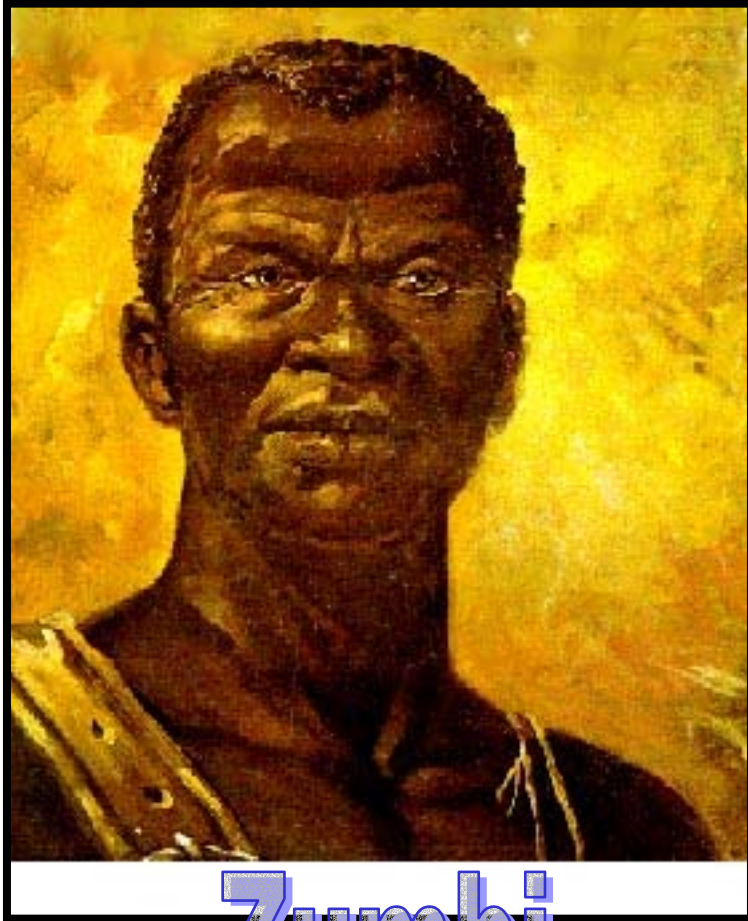


# *A Brazilian Hero*



Zumbi

José Luiz Pereira da Costa



(1) Rural road to the *Serra da Barriga* ridge. (2) The Village, former commercial exchange point between farmers, and Palmares settlers. (3) Pottery woman, Palmares descendant. (4) Pottery for selling at handcraft markets in Maceió city. (5) View at the *Serra da Barriga*. (6) National symbol for Zumbi.



**ZUMBI** DOS PALMARES - INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT OF MACEIÓ CITY,  
homage to a historic rebel, and today a National Hero

## INTRODUCTION

This notebook was organized aiming to give a view to members of National Association For Equal Opportunity on Higher Education, NAFEO, from United States of America, about, both Zumbi and Palmares Movement. It contains marvelous ideals from people, among many others, who spent their time in research to light a spot on an important leader of Brazilian nationality, yet, one of the most important fighter in Americas for the Human Rights.

Was easy to the organizer of this notebook to find intellectual support to write about, both Palmares and Zumbi. Now, many books are available, with large quantity of material. Their contents are based, sometimes, in technical research, like the ones from Décio Freitas, from Benjamin Péret and a masterpiece from Gilberto Freyre, Casa Grande & Senzala.

Even, from the United States, another masterwork, from John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. - From Slavery to Freedom, a History of Negro Americans. Otherwise, in possible fiction, the romance from Carlos Diegues and Everardo Rocha: Palmares: Myth and Romance of Brazilian Utopia. Yet, as mass media peace, Zumbi, from Editora Abril, a major Publishing House in Brazil, sold in new stands, in the seventies.

On the other hand, traveling across Africa for about two decades, the organizer was able to collect books, and hear stories that he hope will not interfere in technical assertions of scientific books. Instead, may it explain some difficult and sometimes inaccessible facts of Negroes in captivity behave.

Working with all this material, and other with names showed in the end of this notebook, we have now, altogether, a different moment in Brazil's Story, when a search for true is stronger than any minor interest in hid skeletons in the hole.

The door of Brazil, via Rio Grande do Sul state, is being opened to NAFEO members, by the key of a Negro Governor, extremely proud of his heritage. Dr. Collares wrote it in 1971, in the early days of his remarkable political career, dreaming, maybe, reach where he is now (walking, long ago, in the corridors of our old and respectful School of Law — we class mates — he told me then: Only when one dream big, great things can be achieved).

As said by one among writers who gave support to this notebook, Palmares was a major event in the whole Continent, in terms of slaves challenge. We hope you will understand the message inside it: the fight was the same, in United States, West Indians, and South America. The means used in the past to hide this important historic event are worthless nowadays. There are means to research, and find, out of the past, inspiration for a fight aiming better days for our communities. Moreover, the cooperation NAFEO, and the Council for Negro Community are working for, can be a large step to consolidate, in a new stage now, international cooperation between descendants of Zumbi and Nat Turner, to give only one name, among many Negro Americans martyrs.

*José Luiz Pereira da Costa, February 1994*

Revisão do texto em inglês: Professora Adriana Menezes Godinho.

# **PALMARES - THE SLAVES' WAR**

## PALMARES - A Guerra dos Escravos.

While still was there slavery in Brazil, slaves constantly shown their rejection to the system via revolt and armed conflict, which frequently finds no parallel in the History of any other people in New World. Those riots, nevertheless, have not found, yet, what Lucien Lebvre called as: "the right to be in History."

Often unknown in frequency and intensity, slaves' riots have been considered as aside of Brazilian historic process.

A certain outside place at History of Brazil, for those movements, served strong historic interest. Among them, must be underlined, the official wish to preserve, as a solid myth, the peaceful, and soft character of slavery system in Brazil.

There was a certain overlook on slaves movements, and as well their participation in development of Brazil's colonial society. The work General History of Brazil, by Adolfo de Varnhagen, book who laid the basis for an official history study in the Country, was after theoretically developed by Nina Rodrigues, a pioneer in studies concerning the Negro in Brazil, who, however, did not manage to change this superficial historic view.

The slaves' riots were not, for Nina Rodrigues, only social protest, but phenomena of multitudinous criminality, or, at most, a return to tribal status. His thesis was successful, since it gave legal support to slaves' riots repression. Yet, masters got out of such thesis the historic label of progressist, proclaiming things like: "The destruction of Palmares have eliminated the most serious threat to the civilization, and to the Brazilian people." However, we know that the opposite is the truth: if something was wrong, it was due to the incapacity of Palmares and slaves to destroy the economic and social system that Brazil was living, the real responsible for Country's underdevelopment.

Anthropologists like Artur Ramos, who fought to dignify the Negro contribution for Brazil — making so many fruitful and serious researches — had, in spite, as well, incurred, somehow, in same governmental historic overlook, about slaves riots in Brazil. They pretended the main objective of riot people was to preserve, only, their african heritage, instead of fighting against the slavery, as a system. Those anthropologists have not understood the politic and social context of slaves riots.

