean something else in dialogue with new times and generations.”¹³⁸ Afro-Brazilian mosques today recall a centuries-old transatlantic architectural tradition that has carried successive meanings of power, prestige, and affluence; piety and an earthly

taste of otherworldly divine beauty and order; and assertions of self-confidence and religious and cultural presence in a globalized and modern world, even if a Eurocentric view of modernity has made their meanings largely illegible to most of the current generation.



Fig. 33 Ayegbami Mosque, Ibadan, Nigeria. Photo by Omoeko Media, 2017. CC BY-SA 4.0.



Fig. 34 Grande Mosquée de Natitingou, Natitingou, Bénin. Photo by Gbetongninougbo Joseph Herve Ahissou, 2018. CC BY-SA 4.0.

50 Despite recent shifts in architectural preference, elements of Afro-Brazilian style are still present in contemporary mosque architecture. Yoruba mosques still overwhelmingly employ the stucco, curved arches, bright colors, balustrades, and segmented façades that are a direct legacy of Brazilian architecture, even if few are aware of that fact. The Ayegbami mosque in Ibadan, Nigeria (Fig. 33) is representative of smaller, neighborhood mosques all over Yorubaland that no longer boast many of the elaborate elements of Afro-Brazilian mosques but still retain a central tower/minaret (although sometimes rounded) set in the middle of a pediment with a colored stucco exterior. In addition, many grander mosques built more recently in Nigeria and other West African countries with historic ties to Atlantic trade retain the double tower on the front façade. The double tower has become a general part of the broader architectural tradition that need not come as a package with the rest of the Afro-Brazilian style. Notable examples include the Central Mosque of Natitingou in Bénin and the famous Mosquée de la Divinité in Dakar, Sénégal (Figs. 34, 35).



Fig. 35 Cheikh Ngom, Mosquée de la Divinité, 1997, Dakar, Senegal. Photo Lamine Gueye, 2018. CC BY-SA 4.0.

51 Although styles and aesthetic sensibilities naturally evolve over time—and Afro-Brazilian mosques demonstrate this brilliantly—the existence of this enigmatic tradition of mosque architecture and the turn away from it are highly informative of scholarly perspectives on Islam and its practice in Africa. The contemporary move toward more “authentic” Islamic architecture centered in the Arab world and the connotations that the Afro-Brazilian style’s connections with Christianity and Western civilization represent a previous “heterodox” Islam are evocative of a framework that posits Africa—particularly south of the Sahara—as a historically passive and syncretic recipient of a universal tradition of Islam.¹³⁹ Karin Ådahl reproduces this perspective by arguing that Islamic societies in Sub-Saharan Africa were functionally and artistically separate

from the high artistic traditions of the central Islamic civilization and were only able to produce “mere reflections of it in simple and mostly second-rate items,” stressing the need to differentiate between the “indigenous” and “Islamic” heritage in the region.¹⁴⁰ René Bravmann provides an excellent critique of this perspective, reframing the discussion in terms of a process of mutual influence by which Islam is deeply integrated in much of what might be labeled the “indigenous.”¹⁴¹ More recent scholarship such as that of Rudolph Ware has robustly challenged the biases implicit in conceptions of culturally specific expressions of Islamic culture in Sub-Saharan Africa as somehow being more “syncretic” or less “Islamic” than those from the Arabian peninsula. This scholarship also challenges the notion that West Africa existed on the remote periphery of the Islamic world as has often been assumed.¹⁴² The extant Afro-Brazilian mosques challenge many such binary and exclusive categories such as Islamic/Christian, Islamic/syncretic, Islamic/indigenous, colonial/indigenous, or center/periphery and demonstrate the deep but subtle engagement with traditions from elsewhere in the Muslim world. They are a colorful reminder of the poetic irony of how aspects and concepts from Maghribi Islamic architecture and aesthetics conquered al-Andalūs, the Almoravids and Almohads, Christian Iberia, and enslaved Africans in Brazil, and returned to Africa to commandeer Victorian British sensibilities in Lagos as well as the homes of most Yoruba people and the most beautiful places of worship in the Muslim Black Atlantic.

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Notes

1. Ikem Okoye, “African Reimaginings: Presence, Absence, and *New Way* Architecture,” in *A Companion to Modern African Art*, eds. Gitti Salami and Monica Blackmun Visonà (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 113-6.

