

The evolution of the Afro-Portuguese copula sã

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1. Introduction

Beginning in the middle of the 15th century, sub-Saharan Africans began arriving in Portugal, as slaves and laborers. Shortly thereafter, the African presence in southern Spain took on significant proportions, at first via Portugal, and later supplemented by direct contacts between Spain and West Africa. Africans arriving in the Iberian Peninsula often learned only the most rudimentary forms of Spanish and Portuguese, and their halting attempts at speaking European languages earned them the name of bozal (boçal in Portuguese), a term roughly meaning 'savage, untamed.' From the outset, the pidginized Spanish and Portuguese spoken by Africans was recorded in literature, first in poems and later in songs, plays, and prose. The earliest língua de preto texts come from Portugal, beginning in the late 15th century and appearing in the Cancioneiro geral of Garcia de Resende (published in 1516), and in several plays by Gil Vicente. By the early 16th century, the habla de negro appeared in Spanish literature, and flourished until the end of the 17th century in Golden Age literature. In both Spain and Portugal, literary representation of bozal speech continued sporadically throughout most of the 18th century, although by this time few if any African-born bozales were found in the Iberian Peninsula (Castellano 1961; Chasca 1946; Dunzo 1974; Granda 1969; Jason 1965, 1967; Lipski 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1988, 1991, 1995; Sarró López 1988; Veres 1950; Weber de Kurlat 1962a, 1962b, 1970).

Most of the literary representations were humorous and unflattering, reflecting prejudice and cruel stereotyping, but in many instances the observations of bozal language were reasonably accurate. A comparison between literary texts and independently documented results of Afro-Iberian linguistic

contacts, such as borrowings from Spanish and Portuguese into African languages, or Iberian-based creole languages, not to mention contemporary Afro-Iberian speech communities in Africa and Latin America, reveals that many early Spanish and Portuguese authors had a good ear for bozal language. The majority of the linguistic features found in these early texts are the simple result of imperfectly learned Spanish, and are typical of learners' Spanish everywhere: imperfect or nonexistent verbal and adjectival agreement, faulty gender assignment, misuse or lack of prepositions and conjunctions, and so forth. Also found are phonetic modifications which can be attributed to areal characteristics of major West African language families. Set against the background of these rather unremarkable effects of adult second language acquisition, early Spanish and Portuguese bozal language exhibited a few grammatical traits which hint at an eventual stabilization of Afro-Iberian language, the fixing of a few consistent ethnolinguistic traits that could conceivably be passed along to new arrivals, picked up and used by non-African observers, and even survive past the first generation of European-born Africans who acquired Spanish and Portuguese in a native setting. One of the most interesting of the recurring Afro-Iberian language features is the uninflected verb sa (with alternate variants sã/sam, the infinitive sar/essar, and the invariant form samos), used as a generic copula, in replacement of both ser and estar. This form made its first appearance in the very first Afro-Portuguese texts, from the late 15th century, and became a mainstay of literary representations of Spanish and Portuguese as spoken by Africans, throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, and occasionally extending into the 18th century. Use of sa disappears abruptly from both Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Lusitanian materials after the early 18th century, and it might be suspected that the word never really existed, except in the collective literary imagination of white writers intent on entertaining their audiences with crude parodies of the language of slaves and servants. That such a summary dismissal is not warranted follows from the tangible survival of sa and its variants, in the Afro-Lusitanian creoles of the Gulf of Guinea (São Tomé, Príncipe, and Annobón) and in

the recently disappeared Portuguese creole of Macao (carried over to Hong Kong). In fact, sa/sã is unique among Ibero-Romance creole copulas in occurring both in Afro-Portuguese creoles and in an Asian Portuguese creole at the furthest extreme of Portugal's former Asian empire. This distribution, which includes Portugal, the Gulf of Guinea, and Macao, and which skips over geographically intermediate Afro-Iberian creoles such as Cape Verdean and Guinea-Bissau creole Portuguese, Papiamentu and Palenquero in the Americas, and the remaining Asian Portuguese creoles stretching from India and Sri Lanka to Malaysia and Indonesia, also requires an explanation. The development, spread, and ultimate evaporation of sa parallels the rise and fall of Afro-Iberian contact languages in Spain, Portugal, and Latin America. Given that 15th-17th century vernacular Spanish and Portuguese provides no ready model for the creation of sa, the origin and spread of this all-pervasive bozal form merits closer attention.

