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BLACK CHIEFS, WHITE TRADERS AND COLONIAL POLICY NEAR THE KWANZA: KABUKU KAMBILO AND THE PORTUGUESE, 1873–1896*

BY JILL R. DIAS

DESPITE its relevance to the understanding of modern political attitudes in Angola, the experience of nineteenth-century Angolan societies living under direct Portuguese rule has been little studied in depth.1 This essay therefore looks at a region of Angola long exposed to colonial influence and domination, at a moment during the later nineteenth century when white and black interests were in close and open conflict. It is offered especially as an illustration of the kind of records, as yet hardly explored by historians, which are available in Luanda.2

The essay, which looks particularly at the relationship of the black chief Kabuku Kambilo with the Portuguese in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, relates to several different aspects of recent work on Angola and other parts of Africa. The case of Kabuku Kambilo provides a further illustration of the initiative shown by black chiefs in the development of 'legitimate' commerce in Angola in this period.3 It also affords yet another example of the skill with which many African rulers exploited the needs and weaknesses of European colonial governments in order to

* I am indebted to Dr David Birmingham for his initial advice and encouragement and for his helpful criticism of an earlier draft of this essay. I am, of course, responsible for any errors which remain.


2 This paper is based largely on research carried out in the Arquivo Histórico de Angola (AHA) in Luanda during 1974. The manuscripts in the AHA relating to nineteenth-century Angola are divided into two principal categories: códices, or copy-books of official correspondence and orders relating to all levels of the colonial administration; and avulsos, consisting of several thousand bundles (maços) of unbound original correspondence, petitions and orders, classified by district. A detailed description of the manuscript collections in Luanda has recently been provided by Joseph C. Miller, ‘The Archives of Luanda, Angola,’ Int. J. Afr. Hist. St., vii (1974), 551–90.

Kabuku’s main concern was to maximize his power within the framework of colonial society and politics, and for a brief period after 1873 he succeeded in dominating much economic and political life in the Cambambe region. During this time his career was not unlike those of some other African leaders whose interests temporarily coincided with those of colonial administrations while clashing with the interests of white colonists and traders.

The Setting: Portuguese and African Society near the Kwanza in the later nineteenth century

In the nineteenth century the Mbundu tribes under colonial rule to the north of the river Kwanza were divided into numerous chiefdoms, or sobados, of widely varying political significance, whose rulers were known to the Portuguese as sobas. Their population was highly mobile: especially near Cambambe, where rainfall was irregular and starvation a constant threat, a temporary dispersal of people from this area to all parts of the interior seems to have occurred annually, in the dry season. Most people were farmers. In a good year of rain much of the soil in the concelho of Cambambe was said to be fertile, producing the basic subsistence crops of manioc and maize, as well as small amounts of rice and beans by the 1860s. Cattle were also very important as a source of wealth.

Despite its declining economic significance before 1700, the Kwanza valley had remained an important corridor for Portuguese colonial activity and penetration of the interior, attracting a continuous flow of outsiders who traded European cloth, firearms and aguardente ('fire water', i.e. brandy or rum) in exchange for ivory and slaves. With the outlawing of the Atlantic slave trade and the expansion of 'legitimate' commerce, in the early nineteenth century, it began to experience an economic revival. Two developments among the many social and economic changes taking place in the Kwanza region during this period of renewed economic

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6 In the nineteenth century the concelho of Cambambe (see map) included twenty-nine sobados within its jurisdiction, lying between the rivers Lukala and Kwanza.

7 Information about this dispersal of population comes from the letters and relatários of colonial officials and sobas scattered through the avulsos and códices of the AHA. Colonial administrators themselves admitted the impossibility of arriving at an exact statistical knowledge of the black population of the interior and no reliable estimate exists for the concelho of Cambambe at any moment in the nineteenth century. See particularly, AHA, códice 5–6–3, ofício no. 606, José Vieira da Silva, administrator of Cambambe, to the governor-general, 11 Aug. 1884.

8 See, for example, AHA, códice (G (5) 3–33, relatório of the governor-general, c. 1868, f. 51. This relatório is wrongly dated 1840 in the catalogue of the AHA.
Part of the lower Kwama region of Angola. The shaded area shows the approximate extent of the territorial jurisdiction of Kabuku Kambilo in the 1870s. Dotted lines indicate the principal trading routes which converged on Dondo from the interior in the same period.
activity are especially relevant to the themes discussed in this essay: the establishment of European coffee plantations in the concelho of Cazengo, on the northern side of the river Lukala; and the transformation of the small feira, or market, of Dondo, on the right bank of the Kwanza, into the most important commercial centre of the interior by 1870. The two were closely associated.

The commercial exploitation of coffee by both African and European farmers increased rapidly in the Cazengo district after 1850, soon becoming the principal branch of local agriculture. Great diversity of agricultural organization probably existed at this date. Coffee grew wild throughout the concelho and much that was sold and exported from there was probably collected in the virgin forests which covered most of the countryside. At the same time coffee was also being planted by African cultivators, including some sobas, a number of whom apparently acquired concessions of land from the Portuguese government in the 1850s. Already by 1870, however, these were overshadowed by several large-scale European plantations, or fazendas, run on slave labour.

The development of plantation agriculture in Cazengo and throughout the Kwanza valley was linked to the growing prosperity of Dondo. The feira of Dondo had long been a slave trading centre and the European fazendas of Cazengo and neighbouring regions were probably founded with slaves purchased there. By the 1870s a growing number of European traders resident in Dondo owned or rented coffee fazendas in Cazengo. At this date much of the commerce in the harvested coffee was concentrated in the hands of Dondo trading houses established in Caculo. From here the sacks of coffee were carried on the shoulders of Bailundu carregadores and ferried across the Lukala on their way to Dondo, where they awaited shipment to Luanda.

9 The separate district of Cazengo, including about thirty sobados to the north of the Lukala, was created between 1840 and 1845. It became a concelho in 1857: see Mário Milheiros, Índice Histórico-Corográfico de Angola (Luanda, 1972), 91.

10 See AHA, cédice G (5) 3-33, relatório, fo. 28.

11 Two important sobas, Kukulu Kamuinsa and Hoka, each possessed coffee plantations in the concelho by the 1860s. A petition of soba Hoka, in 1884, recounts that his father had cleared the land and cultivated it from 1852 onwards, acquiring a concession from the colonial government in 1855: see O Pharol do Povo, no. 71, 18 June 1884; similar examples are cited in no. 29, 8 Sept. 1883. According to information given to Henrique de Carvalho in 1884 there were 200 coffee plantations by African farmers in Cazengo in 1874: see H. A. Dias de Carvalho, Descrição da Viagem a Muctiânguia (Lisboa, 1890), 1, 122.