Distant was the way followed by Historic Revisionism, since one could expect from them a coherent ideology, and methodology, leading to a careful study on large mass of oppressed people under the slavery. Instead, the Revisionism simply had ignored the slaves' riots — as if it had never happen—, pretending that the only fights for liberty, during the colonial rule, and the Empire, was free men's insurrections. Actually, the Revisionism lost the focal point, that is, those free men insurrection never attempted to fight against the real base of oppression and underdevelopment present in the Country: the slavery. Moreover, they indeed supported it.

Nobody fought more intensively and effectively against slavery as the slaves themselves. Their defeat was not enough to avoid their presence inside Brazilian historic process, in its more significant angles. One day when Brazilian's hide face would be shown fully, then the slaves' riots will light up several other historic contradictions, that otherwise will remain incomprehensible.

Among the Brazilian slaves riots Palmares had an important place. And, it was not only the first, but the most important, even by its size. For almost one full century slaves from the Captaincy of Pernambuco resisted and challenged continuous expeditions from a major colonial power in the world. It was the most serious problem the colonial Portuguese administration had to face mainly in the second half of the seventeenth century. For more than once Portugal had to admit that fight against Palmares was so important as the war they had to expel Dutch from Brazil. They used some of the most famous military chiefs, and organized more than thirty missions. It was by far the largest war effort made by Portuguese during the colonial rule in Brazil, except the war against the Dutch. In the whole Americas History only Haiti had a more important rule. A famous historiographer, Oliveira Martins, who for sure was not properly a Negro lover, saw in Palmares a kind of Iliad, and named Macaco (Palmares main Camp as the Black Troy. Far for about three centuries, Palmares, still today, in its literary characteristics, and the socialism inside, can cause enthusiasm and emotion.

## *Then, The Black Republic Inside The Colonial Brazil*

*And God said to Moses:  
I've seen the awful suffering  
Of my people down in Egypt.  
I've watched their hard oppressors,  
Their overseers and drivers;  
The groans of my people have filled my ears  
And I can't stand it no longer;  
So I'm come down to deliver them  
Out of the land of Egypt,  
And I will bring them out of that land  
Into the land of Canaan;  
Therefore, Moses, go down,  
Go down into Egypt,  
And tell Old Pharaoh  
To let my people go.*

**James Weldon Johnson**

“Late years at the 16<sup>th</sup> Century – the exact year can't be yet determined – black slaves from a large sugar cane mill went into a huge riot, at the south border of the Pernambuco Captaincy. Bearing scythes, goads and clubs, they control masters and foremen. Then, slaves can feel themselves as masters for the mill that was a symbol for their long oppression. But then, astonishment: what to do with the freedom at last conquered?

They knew for sure that, staying at the mill premises, they would be attacked by organized troops from the Captaincy, against which would be useless any resistance. They knew, as well, that impossible would be hid themselves for sometime in the various small Portuguese villages scattered along the sea coast of Pernambuco, and neighbour state. They knew, the same, for previous experiences from other runaway slaves, about the impossibility to settle in poor shakes few mille off the shore. The only advantage such experience would grant was a free life, but for a very short period, because riding allover, the Field-Captains for sure would find them and bring them back to the slavery. The tactics used by those watch dogs, the Field-Captains, really professionals of the slavery system, were indeed infallible. They prepared carefully a journey for the hunt, and persistently move on until reach the evaders. Once they have reached the slaves,

then to subjugate them was very easy, because of their superiority using fire weapons. These Field-Captains were often free-lancers, and after the slaves' deliver to their masters, they were rewarded with money.

After all these considerations, the victorious slaves assumed a dramatic decision: to hid themselves at the region known as Palmares.

There was no record, until then, that any person has got into the frightful and mysterious area. At that time, the main town of Pernambuco Captaincy was adherent to the coast line; the extreme border was no more than ten miles out of the shore. So, the land after those ten miles, was considered as *terra incognita*. The highlands of Palmares was sharp inside that frame of unknown land, since it was remote and inside of a thick virgin tropical forest, that started at the superior side of São Francisco<sup>1</sup> river. The region has in abundance palm trees, out of what, the name of Palmares came. In a document from 17<sup>th</sup> Century, one can see the following description for the Palmares region: *"A site naturally rough, hilly and wild, so thick and with a so severe structure of trees branches, that in many spots it is completely shielded for any light penetration. Another natural shield is the variety of branches thorns, and thorns from creeping shrubs, all making difficult any human movement across the Palmares forest."* People know that at this wild environment there was, as well, a large quantity of wild animals, as the jaguar, the jackal, the various and poisonous sneaks, and mosquitoes – all a deadly threat for the men. At the same time, as all the rain forest, Palmares was a natural and powerful source for life, in opposition to the same natural capability to expel the invader. The climate inside the forest oscillated between the extreme cold weather, and severe rain shortage. Even the naturals from the region, Brazilian Indians, always preferred to be far from Palmares.

The insurgent slaves conclude, there is no option: face the forest or return to be slaves forever. They leave behind the sugar mill conquered, and move on with women and children, taking along the required tools for a new life, and to open way across the tick bush. They march on for many days, before going into the dark and dense forest. Inside the bush, they open way slowly and painfully, moving among the huge trees, whose branches interweave forming a thick net, so strong that the sunlight barely passes through. The Black People climb and descend the ridge slopes, until they choose on, at the top, where they decide to stay. Then they start the hard work for clearing the bush, and begin the rising of the first shakes, with straw roof. They name these shacks



Mocambos, from Angolan Kimbundo language. Ahead, Mocambo became Portuguese assimilated word, meaning generically all settlements at Brazilian forests raised by runaway slaves.

It is little likely that many of the escapees survived to the long and painful march to freedom, across the Palmares forest. The oral tradition says that the pioneer group was formed by forty rebels – nevertheless, no matter the real number, they were able to built the primitive core for the Palmares Republic, a Black State who survived, struggling, until the late years of 19<sup>th</sup> Century. For more than 200 years, Palmares was a fortress strong enough to resist persistent attempts from masters of slaves and government agents from Pernambuco Captaincy.”<sup>a</sup>

Castro Alves' masterpiece poem on Brazilian antislavery poetry, *O Navio Negreiro* (The Slave Ship), in English version, can be reach at  
[www.dacostatur.com.br/Some.htm](http://www.dacostatur.com.br/Some.htm)

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1 - São Francisco River, know as the River for the National Integration of Brazil, it cross five Brazilian states.  
2 - Excerpt from “*Palmares – A Guerra dos Escravos*”, by Décio Freitas.

# Zumbi

## ONE

Anytime in the eve of seventeenth century, one could see, like a movies of Recife, in the harbor, few ships docked, with folded sails, standing for the cargo. The blowing wind had a smell, sweet but nauseous. The sugar and sugar cane smell was stronger than the sea odor, but they blended in an odd flavor.