2. Early attestations of sa/sã in Afro-Portuguese texts

The first known attestation of sa comes in a poem reproduced in Garcia de Resende's Cancioneiro geral, published in Portugal in 1516. The text in question is a humorous poem by Anrique da Mota (Leite de Vasconcellos 1933), in which an African pleads with a European, claiming innocence in an incident in which a jar of wine was spilled, in which an African pleads with a European, claiming innocence in an incident in which a jar of wine was spilled (Guimaraes 1917):¹

a mym nunca, nunca mym

entornar

mym andar augoá jardim,

a mym nunca *ssar* roym,

porque bradar?

The largest corpus of early Afro-Lusitanian texts, and the first in which sa appears in its final form, comes in the writings of the playwright Gil Vicente, in several plays (Vicente 1834, 1912). The crucial examples come in Nao d'amores (1527), Fragoa d'amor (ca. 1524), and O clérigo da Beyra (1530). Gil Vicente's texts are important since they represent the bridge between Portugal and Spain as regards the development of Afro-Iberian language:²

From O CLÉRIGO DE BEYRA:

Ja a mi forro, nama *sa* cativo ...

turo turo *sa* canseira ...

Que palote saba *sam*,

Tres ceitil *sa* qui so ...

Essa villão murgurado

sa masa prove que cão ...

Fernão d'Alvaro, esse si;

nunca pente *sa* alli...

Sua rinheiro *sa* seguro,

A mi bai furta em tanto

camisa que *sa* na muro ...

.....

From FRÁGOA D'AMOR:

A mi *sa* negro de crivão,

agora *sa* vosso cão ...

tu *sa* home o *sa* riabo? ...

A negra se a mi falae

dirá a mi *sa* chacorreiro...

From NAO D'AMORES:

Fio *sae* de Rei Beni ...

boso amor *sa* comungaro ...

Another key Afro-Lusitanian text is the 'Auto das regateiras' {ca. 1550} by Antônio Ribeiro Chiado (Chiado 1968):³

A boso sempre *sa* graia ...

sa massando, *sa* cupada...

Seora, *sa* farinhada...

turo, turo *sa* furtado.

Jesu, Jesu, ulo *sa* guardado?...

Aquesse veia *sa* mente,

êsse candeia *sa* morta ...

Another early Afro-Portuguese text is the 'Auto da bella menina' by Sebastião Pires (1922), approximately contemporaneous with the writings of Gil Vicente. This play also contains use of sa as copula:

ou la gentes ou falay corpo na *sam* quebray ...

Eu *sa* negro de bosso yrmão que onte de Brasil chegou ...

Portugal *sa* elle agora tam bragante hora tam fermosante ...

tambem negro nam *sa* gete e boso zombay de mi...

praza a deos cosabrado diabo leuay amor meu hor anda namorado nossa casa emburiado eu
sa sua bayrador turodia *sa* dizendo vida mia belleta minha hora pera nossa *sa* maora que vos vi
quado bozmia.

eu por bosso tem fadige pesara de sam furunado tem furado minha boriga ja mi não sabe
que diga turo dia *sa* chorando

An anonymous text, 'Auto de Vicente Anes Joeira' (Anon. 1963) appears to come from approximately the same time period. Sa is also used as copula (as is one occurrence of sentar):

sabe boso, homem horrado,

esse muer *sa* prenhado ...

Boso *sentar* muto grande bêssa, tolo...

boso *sa* mor salvage do que nunca posso ber.

esse home *sa* mofina...

olha pera co bo tento minho saio *sa* la dentro ...

