

THE MALÉ REVOLT —

During the era of slavery in the Caribbean and Latin America, out of all the colonies, Brazil had the largest population of slaves. As Christianity was assimilated throughout the colonies by the colonists, Islam too was assimilated, but by the slaves, who had adopted the religion in their native countries and tribes before being traded to the Americas. In Brazil, primarily in the city of Salvador da Bahia, the Hausa slaves (from one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa) and the Nagô slaves (from the Yoruba tribe) identified themselves as Muslims. Over time, Islam spread throughout the city and by 1835, the majority of the population of Bahia were Muslims. These Muslim Africans were called malês. By this time, the success of the Haitian Revolution was well known throughout the remaining slave colonies of the Caribbean and Latin America. The malês celebrated the Haitians' success and used it as inspiration for their revolt that began on a Sunday during Ramadan in January 1835. The malês rose up against an oppressive government in attempt to garner their freedom, when officers, with word of the planned rebellion attempted to search the homes of the alleged ringleaders. The malês were able to turn the tables on the officers, thus beginning the revolt in the streets of Bahia. The revolt lasted for approximately three hours and roughly 70 people were killed. When the revolt was eventually put down, more than five hundred rebels were captured and executed. The Malé revolt also known as The Great Revolt is quite possibly the most significant slave rebellion in Brazil.