Recife was the export port for the sugar; the main source of income to Brazil's starting economy. The whole Northeast lived from daily plant, crop and sugar cane transformation. Even the ones not directly connected to this, as cattle breeders and general merchants depended indirectly on the richness out of sugar production. When sugar export was fine, the sugar masters had plenty of money to buy everything.

As Europe had purchased all sugar manufactured in Brazil, the farmers produce more sugar; expand their plantations, covering the long coast of Northeast with a wide green carpet of sugar cane.

Ships queue up on their turn to receive the precious consignment of sugar. Some people moved around the harbor at ease: they were White, well dressed and discussed updated matters — slaves: purchase more or not. A White man, moving in the harbor, talking to friends, would study his chances of buying a sugar mill, property of a Portuguese eager to return home. The price was too high. Still in the port, there was a warehouse with piles and piles of sugar, and some machines imported from Portugal. Yet, there was a warehouse, where a cargo to Recife called the attention: lying in the floor, still in shock due to the shameful journey, inside the Navio Negreiro<sup>3</sup>, women and men were left.

They came from Africa's West Coast, bought by slaves' traders, from chiefs, and tribal kings. The payment for those human beings was only tobacco and gin. Then, the remainders who stood up the fantastic journey, would be sold to the sugar mills owners. They would work on their industries; their houses; their farms.

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<sup>3</sup> - Salve's ships.

## TWO

"Was Zumbi dead?" The question, from mouth to mouth, as the wind blowing in the woods, was made in every small village inside Pernambuco State. Across the sugar cane plantations, toward the ranches, the question had reached farway places where Negroes, living in small groups, were planting their own crops, taking care of their caws, pigs, chickens, and other animals. The farmers, owners of large scale sugar cane plantations, nevertheless, were just awaiting for the confirmation: Zumbi's death would mean the end of a savage fight, and the end of The Negro Kingdom.

Negroes, like many Indians and some whites nevertheless, had not accepted the news concerning King Zumbi's death. He was not humans, but a god, the God of the War. Zumbi was immortal, they used to say.

Some, however, were saying that he was defeated; and the whispers were so strong that Negroes started to think it was true. Inside Senzalas<sup>4</sup>, in the whole Northeast of Brazil, throughout the nights, the wizards called their deities, and prayed the rite song for resurrection. If Zumbi was, actually, dead, then their pray would give him back his life. In opposition if he was not death, but in danger, it could help him to save himself. Night after night the sad moan came out from many Northeast Senzalas.

The slaves believed in their magic powers. If they could use it plus the courage and the high powers of Zumbi, they would defeat the colonial army weapons'. So, night after night the slaves kept on praying for Palmares kingdom survival, with the final victory of Zumbi, that would mean freedom for all Brazilian slaves.

Otherwise, inside the Senzalas around Olinda, the tune was another. They had lost any hope. They were singing just funeral songs. Anyone could see, lying in the sun or in the rain, in the same place, the Pelourinho<sup>5</sup>, used to beat the Negroes, the dead head of Zumbi, the King of Palmares. His head was there, lying like a macabre trophy.

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<sup>4</sup> - Slave's owner Big House

<sup>5</sup> - Place for slaves whipping.

## THREE

By the seventeenth century slavery was a quite normal behavior. To hold war prisoners as slaves were routine then, even in some European Countries. For the large sugar cane plantations, which required so many peasants, the use of slave labor seemed to be the only available solution. The first settlers sent to Brazil tried to use Indians as slaves. Nevertheless, they failed completely: "the Indians produced too little, and died early after becoming a captive," say some historiographers. "The African so humble, so mild and submissive accepted the hard job without protest," assert other historiographers.

However, the history and sociology say this is untrue. The cultural anthropology — says professor Arthur Ramos — shows us "that the Negro adequacy to rural works is a consequence of matching regimens. The Indian has behaved as a splendid slave before the state of settlement in the farms. In the transition from the nomadism to the rural system the Indian failed unabridged. In antagonism, the Negro has qualified perfectly to the farm work, mainly because his higher cultural stage, far superior to the Indian."

Another lesson can be learned out of ancient slave participation on Brazil's History: Negro had never been the docile type, all submission, unable to react. True indeed the Pai Manso<sup>6</sup>, and permanent unpretentious behavior was never the rule. The Negro, even being far better worker than the Indian, because of his cultural background, was never a good slave. Because of that he reacted violently against the slavery regime. Almost four hundred years of slavery show clearly the several revolts they made, not only in Brazil but in many countries in the Americas. From the individual escape, to gigantic insurrections, they always tried. In those movements a sense of fight was present, the wish of showing personal dignity, the contest for a common cause.

This search for dignity, contesting in favor of all the negro brothers, in an organized warfare, is the story of Zumbi.

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<sup>6</sup> - Uncle Thomas.

## FOUR

The sugar cane farmers used to visit Pernambuco frequently, when new consignment of slaves began to arrive at Recife port. They used to stop over, searching for the slave market opportunities, often presented in auction. Before that, they used to examine the slaves: when male, by touching mussels and their teeth; when women, looking the general shape. The eventual buyer used to survey children, as well, in spite of that, they would often be sold, at least, with one of their parents.

In this consignment — almost ready for the auction, one could identify, in a corner of the warehouse, a woman tied by a chain in the ankle. Her gesture revealed she was not a common one. The way she used to sit; the way other Negroes treated her, all confirmed that the rumors spread by the cargo owner were truth: among the slaves there was a Princess.

— "Who wants to buy the Aqualtune Princess?" Boomed the auctioneer.

Standing near the Princess was an old woman, about thirty years old. Probably she was brought by the slaves' drivers, by mistake, or, eventually, in a special arrangement with the chiefs or kings in West Coast. She had her reason to be annoyed: the woman was not from the same area Aqualtune was, but she knew about her, and she respected the people from the Princess' kingdom.

Louder the old woman claimed several times for a certain Zumbi — the devil; master of the war, the one to set free all slaves!

Nevertheless, in the early years of the seventeenth century the profess of an old woman or any other black men would mean nothing.

A sugar cane farmer, then, bought Aqualtune. A small group went along with her. The farmer acquired around ten slaves, all from the same area, places known, nowadays, as Kpandu, Ho, Akosombo, Aflao, and Lome. Altogether they were Ewes. Born in the forest emerging from the banks of Volta River, the group, after the capture, was transported to Elmina Castle, not too far from Volta Region, where they were born. It was the place of their childhood, adolescence, and finally site of their untimely death. At least concerning the ones left behind: their family and their friends. Somehow it was the place were they had left their own souls. Aqualtune was an Ewe Princess.

## FIVE

A sugar cane mill comprised several buildings, almost all of them for sugar production.

They had a millstone; a refining house; the furnaces; the copper vessels' house, and few warehouses to shelter the sugar, before they sent it to the port.