The next group of Afro-Portuguese texts comes from the 17th century, spilling over into the early 18th century. Most are anonymous songs and poem fragments, evidently part of a much larger corpus that was performed in musical and stage presentations. The first is an anonymous song from ca. 1647, 'Sã qui turo,' where sa occurs in the title:

Sã aqui turo zente pleta ...

Several other instances of this copula are also found (Hatherly 1990). A number of anonymous poems from the 17th-18th century have been published by Hatherly (1990). These poems, although apparently written by different authors over a considerable time period, share many important common features, including use of sa:

POEM #6:

como vi bosso fromozinha turo singo *sa* peredido ...

POEM #2:

Os sege, ya *sá* punhalo a la nos cavalariissa ...

Pógi pra qui *sá* os bordão, que nus trazera simpina? ...

Oya vozo nu qui *sá* metida! ...

Isso *sa* ja prohibida...

Oya, turo qui he furoro *sá* locura conhecida y turo qui *sá* locura si cula cus disiplina ...

sá bim feto

Vozo não ve, que us Plotetoro *sá* us Genta di Mouraria qui mora, e qui morará cus Diozo a
la nesso Olimpa?

Não ve voz qui us prigidenta *sá* doutoro de Coimbra ...

não ve voz, qui du oratoria *sá* mestra esse Dominica ...

Não ve vozo, que us Xistoria contaro pru aquel lingoa diesse Rangelo, parece xistoria, y *sá*
maravia?

Não ve, que us poetica turta *sá* dessoro mestres decipla? ...

Sá cuesta sancta us poezia! ...

POEM #3:

pru qui não ve, que essos fessa *sá* so para minha plato...

bassa ja tanto ve bassa, qui *sá* regalaro os oyo, e não *sá* plecizo pedir vista diesses auto.

Turo esses glande prueza qui vozo tem nomealo não *sá* quem qui fazi us honra ao Sioro
Don Brenalo.

os governo tan ceretado *sá* quin magi condecora us rebanho episcupalo.

sá cueza vulgalo sempre *sá* mayolo empleza aquele qui foy mas raro.

San Palo *sá*, cujo mitra pra Blenado *sá* cliado ...

D'um apostlo he que *sá* fio y pay de otro ...

sá sabido qui *sá* mia sus aplauzo ...

POEM #4

... qui entra nus vosso novena cuja nome *sá* Thalia...

dus pletinho us valoro *sá* nus entlanha dus mina...

... us pleto *sá* murcedo dus tlucida ...

Eu bin sabe si us gi blanco *sá* gentilhoma bonita que toro us pleto he gentile pru qui turo *sá* gentia.

eu bin conhece, que us muza tuos nove *sa* blanquinha ...

... us jardin dus roza *sá* grovernada ...

POEM #5:

sá bim feto, e bim pregaro ...

... us lume nus calapinha *sá* cumo pru vida minha us fogo junto du estopa.

... us lume nos burrofronte sempre *sá* fogo sravage...

... si vozo fora judeo assim como *sá* negrão...

Us genta, *sá* admirala cum razão, pru minha vida pru qui, si não *sá* vendida vozo, como *sá* queimala?

A tantalizing document which purports to represent the speech of Africans in 18th century Portugal is a letter apparently written in Lisbon by the 'Rei Angola' to the 'Rei Minas' in 1730 (Tinhorão 1988: 191).⁴

sabe vozo, que nossos festa *sa* Domingo, e que vozo hade vir fazer os forgamenta, ya

vussé não falta vussé cumpadra, que os may Zoana os fia dos may Maulicia, e dos may

Zozefa *sa* biscondessa dos taraya ...

If authentic, this text would demonstrate that a distinctly Africanized Portuguese existed in Portugal well into the 18th century, and not simply as a long-disappeared stereotype remembered only in literary

documents. Even more crucially, it would demonstrate that Africans in Portugal (at least those born in Africa) used a pidgin Portuguese with consistent structural characteristics when communicating with Africans of other ethnic groups, rather than simply approximating the received language of metropolitan Portugal.