12 In the 1860s there were three important coffee plantations owned by Europeans: Colônia and Palmira, situated in or near the sobado of Ndala Tando, between Golungo Alto and Ambaca; and Prototipo, which lay near the sobado of Kukulu Kamuinsa on the north bank of the Lukala. They are described in the governor-general's relatatório of c. 1868 and an account of their development up to 1884 is given in Carvalho, Viagem, 1, 120-4.

13 The owner of the first successful coffee plantation in Cazengo, a Brazilian immigrant called João Guilherme Pereira Barboza, later told how, on his arrival from Brazil in the 1830s, he went to Dondo to buy twenty-five slaves with which to begin the plantation: see Boletim Official de Angola, no. 8, 1 Nov. 1845.

14 The importance of the coffee boom in Dondo’s prosperity was emphasized in an editorial article published in O Mercantil, no. 55, 20 July 1871. The construction of a new
Dondo's importance by the mid-nineteenth century grew out of its favourable position on the right bank of the Kwanza: with the expansion of 'legitimate' commerce the relative cheapness and ease of river transport assumed a new significance and the decade which followed the initiation of a regular steamship service between Dondo and Luanda in 1867 witnessed a spectacular expansion in Dondo's trade and population. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century there were between thirty and forty European commercial establishments in Dondo, several of which were branches of larger Luanda houses. A close trading network linked these firms with branches in Cazengo, Pungu a Ndongo and Malange, the transport of goods between these points being almost entirely provided by Ovimbundu carregadores by 1880. At this date hundreds of people from all parts of the interior were also entering Dondo daily to trade, sometimes travelling long distances on foot along the trails which led to their destination.

Three major trade routes from the interior converged on Dondo in the nineteenth century: from the Lunda kingdom, in the far northeast, ivory, wax, salt and rubber passed by way of Kasanje and Malange to Pungu a Ndongo, thence following a path along the right bank of the Kwanza to Dondo; from the Ovimbundu plateau, south of the Kwanza, a trail led northwards through Libolo as far as the river, bringing wax, rubber, palm oil and slaves; finally a third route from the lands of Jinga, to the north of the Lukala, led south-westwards through the fertile hinterlands of Ambaca and Cazengo, bringing cereals, groundnuts and coffee. As European demand for these goods rose after 1870 Dondo became increasingly important, not only as a centre of direct commerce and reciprocal transactions with the interior, but also as an entrepot for imported European goods and for the agricultural products of neighbouring regions.

The enthusiasm of nineteenth-century Portuguese sources makes it
easy to exaggerate Dondo’s significance in terms of the wider economic development of northern Angola and of African trade in general in these years. Dondo’s prosperity was comparatively shortlived, reaching a broad peak between 1870 and 1880. Thereafter the volume of trade fluctuated and began to fall off through a variety of factors, such as a drop in the price of coffee on the international market; the shortage and consequent high cost of carregadores; the growing inadequacy and inefficiency of river transport between Dondo and Luanda; and the adverse effects of drought and disease. Moreover, even at the height of Dondo’s fame as the largest and most important European commercial centre of the interior, it is clear that a considerable amount of African trade was probably finding an outlet to the coast in other directions, notably northwards to Ambriz, where trading conditions were more favourable.19

The increase in the volume of trade entering the concelho of Cambambe from the mid-nineteenth century onwards enhanced the economic and political significance of sobados bordering or straddling the main routes leading to and from Dondo. Although some sobas apparently participated directly in trading activities,20 most of the chiefs in the concelho probably derived their main advantage from the interception of trade flowing to Dondo through their control of ports and passage across rivers and from the illegal exaction of tribute from traders entering their territories.21 In addition Portuguese sources suggest that some sobas also profited from the robbery and plunder of trading caravans. The insecurity of trade routes grew in the 1870s.22 This was aggravated by frequent armed hostilities among African chiefs, during which even the rumour of an intended war was sufficient to cause a panic and halt the flow of commerce into the concelho.

All these activities by sobas and their people prejudiced European commerce and helped to create a conflict of interest between black rulers and the white trading communities of Dondo and Cazengo. Although the size of these communities was probably insignificant in relation to the total population, the increase in the number of Europeans, induced to settle in the Kwanza valley by its growing agricultural and commercial prosperity, was relatively sudden and important in terms of the history of that region. By 1880 agriculture and trade along the Kwanza and Lukala rivers were coming to be dominated by a handful of wealthy white colonists, most of whom were newcomers within the last ten years.23

19 This was observed, for example, by Monteiro, Angola and the River Congo, 11, 87–8.
20 For example, soba Kilonga Kiahungu, whose sobado included Dondo itself, seems to have been regarded more as a trader than as a farmer by contemporaries: see AHA, avulsos, recenseamento of citizens in the concelho of Cambambe, 1873–86.
21 At least three sobas in the concelho of Cambambe operated ferry services across the Lukala and Kwanza rivers with the knowledge of the government: Kabuku Kambilo and Mubanga a Tutu, on the Lukala; and Kisuba Kïaketa, on the Kwanza: see AHA, avulsos, Cambambe, passim.
22 See AHA, avulsos, Cambambe, passim.
23 The origins of most of the Europeans who settled in the concelhos of Cambambe and Cazengo in these years are hard to discover. Nor is it easy to get more than a general
general their relations with the black and *mestiço* (half-caste) communities they encountered were notoriously bad. Tension resulted from a number of different causes. By this date the arrogance and sense of racial superiority felt by many Europeans was already finding expression in attempts to exclude the representatives of old-established *mestiço* families from municipal office or from posts in the colonial administration. It was also observed that relations between black and white traders were especially characterized by mistrust and suspicion. This was attributed to the arbitrary and often false measures used by white traders when weighing the coffee, rubber and other products brought for sale by African producers.

Above all, in Angola as in other parts of southern Africa by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, much racial bitterness resulted from conflict over land. Throughout the Kwanza valley by the late 1870s, lands claimed to have been formerly cultivated by African farmers, especially along the fertile margins of streams and rivers, were passing gradually into the hands of white farmers. By this date most of the *concelhos* of northern Angola were experiencing conflict over the alienation of land to white settlers. This conflict was nowhere more acute by 1880 than in Cazengo, where the boom in coffee prices over the previous decade had made its commerce and production attractive to African and European alike. The new white coffee planters, or *fazendeiros*, ceased to respect the independence of African-cultivated areas and allegations of the violent burning of African crops and possessions by European colonists were frequent. African grievances found no legal redress within the *concelho* because of the connivance of successive local administrators with the European *fazendeiros*, who controlled the judiciary and used it in their impression of the size of the European communities in this area, since race and colour are rarely indicated in official Portuguese documents and the numbers probably fluctuated according to trading conditions. Before 1850 barely 40 Europeans were counted as resident in the *presídios* of Cambambe and Massangano, which then included Cazengo: see J. J. Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios Sobre a Estatística das Possessões Portuguezas...* (1846), 111, 4–A, Fig. 1. Twenty years later their numbers certainly did not exceed 300. In 1876 there were calculated to be 161 Europeans in Cazengo: AHA, *acórdos*, map 18–1–5, statistical map of population in the *concelho*. Recenseamentos in Cambambe in the 1870s and 1880s suggest that there were between 50 and 100 Europeans in Dondo, depending on the state of trade.