There was very near the industrial complex the Casa-Grande. It was a very solid building with only one level: the farmer's house. Following the Portuguese spirit, and the social stage, those houses used to be large, with a garden, many rooms, but, as states Gilberto Freyre in his book "Casa-Grande & Senzala": "The pompous radish eaters (the Portuguese) used to walk on the streets followed by, sometimes, four slaves: one to carry the hat; another to hold the raincoat; a third one to brush their suit, and a fourth slave to comb their hair. "All this ostentatiousness would represent an ascetic behavior at home. This external performance used to be supported by food shortage, and an extremely poor furniture layout inside the Casa-Grande." Among the facilities there was a Chapel. Sometimes, depending on the wealthy of the farm owner, a resident priest could be found there.

The compound had, yet, a Senzala, described as a group of huts, each one with only one door, and no windows, but small holes. Often the Senzalas were build semi-underground.

## SIX

The newcomers were immediately sent to the Senzala. Aqualtune, from the moment she got in disgrace, and the slave's driver bought her, started to see so many monstrous things that another maybe would not hurt her more than she already was. Mistake, she again got shocked in the darkness of the Senzala, as she was for so many days, almost a full life, in the murkily hold of the slave ship.

Brought often from the West Coast and from Angola, many Senzala's residents were able to talk one to the other in Yoruba, Fanti, Ashanti, Ewe and few other languages. So, when the night was come, Aqualtune and the arrived others started learning lessons from the people arriving from the daily work in the farms. Stories of

suffering and hard work started to be told. Melancholic songs, from Africa, started to be sung.

Slaves whispered names of home Gods, in endured exercises, all composing the sounds farmers' owners dislike. Depending on the farmers' mood the songs and the prayers wouldn't go on, but stopped violently by the hand of the foreman. However, even being not annoyed the owner, the function has never lasted too much. The slaves had to lay in the floor their fatigued bodies, to be ready early the next day for another journey.

Then Aqualtune slept no more as a Princess. She thought she had lost forever, in Africa, her noble status. Thinking so, she put her head in a pillow's simulacrum and quietly tears started to roll in her face. Nevertheless it was a mistake; she simply couldn't know that again she would be a Princess.

Early morning the slaves used to organize a very insubstantial meal and start moving to the plantation, where they would work for the whole day, until the sunset. They would have few breaks for their trivial repast. Those who were lucky, instead of marching to the fields, would stay doing home work or, even, labor in the mills.

No mistakes could the slave practice: doing so, the most common punishment was the palmer and the rush.

To slaves three options were left commonly: a great portion just accepted the fate, and worked hard in the fields for about seven up to ten years, and then, with lost health; without energy, just die.

Others forced a condition of sympathy to the farmers to get a job inside the house; in the mills or, eventually, working as job bosses. Those remaining would work, but dreaming about the day they would escape to the forest.

Some years before Princess Aqualtune had been brought, a group of about thirty or forty fugitive slaves from mills of Pernambuco, arrived to Sierra da Barriga, a far place from the coastline.

They had made a fantastic journey, with nothing more than scarce tools like small ax, scythe, and machetes, stolen from their masters. Then they had opened a way across the thick forest, climbing a mountain where the forest was, to reach the paramount where, finally, they started settling.

The soil was fertile, the vegetation opulent and generous. Together, showing a pleasant skyline, thousand of palm trees could be seen. It gave to the place the actual name: Palmares.

Despite all the security system, used by job bosses, it was possible to escape. Whenever it took place the farmers used to organize immediately large groups of foremen and hunters, named Entradas<sup>7</sup>. When the hunt expedition was successful, they use to bring the caught slaves home, for painful punishments. Rush sessions; immobilization on tree woods, or humiliating carry of a yoke for oxen, used to be the most common revenge.

All the violence, all the security systems weren't strong enough to stop the growing escape of slaves. In the early days of seventeenth century, slaves run out to the forest frequently, generating a very difficult task to the slaves' hunters.

They started, then, to cluster themselves in small men's groups. Those groups became to be known as Quilombos<sup>8</sup>, and they spread all over the Northeast, and Southern states as Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro. However, Palmares made the history.

At Palmares the arriving men used to survive eating mainly fruits — so common in the area, as oranges, watermelons, pineapples, mangoes, bananas, guavas, jacks, coconuts, and roots. Meat they got out of hunting animals in the forest. Fish came from many streams, and to fish they used the same method as in Africa. Somehow they had experienced a process of historical retrocession, since at home, in Africa, some of them had been farmers, craftsmen, businessmen, and herdsmen.

Palmares, then, was nothing more than a small refuge, deep in the jungle, containing few huts.

Time moved on, and more slaves arrived at Palmares, and almost all were men. The wave of Negroes to the bushes of Palmares got simultaneously another direction: the slaves already settled organized expeditions to capture women in the nearby farms.

Professor Décio Freitas, in *"Palmares, the Slaves War"* says: "The first Palmares settlers were too little to represent a feasible economic and social community. First of all, there were no women. It made men frequently march over the plantation down the hill to conquer their 'Sabinas'. Not only Black women, but Indians, Mulattoes, as well as White. The need to kidnap women from different races was due to the scarcity of Black women in the farms and mills, since the farmers always had preferred to buy male than female. Historic papers say about poor free White women who scaped spontaneously to

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<sup>7</sup> - Entradas. Mercenary troops to capture runaway slaves.

<sup>8</sup> -Quilombos. Escapees' slaves town.



live with Quilombolas\*, at Palmares. This is not an exception in history, since in the United States, during the eighteenth century it was common the scape of White women, mainly Irish, Scottish, and British reduced to 'indentures servants', with blacks and mulattoes."

A small village started rising. Men began to prepare the land for the seeds, and the fences identified a rudimentary regime of property. That was the time when, instead of eating only frugal fruits from the trees, roots, vegetables, and grains became the result of early crops. Inside the houses the elements of a family could be seen: women, children, stoves and pans with cassava, maize, meat. Rudimentary beds and, depending of the man or the woman, some frugalities like a piece of mirror or sometimes flowers' vessels. Outside the house, surrounded by the fence, chickens, pigs, oven, to produce bread, and the small plantations.

The new settlers, no more slaves, trying to avoid difficulties with the White men, would prefer few people knew they were living as free people. But they could do nothing about: the news spread out like the wind: there were Negroes living as free people somewhere. In the nights, people inside the Senzalas heard stories about the free Negroes, about their community. Many stories' listeners took the decision of breaking with the status quo and trying to escape to *Serra da Barriga*, to join the free community.

## SEVEN

From 1630 on, new events came to improve the growing Palmares. Pernambuco state was fighting against the Dutch. The Dutch, very efficiently, had disembarked in the capital of Pernambuco, then Olinda city. The Portuguese consequently were much more concerned about the whole colony of Brazil, than slaves, property of farmers.

The war made the productive system, as sugar cane plantation, and sugar production almost collapse. The security system to avoid slaves escapes became weaker. Because of that, more slaves found the way to the Palmares community.