Literary representations of 'Africanized' Portuguese continued well into the 18th century in Portugal, and in Brazil appear to have been used until the final decades of the 18th century. By this time, Africanized varieties of Portuguese were already well-established in Brazil, in many cases exhibiting significant differences from earlier European Portuguese literary examples. The use of European-derived stereotypes in late 18th century Brazil can most probably be ascribed to literary tradition, and should not be taken uncritically as a representation of how Africans actually spoke Portuguese at this time. One interesting Brazilian document is a fragment of 'O preto, e o bugio ambos no mato percorrendo sobre a arte de ter dinheiro sem ir ao Brazil', published in 1789 (Coelho 1967: 73-4); this text also exhibits use of copular sa:

Já non pore deixá de incricá os cabeça, e confessá, que vozo doutrina *sá* huns doutrina
tão craro, e verdadeiro, que pla mim *sá* huns admiraçom non sé platicada per toro o
mundo. O trabaio a que vozo obriga os preto, e os blanco, *sá* huns trabaio a que
ninguem se pore negá sem melecé huns cóssa bom ... Mim agola sem trabaia nom pore
conté ainda que mim ter abominaçom a captiveiro cruer de blanco, de que *sá* forro ...

3. Use of sa in early Afro-Hispanic texts

The invariant copula sa makes its appearance early in the 16th century literary imitations of Africans written in Spain. The first known Spanish writer to make use of literary bozal language or Afro-Hispanic pidgin was Rodrigo de Reinosa, in some coplas (Cossío 1950). The poems in question

are contained in pamphlets or literatura de cordel, and do not carry a date.⁵ The coplas are ostensibly directed to blacks living in the already large black community of Seville. This fact is important since, although the pamphlets were clearly directed at least in part at the literate white public (or at least that subclass which routinely read the humorous pamphlets which were sold on the street much as comic books would later appear), there is at least some indication that Africans themselves were contemplated among potential readers.⁶ The hybrid verb sa has yet to make its appearance in these coplas, but there is considerable confusion of ser and estar, apparently the precursor to the development of sa, in both Spain and Portugal:

Yo *ser* de mandinga y *estar* negro taibo, y *estar* garrapata vostro parente, y vostro
lenguaje yo muyto ben sabo *ser* terra Guinea de marfuz gente, no *estar* taiba mas muyto
pioyenta ...

estar vos marfuz y *estar* taybo él, y vos *estar* negro muy gusarapento ...

Estar yo buen negro de obispo criado, y *ser* de Gelofe, a mí andar en Corte; *estar* piojo
branco vostro cuñado ...

yo no *estar* marfuz, *estar* hombre forte ...

vos *estar* bellaco, muy muyto tahir ...

Following Reinosá, another Spanish writer to make abundant use of 'Africanized' Spanish was Diego Sánchez de Badajoz (cf. Barrantes (1882, 1886), in a series of farsas. All were apparently composed between 1533 and 1548, which, extrapolating backwards, would place the dates of the language just past the examples of Reinosá. In Sánchez de Badajoz, apparent precursors of invariable copular sa make a few appearances:

FARSA DEL MOYSEN:

Pone pan, baso de salmo cando ba *esar* asno ydo...

Ara mara, acá venite casa no pore bober aquí *sar* negro morrer...

FARSA DE LA HECHICERA:

mi corason y mi bira nunca bono *sar* morira...

Among minor works of the same time period, Juan Pastor's 'Farsa de Lucrecia, tragedia de la castidad' (ca. 1529) provides a few instances of what could be legitimate Afro-Hispanic language (Ochoa 1914). This curious fragment, although too short to probe for consistent pidgin traits, shows some Afro-Portuguese characteristics, including non-diphthongized forms (dente, quere, bona, be, vene), some apparently Portuguese words (fogir, meyior < melhor), and two instances of the copula sa. The fragment also uses uninflected infinitives, confuses ser and estar, and shows some phonetic modifications:

ya *ser* venido...

si querendo yo yeva por aqui, o por aya *sa* meyor ...

a yñor *sa* be venida aqui ser tu servidor...