Several centuries of miscegenation had produced a significant *mestiço* population along the Kwanza and Lukala. In the 1870s so-called ‘civilized’ Africans, assimilated in varying degrees to Portuguese culture, permeated every level of society and politics in this region, exercising a wide influence not just as traders but as lawyers and colonial officials. See, for example, Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 93–8.

F. A. Pinto, in *Angola e Congo*, 303–4, contrasted this mistrust with the confidence which prevailed in relations between Africans and Europeans further north, near Ambizu.


This was later cited as one of the chief causes of the revolt of the Ndembu against the Portuguese in 1872: see *O Pharol do Povo*, nos. 9, 11, 19, 23, 7 Apr.–27 July 1883.
own interests. The racial animosities produced by this situation form an
important part of the background to the nationalist struggle of recent years.

By 1870 the Mbundu to the west of Kasanje and Jinga, along the
Kwanza and Lukala rivers, had experienced several centuries of Portuguese
colonial rule. How effective was Portuguese authority in the Kwanza
valley? It is convenient to preface an answer to this question by a brief
account of the internal political organization of the Mbundu states in this
region.

It is likely that the social and political organization of the western
Mbundu in the nineteenth century bore many resemblances to that of
other systems included within the so-called 'matrilineal' belt of central
African peoples to which they belonged. The main political units of each
sobado were the villages, or sanzalas, inhabited by a mixture of free blacks
and 'slaves', called muleke. The sanzalas 'belonged' to individuals,
described as patrões in Portuguese sources, who were probably lineage head-
men, the principal sanzala serving as the capital, or mbanza, of the sobado,
where the soba himself lived.

The succession of sobas had both elective and hereditary features. In
each sobado a small group of counsellors, or makota, elected a new chief,
usually from the same descent group as the preceding soba. The suprem-
acy of the royal lineage within each sobado seems to have rested on a com-
bination of material and spiritual superiority. In common with many
other African rulers sobas exerted their control by this date chiefly through
command over slaves, supplies of arms and gunpowder and wealth from
imported European goods, such as wine and cloth. Moral and spiritual
superiority was conferred on them through the possession of relics
belonging to the sobado, possibly the bones of their predecessors. However,
their power was far from absolute: the makota retained the right to depose
a ruler, replacing him by another, should he desert the sobado or behave
in so oppressive a manner as to justify his expulsion.

When the decision of the makota regarding the choice or expulsion of
a ruler was not unanimous it often resulted in factional violence between

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28 See Angolana (Documentação Sobre Angola), I (1783–1883), ed. Mário António
Fernandes de Oliveira (Lisboa, 1968), 188.

29 See, for example, a letter of the makota of soba Ndumbu a Pepu to the govern-
general, Mar. 1876, a copy of which was published in O Cruzeiro do Sul, no. 223, which
stated that '... the uses and customs of the sobado Dumbo Apepo, handed down and
preserved since remotest antiquity, give to the makota the right of electing the soba from
among the relatives of the deceased ruler ...'. Political attitudes among the western
Mbundu regarding the holding of political power by females seem to have differed from
those of eastern Mbundu tribes, at least by the nineteenth century. In the concelho of
Cambambe by 1870 the election of women as sobas was a fairly common practice in a
number of sobados: compare, for example, J. C. Miller, 'Nzinga of Matamba in a New

30 Evidence from Portuguese sources in the AHA, and particularly the case of Kabuku
Kambilo discussed below, suggests that the employment of political stratagems based on
'manipulations' of kinship also played an important part in the maintenance or extension
of power of sobas in this region.
rival contenders for the sobado. The resulting political instability usually embraced a far wider area than the sobado immediately concerned, through the loyalties produced by a complex kinship structure linking the lineage groups of several sobados. In the concelho of Cambambe such situations were often further aggravated by the incompetence or corruption of local colonial officials and by the vacillation of the Luanda government. The frequent political conflicts among the Mbundu subject to Portuguese rule in the nineteenth century prompted more than one local administrator to urge the extinction of the sobados. But the preservation of African political structures was essential to the maintenance of Portuguese rule over a population whose passive acceptance of colonial authority sprang from its traditional customary obedience to elected sobas.

The nature of a soba's relationship with the Portuguese government was theoretically defined in the ceremony of undamento. This confirmed the election of a new soba and signified his acceptance by the colonial administration. The ceremony was performed by the chief and his makota in the presence of the administrator of the concelho. It took the form of a declaration of loyalty to the Portuguese and belief in Catholic faith by the new ruler, who also promised to fulfil certain obligations towards the colonial government, such as payment of taxes and provision of men for the army or labour services. In return the Portuguese government undertook to protect and defend the new soba against unjustified deposition from within the sobado, or against attack from without.

In practice, for much of the nineteenth century, the relationship of the Portuguese with black potentates in the interior of Angola was conditioned chiefly by the penury and consequent military and administrative weakness of the government. Colonial authority remained heavily dependent on the loyalty of influential African rulers, whose continuing power made them potentially overmighty subjects: in this respect Portuguese rule was probably little different from that of other European powers in Africa at this date. It was a policy further dictated in Angola by widespread corruption among colonial administrators in the interior and by the contempt of successive governor-generals for the low social origin and behaviour of many white settlers. At least until the 1880s the Portuguese government was both unable and unwilling to change this situation by spending the money and manpower necessary to bring about a deepening of administrative control.
In these circumstances, even in the Kwanza region, effective colonial rule was only maintained through the sporadic zeal and effort of a few individual administrators, whose authority was rarely backed by adequate military force. The ease with which Portuguese authority might be annulled was strikingly demonstrated by the successful revolt of the Ndembu in 1872. Following the loss of this concelho, Portuguese prestige along the Kwanza and Lukala sank to its lowest ebb. The memory of this disaster haunted the imaginations of succeeding governor-generals for over a decade: during these years they were especially wary of offending sobas whose continuing power and influence could make them either dangerous enemies or valuable allies of Portugal.