Palmares, in early stages of its formation was a confuse place. It was the materialization, somehow, of Babel's tower, with many people speaking different African dialects. Among them, as well, many locally born people speaking Portuguese and bearing, already, Brazilian and Portuguese habits. With them, as well, many Indians

could be found, speaking their own dialects. Finally, there was in Palmares White people, many, for sure, justice's escapees.

Furthermore so many huts were built that Palmares instead of being a village became gradually a group of villages, one far from the other, but all of them connected somehow. This because of their need of being together, to defend themselves from any attempt from the Entradas.

This entire human complex, generated spontaneously an administrative system, with a rudimentary Government. The responsible, one Chief, used to be, simultaneously, the Governor, the Justice, and the Mayor.

All based upon what they're used to at home, in Africa. Therefore people known as nobles or part of noble families at home became the Chiefs, Kings, Queens, Princesses and so on.

## EIGHT

Life has surprises, and Aqualtune was to receive a good one. She could never imagine, from the moment she crossed the Atlantic Ocean, inside the murky hole of the *Navio Negreiro*, to become again a noble woman, an African Queen, inside Brazil.

The Princess Aqualtune, in the best African style got married, became a beloved Queen raising her children, two males and some females.

Meanwhile, in 1644 Palmares faced the first serious test. The Dutch then dominated all the state of Pernambuco having decided to know more about Palmares. They checked many stories heard about the free Negroes village.

After few strategic studies they decided to send an armed Dutch expedition under the command of Rodolfo Baro to destroy the Quilombo. The Quilombolas were always in alert for the eventuality of a Portuguese assault. So, when the Dutch corps started showing up in the forest, the Quilombo defense system was in alert. They prepared traps using the trees and the soil. When the Dutch were inside the prepared area, trees started to fall down, and, suddenly, they started to receive charges of arrows and spears on their rear-guard; in their flanks. The Quilombolas defeated Baro. Many of his soldiers laid dead and he had no option left, but a withdrawal. His defeat was not more humiliating then it was because of the rudimental weapons used by the Quilombolas.

There was, few months later, a second attempt from the Dutch. They had prepared more carefully a new incursion, at this time under the command of João Blaer, a highly qualified Dutch soldier. When Blaer reached to what he thought the heart of Palmares, he started facing what we may call, nowadays, a Guerrilla. The Dutch soldier started the attack then. The Quilombolas draw back, and waited. If the Dutch moved forward again, then they would come from all the sides, and quickly attack, to disappear again through the thick forest.

For three months Blaer was doing not much more than avoiding to fall down in a mortal ambush. The Quilombolas, on their turn, kept showing that they were not planning to give up their liberty without fight. The three months war was important to show that Palmares was much bigger than the stories told in Pernambuco.

During the fights the Dutch rode inside some parts of the Quilombo. They set fire to large portions of maize plantations, with no practical results, since, as much as they moved inside burning it out, more they saw maize plantations. The Dutch understood that any attempt to keep on burning the plantations was just waste of time.

Finally, wounded mortally by the Whites' natural enemy, the malaria mosquito, Blaer returned to Recife city. He had only one minor victory, destroying just one small Quilombo. With the two failures the Dutch had decided to leave Palmares in peace.

Many Africans from Yourubaland acclaimed the victory as a Xango<sup>9</sup> triumph. A victory of the god who punishes with fever the humans who attempt to affront him. The Dutch had provoked Xangô\* marching against his people, peacefully living in the forest.

In the course of the days that followed the defeat of the Dutch, Quilombolas and farmers told many stories. Almost all, cited one name: Zumbi. The Negroes celebrated their African rites. The people of Palmares had found peace and met their dignity, the same old prior dignity that the shameful captivity and slavery had smothered.

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<sup>9</sup> - Xangô. Yourubá deity.

## NINE

After Dutch's defeat, chronicles concerning Palmares were all connected to Aqualtune and her family. Two of her children — Ganga Zumba and Gana Zona — became kings of the two most important Mocambos. The lack of trustful records concerning that period leads to conclusions more than to facts. The stories are more truthful when they refer the fact that Aqualtune had daughters and one among them gave her a grandson, and this grandson was named after a God of War — Zumbi.

Zumbi, the grandson of Aqualtune, Ewe Princess, was to write an important page in the History of Brazil. He was to be, hundred of years later, one of Brazilians Nationality fathers, a Nation's Hero as Tiradentes<sup>10</sup>.

Zumbi was to be born while Palmares faced the earliest war, against the Dutch. He came on time of the first victory slaves had at Palmares' history. There was time to prepare the fights against the Dutch, as there was time to pray to the Gods for a powerful, wealthy and wise grandson for Aqualtune.

Zumbi was born free, exactly as those who, hundreds of years later, would choose him as their symbol.

And free Zumbi had a normal life, running among the trees of the forest; hunting small bush animals; fishing in the various streams and rivers nearby his Mocambo<sup>11</sup>; in lands of Palmares, inside nowadays State of Alagoas. He grew along with his brother Andalaquituche, moving toward almost the whole Palmares. He knew the nearer Mocambos very well. This was part of his future war activities.

Very little Zumbi experienced on slavery. Living in Palmares he was like an African, inside Brazil. Yet spiritually strongly connected with his brothers in captivity. Constantly he heard sad and disgraceful histories about slavery.

He heard, as well, stories from Africa. Aqualtune, his grandmother — as any common granny — told him many tales about the Ewe. About a soft and pacific people, called The Fantis. Told him stories from the people named Ga, believers in many important deities, and that used to fight against their enemies using the feet, as if they

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<sup>10</sup> - Tiradentes. Martyr of the Independence of Brazil.

<sup>11</sup> - Mocambo. Group of houses, or huts, inside the Quilombo

were dancing. Those Ga people had moved to the Coast, moving like ants, and doing a noise like Nkra, Nkra. It seemed this was the origin for the name Accra. Zumbi heard stories as well about the people named The Ashantis. Living in the thick forest they were very rich, powerful in war, and craft in gold.

Then, after what she thought was the end of her days, she was again, living exactly as if in Africa, as an old mother and grandmother, running a kingdom of free people.

Among a dozen of grandsons, Aqualtune hold special love for one: Zumbi, a free young boy like her brothers and friends in the good long days before the war in Yorubaland. War ended in defeat for the Kingdom of her step parents, and with her expatriation, among many others, to the Americas.

The Dutch were finally expelled, in the year of 1654, from the whole Northeast of Brazil, and, by consequence, Portugal moved again freely. Then was time for the reconstruction, to organize again the economy annihilated by war.

It was not a Portuguese strategy to start a new war, then against Palmares. There was another economic point considered by the Portuguese when assembling their tactic: Jamaica had started to dispute with Brazil the international market for sugar. Northeast was, because of that, in a deteriorating stage. The close coming years would prove this fact: the plantations stopped growing; in fact, they started decreasing. Less men's labor was then required. There was a real armistice between Portuguese and the outlaw community of Palmares. Nearby burgs of Serinhaém, Penedo, Porto Calvo and Alagoas developed a strong commerce with Palmares. The Quilombolas, on their turn, exported cereals, vegetables, bush animals, fishes and pottery. They used to import, in this commercial exchange, tools, agricultural implements, guns and gun powder.