2. Silke Strickrodt, “The Brazilian Diaspora to West Africa,” in *AfricAmericas: Itineraries, Dialogues, and Sounds*, eds. Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger (Madrid:

Iberoamericana, 2008), 43; Elisée Soumonni, “Afro-Brazilian Communities of the Bight of Benin in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Trans-Atlantic Dimension of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora*, eds. Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman (London: Continuum, 2003), 192.

3. “Islamic” architecture is another category that is at times invoked, in the past frequently with the assumption that it is related to foreign cultures (as in the case of stone architecture the Swahili coast and its connections to Arab, Persian, and South Asian populations) because the architecture for other mosques as well as other buildings built by and for African Muslims tend to be in keeping with the regional “traditional” styles of architecture. For example, Susan Denyer and René Gardi’s surveys of African architecture are focused on “traditional” and “indigenous” forms, offering very little room for Islamic architecture, and leaving little conceptual room for Afro-Brazilian mosques. On the other side, Fassil Demissie’s edited volume *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa* is primarily focused on the legacy of European colonial powers, and Nnamdi Elleh’s work establishes a “triple heritage” of “Traditional African,” “Western,” and “Islamic” architecture. I do not intend to be overly critical of these categories as they can indeed be useful in certain contexts, however they render Afro-Brazilian mosques largely invisible or unintelligible. Susan Denyer, *African Traditional Architecture: An Historical and Geographical Perspective* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1978); René Gardi, *Indigenous African Architecture* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1973); Fassil Demissie, *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012); Nnamdi Elleh, *African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997).

4. T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908* (London: Longman, 1978), 66.

5. The irony may be even greater than Picton realized as the Portuguese tradition itself drew significantly from an earlier tradition of architecture created by Muslims from the North African Maghreb. John Picton, “Islam, Artifact and Identity in South-western Nigeria,” in *Islamic Art and Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa*, eds. Karin Ådahl & Berit Sahlsröm (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 83.

6. Of course, other architectural traditions and styles of mosques also existed in the region and had been present for centuries, but I will argue that this particular model enjoyed wide popularity and success because it was particularly well-suited to this specific historical and cultural moment.

7. Mattijs van de Port, “Golden Storm: The Ecstasy of the Igreja de São Francisco in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil,” in *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Oskar Verkaaik (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 79.

8. The Pro-Cathedral of the Holy Cross is a notable exception here, but even that church has been remade in the Gothic style. Picton also notes the irony of the use of azulejos in a Lagosian mosque which is viewed as European or Brazilian in origin there, but is in turn understood to be African—and thus Muslim—in origin in Portugal. Picton, “Islam, Artifact, and Identity,” 83; Picton, “Keeping the Faith,” 205.

9. Alcione Amos, "The Amaros and Agudás: The Afro-Brazilian Returnee Community in Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Yoruba in Brazil, Brazilians in Yorubaland*, eds. Niyi Afolabi & Toyin Falola (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2017), 73-4.
10. Ayodeji Ogunnaike, "How Worship Becomes Religion: Religious Change and Change in Religion in Èdẹ and Salvador" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2019). See also David D. Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
11. A.R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 65.
12. Recent scholarship by Cynthia Robinson, Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, María Judith Feliciano, and others have robustly challenged the idea of a uniquely mudéjar artistic style. They argue this idea is not historically and culturally representative and largely misleading in its focus on the supposed perpetual reproduction of a timeless, monolithic "Islamic" aesthetic. Cynthia Robinson, "Towers, Birds and Divine Lights: The Contested Territory of Nasrid and 'Mudéjar' Ornament," *Medieval Encounters* 17 (2011): 27-79; Cynthia Robinson, "Mudéjar Revisited: A Prologoména to the Reconstruction of Perception, Devotion, and Experience at the Mudéjar Convent of Clarisas, Tordesillas, Spain (Fourteenth Century A.D.)," *Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003): 51-77; Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "Architectural Languages, Functions, and Spaces: The Crown of Castille and Al-Andalus," *Medieval Encounters* 12, no. 3 (2006): 360-87; María Judith Feliciano, "Sixteenth Century Viceregal Ceramics and the Creation of a Mudéjar Myth in New Spain," in *Revisiting Al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Material Culture of Islamic Iberia and Beyond*, eds. Glaire Anderson and Mariam Rosser-Owen (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 209-224; Wendy Shaw, *What Is "Islamic" Art: Between Religion and Perception* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Oleg Grabar, *The Meditation of Ornament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Gülru Neçipoglü, *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture: Topkapi Palace Museum Library MS H. 1956* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995).
13. Robinson, "Towers, Birds, and Divine Light," 29.
14. Shaw, *What Is "Islamic" Art*, 236.
15. Granada in particular became an important center for architects and other artisans, demonstrating how the architecture of Christian Iberia was inextricably linked with its Islamic past. François-Auguste de Montéquin, "Arches in the Architecture of Muslim Spain: Typology and Evolution," *Islamic Studies* 30, no. ½ (1991): 68.
16. *Ibid.*, 68-9.
17. Disney, *A History of Portugal*, 87; Sing D'Arcy, "Configuring and Reconfiguring Cathedral Space in the Spanish Atlantic: From Cathedral-Mosque to Baroque Machine," in *Religion, Space, and the Atlantic World*, ed. John Corrigan (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 202. In fact, the unique isomorphic foundations of Spanish mosque/cathedrals gave rise to a singularly Iberian liturgical model with its own special