The major 16th century Spanish author to employ Afro-Hispanic pidgin in his writings was the playwright Lope de Rueda, in plays written in between 1538 and 1545 (Rueda 1908).⁷ Close inspection of Lope de Rueda's habla de negros reveals complete consistency with Afro-Iberian texts from all time periods, as well as the first inklings of phenomena which became common in later texts. Rueda's examples give the first convincing evidence that something resembling a consistent and coherent Afro-Hispanic pidgin might once have been spoken by first-generation Africans in Spain. Excluding phenomena which are simply the results of foreign-talk Spanish (e.g uninflected infinitives, lack of agreement, loss of prepositions), the recurring pidgin traits, almost all of which can be independently verified, include widespread use of copular sa:⁸

COMEDIA DE LOS ENGAÑADOS:

(Chuchuleta, machacha! Señora, no responder; piensa que *sa* muerta...

)No mira vosa mercé que proguntar quin *sa* yo? Mira, mira, fija, ya saber Dios y tora lo mundo que *sar* yo sabrina na Reina Berbasina ...

(Ay, señora!)Pensar vosa mercé que *san* yo fija de alguno negra de par ay?

)Quin *sa* borracha, Chuchuleta?

... la carta que yo te cribo no e para besamano, sino que *sa* bono bendito sea rios, loado sea rios, amén.

COMEDIA DE TYMBRIA:

... ya ve, como la persona *samo* tan negro carradaz y recogidaz, anque *samo* na campos, no te maraviya vosa mercé, y como tampoco *sa* forana esa cayando, que no lo asamo decir óxete ni móxete....

Sa la verdad, por cierto, que tenemo un poquito la color morenicas ...

Turo me lo conozco, turo me lo entiendes; ma *samo* corrido que delante que bien quiéresme ofrentar aquesa rapaza....

... y no lo digo porque labas, ni porque *san* yo, mas un cara, un cara, (mira vosa mercé!...

)No mira que *samo* refriados y pechigona?

Y tanto me la jura, que no *sa* razón quebrantomos juramentos ...

COMEDIA DE EUFEMIA:

)Paréscete vos que so *sa* bon xemplos a la ventana de un dueña honradas recogidas coma yo ...?

(Jesú!, o la voz me la miente o *sa* aqueya que yama mi señor Pollos...

Pues a bona fe, que *sa* la persona de mala ganas...

... y como yo *sa* tan delicara, despojame na cabeza como nas ponjas ...

The remainder of the 16th century provides no convincing examples of sa as used in Afro-Hispanic language. The turn of the 17th century brought a flourishing of the habla de negro as a viable literary device in Spain, and the greatest writers of the Golden Age were quick to join the tradition. The first well-known 17th century representation of Afro-Hispanic speech is the Entremés de los negros of Simón de Aguado (ca. 1602) (Cotarelo y Morí 1911: vol. 1):

... Siolo mío, siolo mío, no hay para qué vuesa [merced] se venga tan colecicos, que, aunque negro, *samo* honraro y no sufrimo cosiquillas ...

Si *sa* crabo o no *sa* crabo, a dioso daremon conta; y si *sa* crabo, por y eso servinos, no es tan grande pesicaros querer bien a Domingas ...

Yo no *sa* de rimoquetos ni de rimoquetas ...

... tenemo en la memoria la mandamenta y la garticulos, y si *samo* túnica de la Soledad, no *samo* a lo meno de lo judío que yeba lo paso...

The pidginized language of the black characters reveals a much closer approximation to normal Spanish than most of the preceding examples, as well as a wide range of phonetic and morphological distortions.

Most pidgin forms continue those of earlier texts; the verb sa(r) is used throughout, both in the conjugated first person plural samo, and the invariant sa, covering the remainder of the cases.