## TEN

The wide Quilombo of Palmares was then a narrow strip of land wide 180 miles along the coast between Saint Agostinho Cape, in Pernambuco State, and northern part of San Francisco River, belonging of nowadays Alagoas State.

The area, hilly and with thick forest used to comprise the Garanhuns plateau, *Dois Irmãos* and *Banana* mountain ridges, today part of Viçosa County, Alagoas State. The Quilombo was in the area surrounded by *Cafuchi*, *Juçara*, *Pesqueira* and

*Comonati* mountain ridges, far beyond *Serra da Barriga*, the place where the first slaves settled, escaping from sugar cane mills.

The place was remarkably sheltering: all fruits one may need were there, free, in the trees. The palm trees were ready to give the roof to the huts; material for the manufacture of hats, baskets, sleeping nets, fans and brooms. Using the body of a tree named *Pininga* they were able to rise their huts, sometimes large houses for chiefs and kings. From some tree bark they were able to produce rustic dresses. Palm tree was their eden tree, since almost everything they could get out of it, including oil and butter. Even spirits for their deities and for themselves were produced, as well.

Palmares was then in her apogee. Even blacksmiths could be found there. All the inherent aspects of a typical African community were there. Palmares' residents, at that point, felt themselves much more African than Brazilians. Probably, only the Portuguese language, used among them, since was impossible to learn hundred of dialects, was the sign to define that the place was not Africa anymore, but Brazil.

They kept praying to their gods; eating their native food; speaking at home and among the similar family or tribal brothers the same dialect or language. They kept teaching the children as if they were African children. The family structure was preserved as at the far home.

The fast growing commerce between the free people of Palmares and the White settlers, in the region, was not enough to make blind Mocambo's leader. They could see it was just temporary. The farmers, year after year, saw their slaves disappear, escaping to Palmares. The existence of Palmares by itself was a permanent encouragement to the escapees. Palmares' position had consolidated, making waves of slaves search for their liberty over there. Simultaneously, it increased Palmares men's capacity to challenge the farmers. Quilombolas, more and more, organized rides to capture slaves, even inside the *Senzalas*. Palmares, in her beginning only a shelter for runaway slaves, became the center of resistance for the whole Slavery System in Brazil.

Any slave arrived in Palmares became, immediately a free citizen, under de rules of the place, and the orders of chiefs and kings. Although, in an uncommon excrescence, the slaves captured in the farms kept their status in Palmares. Palmares used to have her own slaves, again in a confirmation of Africa's style, brought along with the slaves. The Negroes caught inside the *Senzalas* were brought as slaves.

Those who had escaped from their masters, those Palmares accepted immediately as free citizen. Nevertheless, the slave condition inside the Quilombo was not permanent. It was to supply eventual need, when there was shortage of men's labor at Palmares.

The opposition from the farmers was never strong, during the Dutch period. After the Dutch expel from Brazil, actually, farmers started organizing themselves, and destroy, at least, small Mocambos. The Government of Pernambuco was not yet prepared to organize any troops to face Palmares' outlaws.

Bartolomeu Bezerra, a Portuguese, in 1602 and 1608, rode over Palmares by the first time. The farmers had never approved Palmares. Then, in 1668, sixty years later, the farmers, both from Alagoas and Porto Calvo reached to a Treaty, named "*União Perpétua*" (Union Forever).

The agreement terms said they should organize a powerful army, to ride over the mocambos and capture, as much as they could, runaway slaves. They defined, then, some rules, a budget and prices, like: they would use all food the troops could seize. Escapee slaves, if belonging to a member of the Union, would be returned to their owners, against a fee payment of 12,000 Reis. This fee would decrease to 6,000 Reis, if the slave gave himself up spontaneously. Captured slaves, belonging to other farmers, would be sold by higher price, except boys under the age of twelve years old. The runaway Negroes, wanted by murder, in raids over the farms, should be hanged, with no mercy.

In the year of 1669 another city, Serinhaém, joined the União, in a worthless decision. There was no money to keep the troops doing raids over the Quilombos. Even Governor's decision, by decree, saying recaptured slaves from Palmares ought to be sold to other parts of Brazil, but Pernambuco, was fruitless. The aim of this decree was to affect Palmares' fame as the major point of resistance for the Slavery System. Nevertheless, slaves kept on running away to Palmares.

## **ELEVEN**

The early years of seventieth decade, showed the apogee of Palmares, with a population of about fifty thousand inhabitants, living in various Mocambos. Two of these Mocambos had famous Chiefs: Zumbi and Andalaquituche, his brother. Both men, now

with their own families, with wives and children, great grandsons of Queen Aqualtune, an old and respectful woman.

Palmares was then a kind of Federation. The chiefs and kings of Mocambos used to meet formally, to held discussions concerning important points of their routine. Customarily, as well, to match points, related to an always present probability: the war!

A new Governor, Fernão Sousa Coutinho, reached in 1671 to take office in Pernambuco. His mission, following orders from Portugal, was to give an end to Palmares adventure.

Inside Palmares, Ganga Zumba, son of Aqualtune, and uncle of Zumbi, was the Governor, or King, of the largest Mocambo, Cerca do Macaco. Zumbi, on the other hand, was a strong young man, under the command of his uncle. He had his own ideas. He had his own men in arms, permanently preparing his troops for war. However, he respected and obeyed uncle Ganga Zumba's orders.

The new Governor had authorized a first ride over Palmares, under the command of Captain André da Rocha, and Lieutenant Antônio Jacomé Bezerra. After an incursion in which there were no casualties, Jacome captured two hundred people.

That was not a large victory, but it was very important to the farmers and the Government. In so many years, it was the first time they could achieve something against Palmares. A promotion made of young Jacomé, instead of Lieutenant, an early Colonel.

Jacomé took his time to organize himself and his soldiers. One year later, with his army well trained, carrying ammunition for six months he rode again over Palmares. Again he destroyed several Mocambos and burned various plantations.

Then, something different happened. A large group of Quilombolas, in a fulminating counter-attack, surrounded large portion of Jacomé's files, and, in a vibrant fight, annihilated all the rows. The Colonel faced the hordes of a new warrior: Zumbi was the name he heard more from his soldiers. Jacomé tried to reorganize the troops, yet there were so many casualties and desertions that he had no way besides return defeated to Recife.

The Quilombolas had their own loses. By the first time, they had organized a retaliation. A large column marched over the nearby town of Porto Calvo, burning miles of sugar cane plantations, as the White used to do, at Palmares maize plantations.

Cristovão Lins, Mayor of Porto Calvo, organized troops, and rode over Palmares. Irately, he destroyed one Mocambo with seven hundred huts. Then there was a war



involving the Government of Portugal, via his administrators in Brazil, and the outlaw Federation of Palmares, under the command of King Ganga Zumba.