Kabuku Kambilo and the Portuguese, 1873-96

By the middle of the nineteenth century the largest and most populous sobado in the concelho of Cambambe was acknowledged to be Kabuku Kambilo. Its territorial jurisdiction extended from the banks of the Lukala, in the north, southwards as far as the river Mukoso. The dominant political influence of the sobado at this date was a result not only of its large population and consequent superior military power, but also of the favour and support it received from the Portuguese government. The loyalty of successive rulers to the Portuguese was already well-established by the end of the eighteenth century, when they were apparently willing agents of Portuguese advance in the interior of Angola. In return the colonial government appointed chiefs of Kabuku Kambilo to top positions of command in the guerra preta.

The height of Kabuku’s political power and prestige seems to have been reached in the 1850s. In 1855 ‘Dembo’ Kabuku Kambilo, baptized Dom Francisco André Fernandes Torres, captain-major of the guerar

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37 Cabouco Cambillo. Anmães do Conselho Ultramarino. Parte Não Oficial 1859–1867, 145, states that the sobado contained 3,000 fagos (hearths).

38 See map. The origins of the sobado are not clear. Possibly it was founded by the Imbangala chief ‘Jaga’ Cabucu, an early ally of the Portuguese against Ndongo in the seventeenth century, who was settled beyond the Lukala, near the fortress of Mbaka: see Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680 (reprinted Lisbon, 1972), 1, 286. Cadornega also mentions a sova Cabucu Cabio who was settled in the vicinity of the fortress of Cambambe in 1604: História, III, 241.

39 See D. Magno, Guerras Angolanas (Porto, n.d.), 17; also AHA, códices C 8–3 (g. 23 no. 98), ‘Ofícios para Angola 1798–1854’, passim.

40 Literally translated as ‘black war’: the African auxiliary forces gathered and led by black chiefs and joined with European soldiers in campaigns.

41 Written as ‘Dembo’ in Portuguese sources, this was apparently an honorary title commonly used by the Portuguese from the seventeenth century onwards when addressing or referring to powerful chiefs. However, one nineteenth-century source also alleges that the rulers of Kabuku Kambilo derived their title actually from the chiefs called Ndembu, in the region of Kazu a Ngongo (Cazuangongo), from whom they claimed descent: see AHA, avulsos, maço 16–1–7, petition of soba Ndumbu a Pepu to the governor-general, 31 May 1875.
preta, was promoted to the post of colonel of all the chiefs subject to Portuguese rule within the presidio of Cambambe. A year later he was elevated to the position of general of the guerra preta throughout the whole kingdom of Angola and placed in command of the African force which marched with the Portuguese to re-open the copper mines of Bembe.42 This appointment both recognized his loyalty to the government and confirmed his paramount influence among the sobas of Cambambe and of neighbouring regions.43

Portuguese sources suggest that members of the ruling house of Kabuku Kambilo used their superior military and political strength to augment their wealth as the value of 'legitimate' trade in the interior increased, strengthening and maintaining their power through their capitalization of kinship alliances and lineage relationships. The violent interventions by Kabuku and his close relatives in the affairs of neighbouring sobados, together with the forceful imposition of members of their own lineage as sobas in those states, from the 1860s onwards, form a pattern of consistent attempts to centralize power and gain control of trade routes and ports on the rivers Kwanza and Lukala. By these means the royal family of Kabuku Kambilo, and especially the soba himself, facilitated their own direct trading interests and profited by plunder and tributes exacted from the commerce flowing to Dondo in this period.44

Evidence of these activities became more explicit following the election of a new 'Dembo' Kabuku, Dom Antonio André Fernandes Torres, in 1873. His career as soba and relationship with the Portuguese may be divided into two main phases. The first of these lasted for about a decade, during which time Kabuku profited from the expansion of 'legitimate' commerce and exploited the weakness of the colonial administration to increase his political power. Apart from the military strength of his own sobado at this date, extensive kinship links gave Kabuku a far-reaching influence not only among sobas under effective Portuguese rule but among potentates beyond its limits. In the insecurity of the years immediately following the war with the Ndembu this helped to convince the Luanda

42 See AHA, codice C-8-6, fo. 12°, officio dated 6 June 1856. Kabuku had held the post of captain-major since 1828: see AHA, códice 2-4-8, oficio no. 260, 18 Nov. 1856.
43 It also seems to represent official recognition of Portuguese dependence on Kabuku's influence over the population of a far wider area than the concelho of Cambambe itself—where the reliance of the Luanda government on Kabuku's loyalty in ensuring the success of colonial policy was explicitly recognized in 1857: see Boletim Official de Angola, no. 612, letters of the secretary general to the governor of Golungo Alto and 'Dembo' Cábouco, 16 and 20 June 1857.
44 Information concerning Kabuku's family connexions has been collected entirely from the descriptions which occur in Portuguese documentary sources. In May 1866, for example, André Fernandes Torres was said to be engineering the election of close relatives in different sobados in order to facilitate his trading interests. In this year he violently expelled the ruler of Mubanga a Tutu (Mubanga Atuto) with the help of armed followers. Previously Torres had placed his 'daughter' as soba Kisuba Kiaketa (Quissuba Qiaqueta). Both were small but strategic sobados controlling ports on the Lukala and Kwanza respectively: see AHA, códice G (5) 19.3, nos. 103 and 104, 12 and 19 May 1866.
government that the maintenance of Kabuku's power and loyalty, through
government support when necessary, was crucial in guaranteeing the
peaceful continuance of colonial rule throughout the lower Kwanza
region.\textsuperscript{45} This phase came to an abrupt end soon after 1880 with the rise
of a more vigorous official attitude towards the extension of Portuguese
power and commercial interests in the interior of Angola. The second
phase, ending with the death of Kabuku about 1896, witnessed the rapid
collapse of his power following the withdrawal of government favour, the
fragmentation of his political control and his loss of important trade
revenues.\textsuperscript{46}

At the time of Dom Antonio's succession as soba 'Dembo' Kabuku in
1873 the commercial boom in agricultural products, particularly coffee,
groundnuts and palm oil, was reaching its peak. The sobado of Kabuku
Kambilo was well situated to share in this prosperity. Its territory included
some of the most fertile land in the concelho, especially near the rivers
Mukoso and Lukala. Kabuku's mbanza of Senha was situated on the banks
of the Mukoso, barely a day's journey on foot from the growing urban
centre of Dondo, where products such as manioc flour, tobacco and cotton
were finding a ready market for local consumption as well as for export
at this time. The lands of the sobado also lay directly between Dondo and
the rich agricultural regions of Ambaca and Cazengo, to the north of the
Lukala. By the 1870s the path which crossed Kabuku's lands, linking
Dondo with these concelhos, had become one of the two most important
trade routes passing through the concelho of Cambambe.