spatial features and positioning of the congregation, priests, and choir. See Justin E.A. Kroesen, "From Mosques to Cathedrals: Converting Sacred Space During the Spanish Reconquest," *Mediaevistik* 21 (2008): 113-37.

18. Kroesen, "From Mosques to Cathedrals," 123-4.

19. Ibid., 115.

20. Ibid., 122.

21. Ibid.

22. Souza, "Architectural Languages," 367. It was not only the elite whose senses were conquered by the beauty of the mosque. A Córdoba town council threatened to kill any craftsman who altered the church's architecture on account of "what [would be] taken down [being] of a quality that cannot be recreated in the goodness and perfection with which it is built." Kroesen, "From Mosques to Cathedrals," 122-3.

23. While most examples of Islamic Andalūsī architecture conquering the senses of Iberians are drawn from Spain, as is most scholarship on Islamic art in Iberia, art historians in Portugal generally agree that the artistic production of both regions shares enough similarities to be analyzed together. Luís Afonso, "Late Medieval Portuguese Frescoes and the Concept of 'Mediterranean Painting' in Iberia," *Mediterranean Studies* 12 (2003): 64.

24. "Mourisco" is a term related to the English word "Moor" and derived from the ethnically Berber Almoravids who used to rule the area. Mouriscos and mudéjares were subjected to certain additional taxes in the same way Christians were under Muslim rule. Today, the common name "Moura" or "Mouro," meaning "moor," is a living indication of Iberia's enduring Islamic legacy. Disney, *A History of Portugal*, 82-3.

25. In the second half of the fifteenth century, a Muslim master carpenter named Azmede Castelão was in particularly high demand and kept on a kind of royal retainer contract. Maria Filomena Lopes de Barros, "Construtores e artesãos muçulmanos: do serviço colectivo do rei ao desempenho individual (séculos XII-XV)," in *História da construção - os construtores*, eds. Arnaldo Sousa Melo & Maria do Carmo Riberio (Braga: CITCEM, 2011), 199-200.

26. The word *alfiz* is most likely derived from the Arabic word *al-ifrīz*, "frieze or edge," or *al-farz*, "separation/isolation." Given their close phonetical similarities, there could possibly be a connection between the English word "frieze" and the Arabic root ز-ر-ف which carries a meaning of "to separate or detach."

27. A.R. Nykl, "Arabic Inscriptions in Portugal," *Ars Islamica* 11/12 (1946): 167-9.

28. Souza, "Architectural Languages," 365.

29. Afonso, "Late Medieval Portuguese Frescoes," 63.

30. de Montéquin, "Arches," 70-1.