Again there was a new Governor for Pernambuco State. His name was Pedro de Almeida. The year was 1674. He arrived with strict orders to attack Palmares. To achieve it, he organized a troop of Indians, Mestizoes, and Negroes, who made part of the troops of Henrique Dias, himself a negro, hero of Dutch expulsion from Brazil.


The Quilombo faced Dias, as they did before with others, and was strong enough to stand. Palmares was a reality then, as in the previous seventy years, or even more.

Throughout that period they had always expected for the war. They were able to stock gun powder and weapons, mainly after the defeat of the Dutch.

Low profile of Dias, and Palmares' troops reaction, were not enough to intimidate the new Governor. He ordered Master-Sergeant Manuel Lopes to ride again over Palmares. This incursion had revealed the wide extension of Palmares. A record from that period says: "A total of two thousand houses, all fortified, was the castle where the Negroes have resisted to our troops. They had resisted up to we have put fire on it. Then, they started to runaway."

The troops of Master Sergeant Lopes developed a new stratagem: instead of persecuting the defeat, they transformed the place in a camp. Another finding that surprised the invaders was the ruins of a Chapel, with Christian statues. That was an early finding, concerning the syncretism, that amalgamated, in Brazil, African and Catholic believe.

Some few months later Manuel Lopes got to know that Quilombolas had reorganized themselves twenty miles ahead. His troops marched again and faced a bloody battle. Zumbi was among Quilombo defenders and showed himself as a courageous leader. He fought using guns and spears, and the invaders nearly killed him, when two bullets hit his chest. The name Zumbi and his courage became a myth among the Quilombolas and the governmental soldiers.

Master Sergeant Lopes' Camp was, then, facing an unforeseen problem: food ran out, and there was no way to get it. The enemy forces had surrounded his troops. Little could he do, but ask for support from the Governor. It came via Fernão Carrilho, a distinguished soldier. Carrilho became famous in previous fights against Quilombolas, in another State, Sergipe. Carrilho did the same, as well, against Indians, at Sierra de Pecara. 

Immediately after becoming the new commander, Carrilho adjusted a working policy with the rulers of interested villages. They should arrange two hundred archers and one hundred guns, what would cost 700,000 Reis. They should arrange, also 100,000 Reis, monthly, as troop provision. In return he would sell for 12,000 Reis any Negro captured, but the ones under the age of three years.

The farmers couldn't give all Carrilho was requiring, regardless he rode over one Mocambo in special: Aqualtune's old woman Kingdom. Ganga Zumba and a large portion of his people ran out. There was a second ride, against the Mocambo of Gana Zona, brother of Ganga Zumba. Then, Carrilho, surprisingly, was about to fight against nothing. The settlers, before troops' arrival destroyed the whole Mocambo. Remained, then, to the invaders, nothing more than ashes.

Carrilho did the same as Master Sergeant Manoel Lopes had done before: he transformed the place in a Camp, and requested support to Recife. Meanwhile, in a distinct stratagem he started doing quick ride over the Mocambos, returning immediately after to his Camp. He was being successful using this tactic.

It was a big award for him when he rode over Mocambo Amaro, and in an extremely bloody battle slaughtered hundred of Negroes, including Tocolo, son of Ganga Zumba. Among other prisoners was Gana Zona, brother of Ganga Zumba, the King; Zambi and Acaiene, both sons of Ganga Zumba. Happy with his victories Carrilho trumpeted in Recife: to destroy completely Palmares was then a job for thirty or twenty soldiers. Porto Calvo town acclaimed Carrilho. Then he announced the foundation of Bom Jesus e a Cruz Camp, deep in the heart of Palmares.

## TWELVE

Much more than Palmares' whole destruction, the clear objective of Pedro de Almeida, Governor of Pernambuco, was to achieve the Negroes entire submission. Moreover, considering the fact that so many defeats made ripe an unconditional surrender. The Governor based his strategy in a fatherlike treatment to the Quilombolas. He was, actually, thinking of transforming Palmares in a new Portuguese settlement. The Mocambos would be transformed in a Colonial Village.

They had conveyed to Ganga Zumba, the Negro Brazilian King, the Governor's views. So, he was weighing carefully the Governor's proposal. Zumbi thought about many

years of war. He considered his brother and son arrested. King Zumba pondered the difficulty to arrange gun powder and arms. Despite it, the end of the war could mean a peaceful life, with an increase in food production. And, above all, he would get full reconnaissance to his people, as legally free citizens.

The old King took his decision. In 1678, he sent to Recife three of his sons, and another eleven assistants. All escorted by a messenger, sent by the Governor. When they returned home, Ganga Zumba's son brought a Treaty of Peace. Palmares rose to the condition of Villa, and Ganga Zumba received the Portuguese title of Mestre-de-Campo (Field Master).

In Olinda there was even a Mass as thanks given to the war end. At Palmares large portions of Quilombolas applauded the wise gesture of King Ganga Zumba.

Zumbi, however, was against the decision of his uncle. He believed it was not important to set Palmares free only. The remaining Negroes still slaves would be unprotected. Histories he heard during his life about slavery led him to stand that way.

A large portion of Palmares was ready to follow the new status, conquered by Ganga Zumba. Another portion, mainly formed by young people, started preparing themselves again for the war.

Young people's reaction to the Treaty reached to the Governor. To avoid new battles he set free Gana Zona, brother of Ganga Zumba, and sent him for discussions with Palmares' ruler. Meanwhile, from many peaceful Mocambos, youth ran away to join Zumbi's troops.

Ganga Zumba was still the leader and he was strong enough to sustain reconciliation. Yet, the youth, even the ones living inside the Royal Mocambo, plotted to dethrone the King. As it could have happened in Africa, they did it in Brazil: they poisoned the King's food. Then, Ganga Zumba, first generation of Afro-Brazilians, born free at Brazil's slavery time, was killed by his own people.

Zumbi, his nephew — son of a sister of his, and grandson of Aquatune, the Ewe Princess; the Palmares Queen — became the new leader. He would be a tough and sanguinary leader.

## THIRTEEN

Zumbi, then the King led Palmares to her bloody age, involving it in frequent battles. His followers loved him, the general people in Palmares feared him. The farmers in the surrounding villas simply hated him, and wanted to see him dead. Loved, feared, and hated, Zumbi ruled indisputable over Palmares.

Even some White, in Recife, used to say that "his courage and energy is shameful for us and inspiring for his followers."

Record from Portugal Colony Council refers: "Zumbi is a rush beating over Recife's people."

The truth was that Zumbi had no more where to buy gun powder and arms. To get it he had to seize to the enemy, during the battles.

There was again a new Master-Captain. Goncalo Moreira was his name. Efficiently he marched against Palmares, and in a quickly fight arrested two hundred Negroes. This kind of victory, nonetheless, was not sufficient to destroy Palmares, nor to arrest Zumbi. Changes in the Government, as new Governor and new Master Captain occurred.

A new decade started, the eightieth years. Authorities wished to find Zumbi, and even forgive him, if he agreed to give up to the fight. Warnings started appearing in bill boards, respectfully addressing to the Negro leader as "Captain Zumbi," asking Zumbi to stop fighting.