In the 1870s much of the trade flowing between Dondo and the regions
to the north of the Lukala was intercepted and regulated by Kabuku as it
passed through the lands under his jurisdiction: he collected the rents
and taxes imposed on traders at three feiras which had grown up at points
along the route between Dondo and the margin of the Lukala\textsuperscript{47}; he also
claimed exclusive control of the ferry service over the Lukala on the road
between Dondo and Caculo, the commercial and administrative centre
of Cazengo. In 1872 a government decree had abolished the official tax
imposed on all who passed across rivers within concelhos under Portuguese
authority. In the concelho of Cambambe, however, this revenue continued

\textsuperscript{45} The little which is known of Kabuku's lineage and kinship relationships suggests
that they covered a wide area, including several powerful sobas in neighbouring concelhos,
for example, a 'father-in-law', soba Kakulu Kamuinsa of Cazengo, and a 'grandson', soba
Hebo a Kimbi of Massangano. Kabuku also claimed kinsmen among the unsubdued
African rulers on the periphery of Portuguese rule, among the Ndembu and Jinga, to
the north and north-east of Cazengo.

\textsuperscript{46} Dom Antonio was unable to speak or write Portuguese. Throughout his long career
as soba his relations with the colonial government were conducted through interpreters
and secretaries, who were sometimes also his close relatives.

\textsuperscript{47} Mukoso, Kangonguí and Lukala. These may have grown up at natural resting-points
for trading caravans. A description of the feira of Mukoso in 1884 appears in Carvalho,
\textit{Viagem}, i, 110-11. These three feiras remained under Kabuku's exclusive control until
1894: see AHA, avulsos, maço 16-7-4, secretary-general to the chefe of Cambambe,
28 May 1894.
to be collected on the Lukala as the personal tribute of Kabuku: he pro-
vided two canoes to ferry passengers across the river and appointed his
own nominee to collect the tax. This was done with the full knowledge,
if not the official sanction, of the colonial government. Kabuku maintained
his monopoly through the violent intimidation of potential rivals and by
1876 was alleged to be exacting three times the amounts formerly taxed
on persons and cargoes crossing the river. It was to the proceeds of this
tribute in particular that contemporaries attributed Kabuku’s notorious
wealth and grandeur.48

Following his succession as soba, Kabuku pushed the frontiers of his
political domination southwards as far as the Kwanza. It is likely that this
was an attempt to intercept and participate in the growing trade coming
from Libolo, an important part of which was a trade in manpower.49 The
extension of Kabuku’s control over sobados bordering the Kwanza facilit-
ted his domination of the chief crossing points on the river between
Libolo and Cambambe. It also made possible the interception of trade
entering the concelho from the east as it passed along the northern margin
of the river to Dondo.50 However, Kabuku’s aggressive endeavours to
establish a centralized imperial control over neighbouring sobados by
engineering the elections of close relatives as sobas aroused hatred on all
sides and involved him in a series of violent conflicts which eventually
hastened his downfall.

The first of these conflicts concerned a rival Mbundu chiefdom:
Ndumbu a Pepu, situated in the eastern half of the concelho of Cambambe,
where it was considered to be second only to Kabuku Kambilo in size of
population.51 The immediate cause of rivalry between the two sobados
48 See AHA, código 6–1–10, ofício no. 464, 14 July 1876; avulsos, maço 18–4–2, relatório
of the chefe of Cazengo, 28 Nov. 1882; O Pharol do Povo, no. 49, 30 Jan. 1884. Soon after
Dom Antonio’s succession as ‘Dembo’ Kabuku the Portuguese commander of the military
garrison at Dondo was surprised and impressed by the comfort of Kabuku’s mbanza and
the plentiful supply of imported European food and wine: see O Mercantil, no. 187,
15 Jan. 1874. Contemporary estimates of Kabuku’s annual income from the Lukala ferry
by the 1880s varied between three thousand and six thousand escudos: see Carvalho,
Viagem, 1, 114. According to R. J. Hammond in Portugal in Africa 1875–1910 (Stanford,
1966), 50 n., a thousand escudos was worth somewhat more than a thousand dollars in
this period.
49 Following the institution of the contract labour system by the Portuguese in 1875
the independent enclave of Libolo was a major generating point of labourers, or servições,
contracted in Dondo to work on the plantations of the Kwanza valley and of São Thomé.
Many of the sobas of Libolo co-operated actively in the exchange of people for alcohol,
gunpowder and other goods. Evidence of Kabuku’s participation in this commerce
occurs in 1883, when he was said to be a partner with sobas Nzumba a Panji and Kisongo
of Libolo in the capture and sale of free men: see AHA, avulsos, maço 23–7–3, petitions
50 After 1880 it was alleged that Kabuku employed the people of the sobados he con-
trolled along the Kwanza in attacking and robbing carregadores and traders on the road
between Dondo and Pungu a Ndongo: see O Pharol do Povo, no. 53, 20 Feb. 1884.
51 According to Cadornega, Guerras Angolanas, 1, 79, Ndumbu a Pepu was already a
powerful presence in the Cambambe region by the early 1600s. The sobado was calculated
to contain 1,107 fogos in the 1860s: see Anndes do Conselho Ultramarino. Parte Não
Official, 1859–1867, 146.
after 1873 was the question of ‘ownership’ of a sobeta, or tributary sobado, called Mbumba a Kisansu, consisting of a single sanzala near the Kwanza. The motive for the dispute was probably economic: long before the nineteenth century a feira had functioned at this point which may have revived in importance as the volume of trade increased along the right bank of the river. The hostility generated by this quarrel is now chiefly significant for the light it casts on Kabuku’s manipulative power within Portuguese colonial society itself.