31. These arches commonly contained windows or doors and the alfizes were generally placed within larger subdivisions that perfectly balanced each other, creating satisfyingly symmetric façades. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Islam, Art, and Architecture in the Americas: Some Considerations of Colonial Latin America," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003): 48.
32. This feature informed the design of the tops of bell towers and central pediments in the later Afro-Brazilian Mosques. Kaufmann, "Islam, Art, and Architecture," 48; R. Brooks Jeffery, "From Azulejos to Zaguanes: The Islamic legacy in the built environment of Hispano-America," *Journal of the Southwest* 45, no. 1-2 (2003): 302.
33. These minarets were usually situated very close to the mosque but were short enough so that they could be incorporated into the structure of new churches without being elevated too high above them. Jeffery, "From Azulejos to Zaguanes," 304, 306.
34. These features were even more prominent in Portuguese architecture than Spanish. *Ibid.*, 295.
35. Kaufmann, "Islam, Art, and Architecture," 48; Afonso, "Late Medieval Portuguese Frescoes," 63.
36. Afonso, "Late Medieval Portuguese Frescoes," 63.
37. The Arabic word *al-Jannah* is often translated as "heaven" but also carries a literal meaning of "garden" or "paradise." The Qur'an is replete with allusions to paradise as a garden. See for example 16:32 (Pickthall), "Those whom the angels cause to die (when they are good). They Say: Peace be unto you! Enter the Garden because of what ye used to do." or 9:72, "Allah promiseth to the believers, men and women, Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide—blessed dwellings in Gardens of Eden. And—greater (far)!—acceptance from Allah. That is the supreme triumph." Orange trees appear to have been a favorite for the garden paradises in atrios, and the trees served mostly to provide shade and beauty in the warm, sunny climate more than merely to produce fruit. The atrio of the Cathedral of Seville was preserved intact from the earlier mosque. Jeffery, "From Azulejos to Zaguanes," 312.
38. Souza, "Architectural Languages," 368-9.
39. Nykl, "Arabic Inscriptions"; Souza, "Architectural Languages," 369.
40. Jeffery, "From Azulejos to Zaguanes," 299; D'Arcy, "Configuring and Reconfiguring Cathedral Space," 219-20.
41. Afonso, "Late Medieval Portuguese Frescoes," 63.
42. D'Arcy, "Configuring and Reconfiguring Cathedral Space."
43. Souza, "Architectural Languages," 364.
44. Alessandro Vanoli, "The Presence and the Memory of Islam during the 'Spiritual Conquest' of the New World (Sixteenth Century): A Brazilian Case Study," *Franciscan*

Studies 71 (2013): 219-36

45. Maria Luisa Montes, "As figuras do sagrado: entre o público e o privado," in *História da vida privada no Brasil* ed. Lilia M. Schwarcz (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998), 63-171.
46. van de Port, "Golden Storm," 78.
47. Mexican churches in particular possess many strong similarities to mosques through the Spanish churches that were converted from mosques and served as the models for many colonial churches. Specifically the "open chapels" and liturgical model adopted by the Franciscans drew heavily from the architectural influence mosques left on Spanish churches with the royal chapel at Cholula and its links to the mosque-turned cathedral at Córdoba serving as the most prominent example. Jaime Lara offers a detailed account of how monastic orders in Mexico drew heavily from their exposure to North African and Middle Eastern architecture as well as experience evangelizing "new Christians" in Iberia. Jaime Lara, *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 17-39; Vera Peacock, "The Open Chapel in Mexico," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 1, no. 3 (1959): 277-280; Manuel Toussaint, "Evocative Geometry: Mudejar Reminiscences," *Artes de México*, no. 54 (2001): 90-91; León Zahar, "Transformed Geometry: Mudejar Presences and Absences," *Artes de México*, no. 54 (2001): 93-5.
48. While there was a very limited presence of Portuguese architecture in slave forts in ports on the coast of West Africa, West Africans who were forcibly taken to the Americas would have mostly passed through there in transit, while those who lived around these structures permanently were less likely to have been sold and transported. In the central African Kongo region, however, the more extensive contact with the Portuguese and their settlement in Angola would likely have made people from this region of Africa more familiar with Portuguese architecture. This population, however, was far less heavily involved in the forced migrations to Bahia in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.
49. Alexandre Vieira Ribeiro, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade to Bahia, 1582-1851," in *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, eds. David Eltis & David Richardson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 141.
50. Some Africans voluntarily and enthusiastically joined Catholic lay brotherhoods, called *irmandades*, as a means of preserving and continuing ethnic culture and tradition. These brotherhoods would often undertake construction projects themselves. Barry Hallen, "Afro-Brazilian Mosques in West Africa," *Mimar* 29 (1988): 17.
51. The level of opulence became so great that religious orders in the nineteenth century went on a campaign to reduce the "excessive ornamentation" in their churches, leaving them only a fraction as intricate as they would have been for the majority of the colonial era. van de Port, "Golden Storm," 71.
52. Ibid.