No answer was given by Zumbi who, month by month, year after year, fought enemies in his Camp, or marched against the farms. A system of compensation stands: Captured Negroes, by governmental troops, out of successful rides would be returned to their farms, again as slaves. On the other hand, when Zumbi's men successfully drove over the farms, slaves are set free, enlarging resources of Palmares, or Zumbi's corps, as well.

The eightieth years were in the second half: it was 1686, and Portugal placed a new Governor in Pernambuco, Souto Maior. Fernão Carrilho was again in charge to ride over Palmares.

The Quilombolas got to know about it in time to prepare themselves. The fights were then more favorable to the Negroes than to the Whites, making the Governor to contract another leader. Domingos Jorge Velho was the new in charge, and he promised to destroy the whole Palmares. To do so, as others had tried before, he would receive one

fifth of the revenue out of slaves sold, land for him and forgive for his men. The discussions concerning the agreement with Velho lasted for some years and only in 1691 they had signed it.

More than one thousand men under the command of Velho invaded Quilombo do Macaco, Zumbi's headquarters. Domingos Jorge Velho men's were not expecting a real war, but a simple hunt of Zumbi. Marching straight to Macaco they thought Negroes would runaway. However, in opposition, what they found was a terrible resistance. In spite the number of soldiers, Velho's troops had to withdraw. That was a glorification for Zumbi. His people soon started to see him not more as a man, but as a god — the God of War, as he was named when born.

The Governor, informed about the defeat, sent more troops, now under the command of Master-Captain Bernardo Vieira Melo. Zumbi, aware about the new attempt, sent his men to dig a ditch six hundred meter large, protected by palisades and contenders. Twice the troops of Velho and Melo, now together, attempted defeat Zumbi.

The King himself, as the leader of his troops, repealed the enemies. The fight was awful. The Quilombolas used all kinds of weapons that they could manufacture. Even boiled water the women threw over horrified soldiers. Zumbi's men in a superior position marched over the Government troops, but wisely Zumbi decided to leave them withdraw, since the night was falling. He decided the children and oldies to return to their huts to fabricate spears and arrows. There was no time to sleep. Zumbi kept on moving energetically. He was proclaiming his men to fight until die, to die as free people.

The other day came and the fight was not much different from the previous one: Government troops using guns tried to pull down the barricades. Zumbi's men fought using even their own hands. Some of them using hooks caught soldiers and pulling them inside the fence killed them using their own bare hands. It was an uneven fight, since soldiers were well armed. Negroes had almost nothing to combat. Nevertheless, Palmares resisted.

Palmares rested tense, but quite by the night of January 23rd, 1694. The Commanders of Governmental troops, took the firm decision that Palmares would never fall down, unless they could use heavy guns from artillery. Velho expected to get what he needed.

Three sides of Mocambo do Macaco, remainder of Palmares resistance, lay siege. A fourth side lay to deep abyss. So, Velho thought of breaking Palmares resistance by keeping them with no water and scarce food, until the cannons' arrival.

Inside the Quilombo, Zumbi and his people had a wellspring from which they got water. There was food too. To compensate general lack of weapons, they've packed gutters with sharp spears. Velho, on his turn, was preparing himself a long fence, reaching the abyss' border, involving then almost all the Quilombo. Velho wanted, using that strategy, to fight nearer against Zumbi.

Early 23rd January the attack took places in the three fronts. The troops couldn't reach even to half way to Palmares's fence. Strong counter-attack pushed back the government troops.

Then, on February 3rd, six cannons, pushed by a troop of two hundred soldiers, arrived to Sierra da Barriga. They faced then a problem: how to use it, since their gunshot was too short, and the fences and ditches made impossible to come nearer.

Velho built a long fence, likewise the one Palmares had. They did it very quickly and efficiently. It was a great and unpleasant surprise for Zumbi. It is said that Zumbi ordered the execution of the sentinel in charge of that fence.

The war field was ready. However until today one question remains: why did Zumbi accept that kind of war, instead the one he and his people had been doing for so many years? The guerrilla was ideal. They had no conventional ammunition. They did not have heavy arms. Yet they were against an abyss. Like Spartacus, a slave too, he also had just one alternative. History says that Spartacus being pushed against an abyss, sent his men, using long ropes, descend the abyss and return again, at that time in the rear-guard of the enemy. Zumbi could not do the same.

In the dawn of February 6, 1694, cannon shots opened wide holes at Mocambo's fence. Through those holes, soldiers started to invade Zumbi's Camp. Zumbi and his people had only one way to go: the abyss. Blood flowed like a river. Negroes and Whites died brutally.

Two gun shots hit Zumbi, and everybody around saw when the bullets hit him. Despite, he followed fighting. His men kept on fighting, being pushed against the deep chasm. Many of them fell, or were pushed inside the abyss. It was a real massacre with old people, women and children, apart the men, being destroyed by the soldiers.

Zumbi and his men were fighting for nothing besides freedom. Understandable why they fought with no arms, against well equipped soldiers, dyeing dozen after dozen.

The followed day, when the sun rose again there was almost nothing unless dilacerated bodies on the ground. The soldiers of Velho, and Melo started immediately to

search for Zumbi's body. They found nothing. They thought that either Zumbi had felt down inside the abyss or he was able, during the night before, to pass across their lines.

The war reached to an end, after three years of intense fights and one battle of twenty two days. The soldiers put down more Mocambos, hoping to find Zumbi.

One year had gone, and armed groups still used to invade town like Penedo, to obtain powder gun and arms. One of those groups, by the command of a mulatto named Antonio Soares was captured by the soldiers. They knew Soares was an important man below Zumbi's orders and took him to Recife, beneath strong guard. Delivered to Andre Soares de Mendonca, he was tortured, and disclosed the place where Zumbi was hiding himself.

They took Soares along, and he was able to access Zumbi, then an escapee King. Soares was received naturally. Suddenly and unexpectedly he pulled out a knife and hit Zumbi with it. All the soldiers were near the hut and, in spite so many, and even being mortally hurt, Zumbi fought bravely until they finally killed him.

## EPILOGUE

The date was November 20th. The year, 1695. Palmares, the multi kingdom inside Brazil — ruled at her apogee by a Queen, former Ewe Princess — was supposed to celebrate nearly one hundred years of existence. Instead of any celebrating day this was the day when Andre Furtado de Mendonca beheaded Zumbi!

That was the night when Senzalas started to whisper stories about Zumbi — God of War. For nearly three hundred years only inside Senzalas, and Afro-Brazilian shrines, Zumbi was remembered. White Brazilians set Zumbi aside the History of Brazil.

Emerging Negroes, and his descendants, in the national society, nevertheless brought Zumbi's back, inserted at the Nation's Heroes Gallery, as one of Brazil's most important fighter for humans rights.

Zumbi was never a slave. The importance of being free, this very special feeling he was lucky to enjoy, was what he dreamed for his people. Yet, he died for it.

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Publicado em 5 de fevereiro de 1994.