In Luanda it was feared that an escalation of the armed hostilities, which broke out between Kabuku Kambilo and Ndumbu a Pepu from April 1875 onwards, might provoke further rebellion against the colonial government—which had neither the inclination nor the resources to engage in a full-scale war. Kabuku himself was well aware of the precarious balance of colonial power in the interior: in a letter addressed to the commander of the Dondo garrison he threatened to summon aid from his kinsmen of Kazu a Ngongo, a district to the north of Cambambe which had taken a leading part in the Ndembu revolt three years earlier, should the Portuguese refuse to intervene in his favour against Ndumbu a Pepu. The latter’s sudden seizure and imprisonment without trial in Luanda, shortly afterwards, was followed by published reports exposing Kabuku’s bribery of colonial officials at all levels—including the governor-general himself. While no proof of these allegations is now forthcoming they are far from implausible: Kabuku himself later admitted that ‘... the balance of justice in the interior depends on who pays ...’. His close involvement with Portuguese society at this date is demonstrated by the alliances he formed with two prominent mestiço traders of Dondo, who held important judicial and municipal offices in the local administration; and by his employment of a leading Luanda official to represent his interests before the governor-general: Joaquim Eugenio de Salles Ferreira, soon to become administrator of the concelho of Luanda. He was to provide Kabuku with similar valuable support in the future.
As long as Portuguese authority lacked force and the colonial administration in the interior remained weak, Kabuku was able to maintain and extend his power. Between 1875 and 1880, aided by his kinsmen, he adopted a policy of armed aggression against neighbouring *sobados*: in 1877 he forcibly reinstated a 'nephew' as ruler in Momba a Kisansu; a year later he assisted a 'grandson', *soba* Huachila a Mbanza of Libolo, to invade Ngola Kalunga, an important *sobado* dominating crossing points on the Kwanza used by Bailundu traders and *carregadores*; at this time also he may have violently acquired exclusive control of the *feira* of Nhangui a Pepi, on the road between Pungu a Ndongo and Dondo. During these years Kabuku imposed his political control both within Kabuku Kambilo and elsewhere by means of large bands of armed 'slaves' resident in his *mbanza*, whose fame inspired terror and panic throughout the *concelho*. Finally, in 1880, his activities brought him into open conflict with European commercial interests, provoking two major crises which forced the Luanda government to clarify its policy in relation to Kabuku.

Tension between Kabuku and the white *fazendeiros* and traders of Dondo and Cazengo had been building up for several years over the Lukala ferry. By 1880 Kabuku probably controlled most of the points of passage across the Lukala between Cambambe and Cazengo either directly, or indirectly through close relatives. European traders protested publicly against his monopoly, complaining bitterly of the extortions and robberies practised on people and goods crossing the river and of the ruined state of the canoes provided by the *soba* for the service. Kabuku's principal opponents were young men, of short residence in Angola. In most cases only a few years, or even months, had sufficed for the accumulation of the wealth which had brought them social and political standing among the trading communities of the interior. Their ruthless trading acumen took little account of African interests: indeed, to such men the

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59 AHA, *avulsos*, maço 23–3–2, Kabuku to the *chefe* of Cambambe, 7 Nov. 1877.
60 Huaxilla a Banza.
61 See AHA, *avulsos*, maço 23–3–1, investigations concerning the attack on Ngola Kalunga, June 1878. An order to seize Kabuku and bring him to Dondo on charges of having ordered his people to fire on Portuguese troops sent to defend Ngola was never executed.
62 See AHA, *avulsos*, maço 23–4–3, petition of *soba* Nhangui a Pepi to the *chefe* of Cambambe against attacks on his *mbanza*, 30 Nov. 1880.
63 See, for example, AHA, *avulsos*, maço 16–1–7, *chefe* of Cambambe to the secretary-general, 24 June 1875. Kabuku's military power was increased in this period by a government order to place a detachment of soldiers from the Dondo garrison in his *mbanza*, under his command as colonel of the *guerra preta*: see AHA, *códice* G (5) 2–15, fo. 8, officio no. 204, 5 Apr. 1876.
64 Apart from the main route across the river, controlled by Kabuku himself, another crossing point further upstream was controlled from the Cambambe side by *soba* Mubanga a Tutu. In 1876 Dom Francisco André Fernandes Torres, apparently a close relative of Kabuku, was elected ruler of this *sobado*: see AHA, *códice* G (5) 2–15, fo. 8, officio no. 521.
black sobas of the Angolan interior were no better than 'savages' who must be made to feel the power of Portuguese authority.66

These attitudes were sharpened by fear when Kabuku's attempts to expand his territorial power north of the Lukala briefly threatened the survival of white plantation owners in Cazengo. Conflict arose from Kabuku's efforts to obtain, as his inheritance, a coffee plantation which was also claimed by a European trader, Augusto Fernandes de Freitas,67 in satisfaction of a debt. An open and violent struggle between the two claimants had continued for five years when finally, early in 1880, Kabuku suddenly massed hundreds of armed followers along the left margin of the Lukala, intending, so it was rumoured, to invade Cazengo and reclaim his inheritance by force. His action aroused much panic among Europeans in Cazengo: at this date the racial tension generated by land disputes in that concelho threatened daily to explode in revolt against the colonial government itself. Kabuku's political dominance in the Lukala region and his control of the river ports gave him great prestige and influence among the angry population of the northern bank: as his followers massed along the Cambambe side of the river the people of Cazengo flocked to meet them, clamouring for Kabuku's aid in driving the white fazendeiros from the concelho.68

White fears were temporarily allayed by the unexpectedly swift convergence of government forces on Cazengo, which rapidly induced the assembled crowd to disperse. Returning to his mbanza, Kabuku vehemently denied that he had intended to promote rebellion: '.. . . Yes, I am soba and black', he stated afterwards in a dignified letter addressed to the governor-general, 'but . . . my ideas were never subversive and I pride myself on having been always loyal to the flag, that was my cradle, and of helping it in its most critical crises ...'.69 Perhaps not surprisingly, in view of Portuguese military and administrative weakness, the governor-general, Vasco Guedes Carvalho e Menezes, allowed himself to be convinced. Seeing that reliance on the corrupt white administration of Cazengo could only bring further deterioration in social and political

66 See AHA, avulsos, maco 23-6-1, Augusto César Manacas to the chefe of Cambambe, 9 Mar. 1881. The careers of Manacas and of Manoel Antonio Affonso, two of Kabuku's chief enemies among the white traders of Dondo, can be traced in the recenseamentos and avulsos relating to Cambambe in the AHA.

67 Freitas was a native of Madeira who had arrived in Angola some time during the 1860s. His career was typical of that of a successful white trader in Angola at this time: a lesser member of the Dondo trading community in 1868, he had soon become active in Cazengo as the agent of a Luanda trading firm and by 1875 owned property there. He was several times accused of illegal extortions of land and even murder, charges which were never examined, due to his close intimacy with successive colonial administrators and his own position as a colonial official. His conflict with Kabuku can be traced in AHA, avulsos, maco 18-2-3, passim., código B-20-2 (G. 52, no. 209), oficio no. 278; código 32-1-46, oficio no. 122.

68 See Angolana I, 403-5, 415-16, 684; AHA, avulsos, maco 23-4-4, telegrams exchanged between the chefs of Cambambe and Cazengo, Jan. 1880: these mention that Kabuku had assembled a force of about 600 followers on the Cambambe side of the Lukala.