53. In the 1860s , the Catholic Church commissioned Friandes to build this magnificent church as well as several other buildings. In the twentieth century the Augustinian priests who oversee the church imported materials from Iberia to increase its ornamentation and gave it its current form. Michael Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 127.
54. Henry J. Drewal, “Memory and Agency: Bantu and Yoruba Arts in Brazilian Culture” in *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (New York: Routledge, 2014), 245.
55. Montes, “As figuras do sagrado.”
56. A 360 degree virtual tour of the church is available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/4101bba7-e5dc-45a7-b99a-4e148311fef0>. van de Port has provided an excellent description of what he calls the “Golden Storm.” Reflections of visitors abound online as well. van de Port, “Golden Storm.”
57. Ibid., 63.
58. For more on this celebrated figure in Brazil’s history, see James Hogan, “Antonio Francisco Lisboa, ‘O Aleijadinho’: An Annotated Bibliography,” *The Latin American Research Review* 9, no. 2 (1974): 83-94. Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *Architecture since 1400* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 152.
59. Paul E. Lovejoy, “Background to Rebellion: The Origins of Muslim Slaves in Bahia,” *Slavery and Abolition* 15, no. 2 (1994): 167.
60. Robin Law estimates that at the time of the slave rebellion in 1835 in Salvador a full 30% of the African-born slaves were Yoruba, and they only came in greater numbers after that. Robin Law, “Yoruba Liberated Slaves Who Returned to West Africa,” in *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World*, ed. Toyin Falola & Matt D. Childs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 349.
61. Ibid., 356; Strickrodt, “The Brazilian Diaspora,” 53.
62. Strickrodt, “The Brazilian Diaspora,” 61; Law, “Yoruba Liberated Slaves,” 360.
63. For more information on the lifestyle of the Aguda in Lagos see A. B. Laotan, *The Torch Bearers or Old Brazilian Colony in Lagos* (Lagos: Ife-Olu Printing Works, 1943) and Lisa A. Lindsay, “To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos,” *Slavery and Abolition* 15, no. 1 (1994): 22-50.
64. Gibril R. Cole, “Liberated Slaves and Islam in Nineteenth-Century West Africa,” in *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World*, eds. Toyin Falola & Matt D. Childs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 45.
65. Titilola Euba, “Shitta Bey and the Lagos Muslim Community 1850-95 (Part I),” *Nigerian Journal of Islam* 2, no. 1 (1971): 21.

66. Adedoyin Teriba, “Afro-Brazilian Architecture in Southwest Colonial Nigeria (1890s-1940s),” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2017), 66-7; Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam*, 28.
67. Reyhan Sabri and Oluseyi A. Olagoke, “Rethinking the Conservation of Afro-Brazilian Mosque Legacy,” *Journal of Architectural Conservation* 25, no. 1-2 (2019): 51; Okoye, “African Reimaginings,” 121; Cleo Cantone, *Making and Remaking Mosques in Senegal* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 110-5.
68. Law, “Yoruba Liberated Slaves,” 359.
69. In many parts of Yorubaland success in trading and the wealth that comes along with it is more closely associated with Muslim families and lineages while success through modern education is more closely associated with Christians.
70. It is worth noting that these are the same trades for which Muslim craftsmen in Christian Portugal were famous. Picton, “Islam, Artifact and Identity,” 78.
71. João Batista da Costa is not given the “Senhor” honorific in historical sources. Lindsay, “To Return to the Bosom,” 29; A. B. Latoan, “Brazilian Influence on Lagos,” *Nigeria Magazine* 69 (1961): 159; Picton, “Islam, Artifact and Identity,” 78.
72. Hallen, “Afro-Brazilian Mosques,” 22.
73. Notable examples of the double tower do exist, such as in Abeokuta. Hallen, “Afro-Brazilian Mosques,” 22-3; Sabri and Olagoke, “Rethinking the Conservation,” 53-9.
74. Okoye, “African Reimaginings,” 122-3.
75. Although it is unclear if he financed the entire operation himself or if he had help from successful Afro-Brazilians as well.
76. Teriba, “Afro-Brazilian Architecture,” 55.
77. Recently the leadership of the mosque has sought to renew ties with Turkey, the former seat of the Ottoman Empire. Rafiu Ajakaye, “Nigeria’s Oldest Mosque Seeks Partnership with Turkey,” *Andalu Ajansi*, October 18, 2018. hdl.handle.net/10079/6e759c06-dc82-49ba-85b4-6do2dd47e804.
78. Brent D. Singleton, “‘That Ye May Know Each Other’: Late Victorian Interactions between British and West African Muslims,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29, no. 3 (2009): 373-5.
79. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam*, 66; Sabri and Olagoke, “Rethinking the Conservation,” 52-3; Laotan, “The Brazilian Influence,” 159; Amos, “The Amaros and Agundás,” 72.
80. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam*, 66.
81. Ayodeji Ogunnaike, “Bilad al-Brazil: The Importance of West African Scholars in Brazilian Islamic Education and Practice in Historic and Contemporary Perspective”

Religions 12, no. 2 (2021): 131.

82. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

83. For example, J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); J. Lorand Matory, "The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yoruba Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 1 (1999): 72-103; Kristin Mann and Edna Bay, *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: Frank Cass, 2001); Stephan Palmié, *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Stefania Capone, "Le pai-de-santo et le babalawo," in *La religion des Orisha: Un champ social transnational en pleine recomposition*, ed. K. Argyriadis and Stefania Capone (Paris: Hermann Editions, 2011). This may also be in part because Gilroy's analysis is largely limited to the Anglophone world. An extension of what Ousmane Kane identifies as the "Arabophone" intellectual tradition of West Africa formed an important part of the cosmopolitan, transnationalism of the Muslim Black Atlantic represented by the Shitta Bey Mosque. Portuguese was also obviously another crucial language for this population for cultural, social, and commercial reasons. Ousmane Kane, *Non-Europhone Intellectuals* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2012); Ousmane Oumar Kane, *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Ogunnaike, "Bilad al-Brazil," 131.

84. Yet another name by which Shitta Bey was affectionately called was "William," given to him by his many Christian friends, demonstrating the normally cordial relations of mutual respect that obtained between Muslims and Christians at the time. Euba, "Shitta Bey Part I," 25.

85. Of course, many of the craftsmen were Muslim, but like the Aguda community and the Yoruba in general, they were affiliated with all of the different religious traditions present in Lagos at the time. Religious diversity did not present a problem for collaboration in creating structures and houses of worship for members of different religious groups. Teriba, "Afro-Brazilian Architecture," 56.

86. Titilola Euba, "Shitta Bey and the Lagos Muslim Community 1850-95 (Part II)," *Nigerian Journal of Islam* 2, no. 2 (1972-4): 8.

87. Euba, "Shitta Bey Part I," 26.

88. Teriba makes the fascinating observation that while the inclusion of the mihrāb and minbar within the same room could be a result of the architects' familiarity with altar-pulpit spaces in churches, corollaries can also be found in many prominent West African mosques such as the Grande Mosquée of Djenné and the more geographically proximate Zaria Central Mosque, suggesting that either or both traditions could have inspired this structure. It is also worth noting again that the layout of many prominent Iberian cathedrals and liturgical structures were influenced by North African architecture, and

that the Islamic Maghrib was in constant contact with West African states such as Futa Djallon. Teriba, “Afro-Brazilian Architecture,” 64.

89. Such as the Cathedral of Zaragoza. Kroesen, “From Mosque to Cathedral,” 119.

90. Okoye, “African Reimaginings,” 120.

91. Teriba, “Afro-Brazilian Architecture,” 63.

92. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, “Structuring Sovereignty: Islam and Modernity in the Mosque of Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha,” *Material Religion* 16, no. 3 (2020): 317-344.; S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1-29.

93. This is of course because Europeans had been responsible for constructing numerous churches, but the Shitta Bey Mosque appeared to have eclipsed them all in terms of grandeur without any involvement from European financing or physical or intellectual labor. Euba, “Shitta Bey Part II,” 14.