69 Angolana, I, 409.
relations within that conceelho, Menezes decided that the government would gain greater advantage from supporting a 'loyal robber' of Kabuku's presumed power and influence than by opposing him. His proposed strategy was to make the ‘Dembo’ a ‘prisoner’ of his loyalty by openly treating him as an ally of the Portuguese and thereby discouraging any potential rebels from looking to him for support. Thus, to the dismay of European colonists, Kabuku was officially praised and decorated by the government for his ‘co-operation’ in ‘pacifying’ the population of Cazengo.70

The position of the Portuguese government in relation to the growing hostility between Kabuku and the white settlers of the interior at this date received even clearer expression during a second crisis, some months later, when European traders in Dondo felt their interests and personal security seriously endangered by the aggressive extension of Kabuku’s dynastic influence near the Kwanza. This arose out of a dispute concerning the ruler of Kambambe Kalunga, an important sobado situated on the right bank of the Kwanza close to Dondo, which controlled some of the principal crossings on the river used by traders entering Dondo from Libolo.

The internal politics of Kambambe Kalunga had been turbulent for several years when Kabuku decided to intervene in favour of his own grandson, Dom João Paschoal, as a rival claimant to the sobado. Despite repeated orders from the Luanda government to substitute the latter for the actual soba, Dom Christovão Thomé da Cunha, successive local administrators had proved reluctant to provoke trouble by interfering in the question.71 However, when Kabuku himself became the victim of a surprise attack by Dom Thomé, aided by several hundred allies from Libolo, in November 1880, the affair began to assume a more dangerous significance. Not long afterwards the trading community of Dondo heard with alarm that Kabuku had engineered the assassination of Dom Thomé, whose severed head was at that moment barbarously displayed in his mbanza. These reports brought white hatred of Kabuku to a climax. Fed by rumour, this transformed itself into terror as a generalized fear of assault closed the few paths leading to Dondo.72

In Luanda the new governor-general, António Eleutério Dantas, was forced through his ignorance of life in the interior to rely heavily on local advisers. One of the most influential at this date was the administrator of the conceelho of Luanda, Joaquim Eugenio de Salles Ferreira, whose knowledge and experience of affairs in the Kwanza region was highly regarded by the colonial government. Salles Ferreira was no sympathizer

70 Angolana, 1, 405, 415-17; Boletim Official de Angola, 1880, no. 11, portaria no. 17, 29 Jan. 1880.
71 Details of the previous history of this sobado can be found in the AHA, avulsos, maços 16-1-3, 23-3-2, 23-3-1, passim.
72 AHA, avulsos, maço 23-4-3, confidential letter of the chefe of Cambambe to the secretary-general, 14 Nov. 1880; Angolana, 1, 191-9.
with the European traders and plantation owners of Dondo and Cazengo. Moreover he was a close acquaintance of Kabuku himself and at this time was certainly biased in the soba's favour, although whether through bribery, friendship or genuine political conviction is impossible to say. This was the man whom the governor-general now sent to Dondo to ascertain the true facts, in December 1880.

The gulf in understanding between the Luanda government and the white settlers widened still further. Salles Ferreira's lengthy report, in which he dismissed the accusations and fears of Dondo traders as 'exaggerated' and 'irrational', emphasizing Kabuku's innocence and continuing submission to colonial authority, was unquestionably accepted by the governor-general. Later allegations that Salles Ferreira had falsely informed the government about events relating to Kambambe Kalunga were ignored. The tone of white opinion became increasingly racialist and bitter in its open criticism of the governor-general: '... It would not surprise us', suggested one writer, 'to see Cabôco finish any day with the authorities in Dondo and be absolute ruler in the concelho...'. Unperturbed by these outbursts in the Luanda press, the governor-general confidently informed Lisbon that, if 'well taken advantage of', Kabuku could still serve Portuguese interests in maintaining order and tranquillity in the interior. In his view it was not Kabuku who would raise difficulties for the colonial government, but the 'ill-advised spirit' of the Europeans, especially the Dondo traders, whose campaign for the 'Dembo's' imprisonment would surely compromise rather than consolidate colonial rule in Angola.

During the months which succeeded this crisis, Kabuku was assured of government protection by an order forbidding the Dondo administration from proceeding further against him. These months probably saw the peak of his prestige and political power: by 1882 about half of the twenty-nine sobas in the concelho of Cambambe were his close relatives or dependants; he was openly acknowledged as the 'first authority' among the sobas of that jurisdiction; and his mbanzá served as a high court for the arbitration and settlement of disputes among chiefs as far distant as

73 In 1879 Salles Ferreira had led an independent government commission which had attempted to provide a just solution to the land questions pending between Africans and Europeans in Cazengo. Throughout 1880 outraged white fazendeiros had tried hard to convince the Luanda government that Kabuku was planning a full-scale revolt against the Portuguese, aided by sobas from the Duque de Bragança region, to the north-east of Cazengo. Perhaps on the advice of Salles Ferreira—who sent Kabuku secret warning of these accusations—the governor-general personally reassured Kabuku that he would never attach any importance to the intrigues of his enemies: see Boletim Official de Angola, 1880, no. 11, Portaria no. 17, 29 Jan. 1880; AHA, códice 32-1-46, oficios nos. 108, 110, 134, May–June 1880; Angolana, 1, 452–3. 74 See Angolana, 1, 187–205.
75 See correspondence from Dondo in O Mercantil, nos. 600–3, 3–24 Feb. 1881.
76 AHU, Lisbon, Angola, file 1, 1º Repartição (2º Secção), oficio no 5, 22 Feb. 1881.
77 See O Mercantil, no. 604, 3 Mar. 1881. Reports that Kabuku continued secretly to encourage attacks on white-owned fazendas in Cazengo during 1881 were also ignored by the government: see AHA, códice 32-1-46, passim.
Libolo, beyond the Kwanza. But the climax had been reached. From the mid-1880s onwards his power entered a decline. This was provoked by a combination of different factors, the most immediately significant of which being the withdrawal of the government favour and toleration which his predecessors and he had enjoyed for at least a century.

With the sudden death of António Eleutério Dantas, in July 1882, the attitude of the Luanda government towards Kabuku underwent a sharp change. The new governor-general, Francisco Joaquim Ferreira de Amaral, was an enthusiastic believer in the expansion of effective Portuguese authority and in the promotion of European commerce in the interior of Angola. Kabuku's attempts to act independently of the colonial administration were a provocation to Portuguese imperialism and a challenge to claims of effective colonial rule—especially in the Kwanza valley which had known Portuguese influence for so many centuries. These views were zealously shared by the man Amaral appointed as chefe in Cambambe in 1883, José Vieira da Silva, an Angolan mestizo lawyer, educated in Portugal, who already had a wide personal experience of conditions in many of the concelhos near the Kwanza.