94. Marianno Carneiro da Cunha, *Da senzala ao sobrado: Arquitetura brasileira na Nigéria e na República Popular do Benim* (São Paulo: Nobel, 1985), 80-1.

95. Euba, “Shitta Bey Part II,” 14.

96. Olabiyi Yai, “The Identity, Contributions, and Ideology of the Aguda (Afro-Brazilians) of the Gulf of Benin: A Reinterpretation,” *Slavery and Abolition* 22, no. 1 (2001): 73.

97. There was also a decent amount of friction between the Saro and the indigenous population as a result of the former’s frequent Eurocentric (and thus often prejudicial) way of life. This friction generally did not extend to the Aguda, who were more ready and able to integrate themselves, as Vlach writes making “the indigenous Yoruba . . . thus inclined to embrace the Afro-Brazilian as well as elements of the cultural baggage that he might have acquired in his bondage.” The British Consul himself remarked on this difference between the way the Saro and Aguda related to the Indigenous population after a riot targeting the Saros broke out in Lagos in 1857. John Michael Vlach, “The Brazilian House in Nigeria: The Emergence of a 20th-Century Vernacular House Type,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 97, no. 383 (1984): 12; Patrick Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 49; Ojo-Ade, “Afro-Brazilians in Lagos,” 218-9; Femi Ojo-Ade, “Afro-Brazilians in Lagos: A Question of Home or Exile?” in *Back to Africa: Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities*, ed. Kwesi Kwaa Prah (Cape Town: CASAS, 2009), 225.

98. Vlach, “The Brazilian House,” 18-9.

99. Okoye, “African Reimaginings,” 122; John Picton, “Keeping the Faith: Islam and West African Art History in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, eds. Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 204.

100. Adedoyin Teriba, “A Return to the Motherland: Afro-Brazilians’ Architecture and

Societal Aims in Colonial West Africa” in *Design Dispersed: Forms of Migration and Flight*, eds. Burcu Dogramaci and Kerstin Pinther (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2019), 239.

101. Vlach, “The Brazilian House,” 20.

102. Stucco also constituted a more impressive and colorful alternative to the mud and earth traditionally used to cover exterior walls. Sabri and Olagoke, “Rethinking the Conservation,” 51; Vlach, “The Brazilian House,” 16, 19. This was especially the case with the Yoruba *aṣọ oke*, which is viewed as among the most luxurious and traditional of fabrics in use in Yorubaland and also has roots in Islamic arts and craftsmanship in West Africa. Picton, “Keeping the Faith,” 209-14.

103. Teriba, “Afro-Brazilian Architecture,” 78.

104. van de Port, “Golden Storm,” 66.

105. Laotan, “Brazilian Influence,” 159. For the praise other Europeans gave Brazilian architecture found in the Bight of Benin, see Strickrodt, “The Brazilian Diaspora,” 61-2.

106. British explorer R. F. Burton made similar remarks about the house of the successful merchant M. J. Domingo Martins in Ouidah. da Cunha, *Da senzala*, 70-3.

107. Dundonu Amosu, “The Jaded Heritage: Nigeria’s Brazilian Connection,” *Africa: Revista do Centro de Estudos Africanos da USP* 10 (1987): 48.

108. *Ibid.*, 47.

109. This was also the case with respect to academic education. Some children of Brazilian returnees were sent to Bahia to attend school and others were sent from Bahia to Lagos to be educated in English. While travel to acquire these highly lucrative skills increased in the second half of the nineteenth century, in 1847 before the British annexation of Lagos, then king Kosoko sent a trusted adviser, Oshodi Tapa, to Bahia to encourage Yoruba craftsmen to come settle in Lagos, a trip which ultimately resulted in 130 of the first returnees arriving in 1851. da Cunha, *Da senzala*, 70; Olatunji Ojo, “Afro-Brazilians in Lagos: Atlantic Commerce, Kinship and Trans-Nationalism,” in *Back to Africa: Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities*, ed. Kwesi Kwaa Prah (Cape Town: CASAS, 2009), 44.