The withdrawal of government protection after 1882 coincided with serious political dissension within Kabuku Kambilo itself, threatening the sobado with disintegration. In 1884 armed revolt broke out against Kabuku, led by a faction of his own makota and village headmen. This was immediately occasioned by opposition to the hut tenth tax, or decima predial, reimposed by the Portuguese in a modified form in 1880. But its roots may have lain in deeper political tension created by Kabuku's attempts to extend a despotic control over affairs both within his sobado and elsewhere. It is not implausible to speculate that the close domination of ports and markets by Kabuku and his close relatives during the previous decade of commercial expansion in the concelho had stimulated resentment and discontent among rival lineages and bred a desire to overthrow the royal dynasty. As the revolt reached its height a group of leading rebel makota refused to recognize the supremacy of Kabuku's mbanza, claiming to have redivided the territory of the sobado among themselves.

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78 See AHA, avulsos, maço 23-8-1, petition of soba Ndombu a Ndala (Dombo Andalla) to the chefe of Cambambe, 10 Oct. 1883; maço 23-9-1, information of the chefe of Cambambe to the governor-general, n.d., c. 1882, that Kabuku is placing in different sobados his 'nephews' and 'grandchildren' as sobas.

79 Details of Silva's career and opinions are found in AHA, avulsos, maços 16-3-1, 16-4-4, 18-3-1, 18-2-4, código 5-6-36, passim. In Aug. 1883, Silva informed Kabuku that he would not tolerate any refusal to obey government orders and withdrew the soldiers stationed in his mbanza since 1876, also depriving Kabuku of his command of the guerra preta: see AHA, código 5-6-36, oficios nos. 434 and 544, 22 Aug. and 21 Sept. 1883.

80 Widespread resistance had made collections of this tax impossible before 1883. In Cambambe the effective opposition of sobas to the renewal of the decima had been attributed to the secret instructions of Kabuku. In 1884, however, apparently under personal pressure from the governor-general, Kabuku had authorized its collection: see Angolana, ii, 291; AHA, código 5-6-36, ofício no. 434, 2 Aug. 1883.

81 See AHA, avulsos, maço 16-3-3, Kabuku to the chefe of Cambambe, 27 Jan. 1885.
Opposition to Kabuku was countenanced and encouraged by the colonial administrator in Cambambe, José Vieira da Silva, who ignored Kabuku’s reiterated demands for Portuguese help in what appears to have been a deliberate attempt to undermine his position as soba. Nevertheless Kabuku succeeded in reasserting his control over the sobado, apparently through a reign of terror instigated by his relatives and dependants. By February 1885 most of the leaders of the rebellion had been assassinated or banished from Kabuku Kambilo. But Kabuku never regained his former power. Former leaders of the revolt, many of whom had taken refuge in the lands of Kabuku’s enemy, soba Ndumbu a Pepu, continued to plot against his house, fermenting further rebellion in Kabuku Kambilo in 1887. Disease, emigration to escape colonial taxes, and increasingly vigorous recruitment for the army and labour services took a steady toll of the population of the sobado. Even Kabuku’s own relatives began to challenge and reject his authority as his power crumbled.

Kabuku’s declining political power was accelerated by the steady ebb of his economic strength. Between 1884 and 1894 the revenues which he had monopolized in the concelho of Cambambe were taken from him. The first and most important of these was the ferry across the Lukala, which ceased with the construction of a bridge, completed in 1887. Later attempts to continue his old practice further upstream were successfully opposed by the European-dominated camara municipal of Dondo, which now collected the toll levied on carregadores and traders crossing the new bridge. During the next few years, encouraged by government support, the same body consolidated European control over the conduct of trade in the concelho, auctioning for rent to the highest bidder the feiras of Mukoso, Kangongue and Lukala, ‘belonging’ to the sobado of Kabuku Kambilo, together with the feira of Nhangui a Pepi. Kabuku’s attempts to obstruct the collection of this revenue were again unsuccessful.

Kabuku’s inability to resist the pressures which were steadily stripping him of his wealth and power seemed to confirm governor-general Amaral’s opinion in 1884 that the ‘legendary’ fear of the ‘Dembo’ had been no more
than a 'falsehood forged in Luanda by persons of influence' for their own advantage.90 Already by the later 1880s the myth of Kabuku's invincibility was no longer credible: '... Always remember', wrote the colonial administrator of Cambambe in June 1888, 'that you are no more than soba Cabouco ... I have sufficient force to crush you when you direct yourself disrespectfully to the chefe of the concelho ...'.91 Six years later the white fazendeiros of Cazengo began to extend their landholdings southwards across the Lukala into the territory of Kabuku Kambilo itself, receiving government concessions of fertile land formerly cultivated by Kabuku's people along the bank of the river. '... It seems to be a combination to expel me from the lands of my birth ...', Kabuku complained in vain to the governor-general.92 With the death of the soba, shortly afterwards, the economic and political significance of Kabuku Kambilo was finally extinguished. Little is known of his successor and the eventual fate of the sobado can only be guessed at: very probably it suffered extinction following the outbreak of sleeping sickness which decimated the population of Cazengo and Cambambe around 1899.93

SUMMARY

Some effects of the expansion in European commerce and of developments in colonial policy in Angola are explored through a study of the relationship of the black chief Kabuku Kambilo with the Portuguese during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. By the 1870s the growth of 'legitimate' trade along the rivers Lukala and Kwanza was attracting the settlement of an increasing number of European colonists and traders. In the concelho of Cambambe the feira of Dondo, situated on the right bank of the Kwanza, briefly became the most important commercial centre of the interior. In these years much of the trade flowing between Dondo and other points was regulated by Kabuku, ruler of the largest and most powerful chiefdom, or sobado, in the concelho. Kabuku's aggressive attempts to extend his dynastic authority and to profit from the increasing volume of trade entering the concelho involved him in a series of violent conflicts with rival chiefs and with European settlers. At first the extension of his power was facilitated by the military and administrative weakness of the Portuguese. By the mid-1880s however a more vigorous colonial policy, supporting the expansion of Portuguese power and commercial interests in the interior of Angola caused Kabuku's power to wane. After 1890 he succumbed to the pressure of white political and economic dominance in the Kwanza region. Following Kabuku's death the sobado itself may have suffered extinction through an outbreak of sleeping sickness around 1900.

90 Angolana, II, 287.
91 AHA, códice G (5) 3.6, chefe of Cambambe to Kabuku, 25 June 1888.
92 AHA, avulsos, maço 16–7–3, two letters from Kabuku to the governor-general, 11 Mar. 1894.
93 The population of Kabuku Kambilo may have shared the same fate as that of bordering sobados along the Lukala, Kabuku Ka Ndala a Kitanda (Cabouco Candalla Aquitanda) and Mubanga a Tutu, which were reported to have been almost wholly wiped out by sleeping sickness in April 1899: see AHA, avulsos, maço 16–9–4, commando do Nhangu Apepe, ofício no. 66, 15 Apr. 1899.