110. Soumonni, “Afro-Brazilian Communities,” 187; Strickrodt, “The Brazilian Diaspora,” 61.

111. Yai, “Identity, Contributions, and Ideology,” 74.

112. Amos, “The Amaros and Agudás,” 78; Vlach, “The Brazilian House”.

113. Muslims in Swahili city states also distinguished themselves architecturally from the traditional wattle and daub houses through multi-story stone architecture that evoked wealth, religious identity, transnationalism, and a particular orientation of social/familial space. René Bravmann, “Islamic Art and Material Culture in Africa,” in

The History of Islam in Africa, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 509-10.

114. Vlach, "The Brazilian House," 14.

115. Okoye, "African Reimaginings," 114; William Fagg, "Notes on Some West African Americana," *Man* 52 (1952): 120.

116. Teriba, "A Return to the Motherland."

117. Another saying at the time was "if something is great it will be like Andrew's House" or *alamoga bi Peṭeṣi Anduru*. Ibid., 244.

118. Vlach, "The Brazilian House," 19.

119. Euba, "Shitta Bey Part II," 15.

120. Euba, "Sitta Bey Part I," 27.

121. Even some of the most prominent Yoruba Christian clergy "admired the Muslim's sense of devotion, his zeal and his independence of spirit and wished that their Christian flock would emulate these qualities." Euba, "Shitta Bey Part II," 10-11.

122. Ibid.

123. da Cunha, *Da senzala*, 101; Brigitte Oshineye, "Migrations, Identities, and Transculturation in the Coastal Cities of Yorubaland in the Second Half of the Second Millennium: An Approach to African History through Architecture," in *Movements, Borders, and Identities in Africa*, eds. Toyin Falola and Aribedesi Usman (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 145.

124. Teriba, "A Return to the Motherland," 238.

125. Teriba, "Afro-Brazilian Architecture," 68.

126. Sabri and Olagoke, "Rethinking the Conservation," 58-9.

127. Strickrodt, "The Brazilian Diaspora," 60.; Soumonni, "Afro-Brazilian Communities," 187.

128. da Cunha, *Da senzala*, 80; Teriba, "A Return to the Motherland," 237.

129. Cantone, *Making and Remaking Mosques*, 224; Cantone, "A Mosque in a Mosque: Some Observations on the Rue Blanchot Mosque in Dakar & Its Relation to Other Mosques in the Colonial Period," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 46, no. 182 (2006): 383-4.

130. In particular, she makes a fascinating connection between the popular mirador-style minarets common in Senegambia and Sacrista da Capela de Santo Antonio in São Roque, Brazil. And of course, these two architectural traditions have their own historical connections as well. Cantone, *Making and Remaking Mosques*, 153.

131. A. Rahman I. Doi, "Mud Mosque and Their Decoration in West Africa," in *The*

Proceedings of the Hijra Celebration Symposium on Islamic art, Calligraphy, Architecture and Archaeology, vol. II, ed. Abdur Rahman (Peshwar: University of Peshwar, 1987), 430-1.

132. A much more limited (both in terms of numbers but also types of buildings) tradition of Iberian architecture did exist amongst the small Portuguese trading communities, as can be observed in places like Elmina, Ghana, but it seems not to have spread to other populations or been employed for buildings other than churches or forts. George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observances from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); Cantone, *Making and Remaking Mosques*, 219-20.

133. Teriba, “A Return to the Motherland,” 236.

134. Sabri and Olagoke, “Rethinking the Conservation,” 50.

135. Alberto da Costa e Silva, “Buying and Selling Korans in Nineteenth-Century Rio De Janeiro,” *Slavery & Abolition* 22, no. 1 (2001): 88-9.

136. Sabri and Olagoke, “Rethinking the Conservation,” 65.

137. Ibid., 67.

138. van de Port, “Golden Storm,” 65.

139. Teriba, “Afro-Brazilian Architecture,” 68.

140. Karin Ådahl, “Islamic Art in Sub-Saharan Africa - towards a definition,” in *Islamic Art and Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa*, eds. Karin Ådahl & Berit Sahlström (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 17, 18.

141. Bravmann, “Islamic Art and Material Culture in Africa,” 489-517.

142. In fact, he demonstrates how certain aspects of Islamic traditions—most specifically Qur’anic education and epistemology—in parts of West Africa are much closer to historical precedents in the Hijaz from the time of the Prophet than are contemporary reform movements emerging from the Arabian Peninsula. Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Qur’an: Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).



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