Just a few years after the Entremés de los negros, two of the most prominent writers of the Golden Age turned their hand to imitations of 'black' Spanish; Góngora in poetry (Ciplijauskaitė 1969), and Lope de Vega in drama (Vega Carpio 1893, 1917, 1930, 1955).

Góngora, 'En la fiesta del Santísimo Sacramento' (1609):

Mañana *sa* Corpus Christa ...

(Ay, Jesús, cómo *sa* mu trista!...

Samo negra pecandora ...

La alma *sa* como la denta ...

... que aunque *samo* negra, *sa* hermosa tú...

... que aunque negra, *sa* presona...

)Quién *sa* aquél?...

Góngora, 'A lo mismo' [al nacimiento de Cristo nuestro señor] (1615):

Tu prima *sará* al momento escravita do nacimiento...

)E qué *sará*, primo, tú?...

Sará bu, se chora o menin Jesús...

Góngora, 'En la fiesta de la adoración de los reyes' (1615):

Paparico, poco a poco, que *samo* enfadado ya...

Hormiga *sá*, juro a tal ...

Sá de Dios al fin presente...

Góngora, Soneto 'A la "Jerusalem conquistada" de Lope de Vega' {1609}:

Vimo, señora Lopa, su Epopeya,

e por Diosa, aunque *sa* mucho legante,

que no hay negra poeta que se pante,

e si se panta, no *sa* negra eya...

... la negrita *sará* turo abalorio ...

From Lope de Vega's texts come:

EL AMANTE AGRADECIDO:

a Seviya del mundo *sa*, Princesa...

EL MAYOR REY DE LOS REYES:

Non *sa* cagayera yo...

quando *samo* en parandero...

Más y bonico y más branco *sa* que el Sol...

Otro Reye *sa* de Arabia...

anque negro cabayera *samos* toros esotros...

LA SIEGA :

Yo, Siñolo, simple *samo* ...

VITORIA DE LA HONRA :

Aquisá que no se ha periro ...

Aquisá señol Cupilo ...

(Voto Andioso verrarero que *sa* Sinvilla la reina de cuantas civilidades turolo mundo rodea!...

MADRE DE LA MEJOR:

Samo tan regocijara de ver lo sielo tan beyo ...

... *sando* el cielo llovenhero ...

EL NEGRO DEL MEJOR AMO:

(Jente branca, vivandioso que *sa* baya can vesino!...

Amore, bosancé *sa* gran beyaca ...

EL SANTO NEGRO ROSAMBUCO:

No *ensá* discreto...

Pues como *samo* lindo hoy *en samo* malo de ojo...

)*Samo* de Santa Tamé, de Angola *samo*, maluco?

... decimo logo a la negra si *samo* de monicongo...

...pensé *samo* de mi tierra ...

Si pol cantá dispeltamo, pue que *samo* amor epejo aun que *samo* un poco lexo ...

Durmiendo *sa*, ya len vi ...

Fraire franchico *esamo*, ya veremo quen *samo*...

Si *esamo* santa Luncrecia habló santo negro, y negra...

Hoy hacemo dete día, pues que *sa* santo y me aleglo ...

Lope's use of esamo suggests that the early variant essar still had some viability.⁹ These texts also contain clear examples of samo used with singular reference, but this is always sporadic. The examples just given are set against many others in which ser and estar are used appropriately. To the extent that Lope's imitation of Africanized Spanish has any basis in fact, this would indicate a considerable variation among partially or totally invariant forms, and correctly selected and conjugated copulas.

After these early 17th century examples, changes in the literary representation of Africans become evident, although some later texts continue to duplicate earlier patterns, well into the 18th century. In general, grammatical deformations become less frequent, except for stereotyped morphological distortions such as diosa < Dios. Greater emphasis is placed on phonetic patterns. Taken at face value, this would indicate that by the middle of the 17th century, 'black Spanish' in Spain was mostly a phonetically-influenced 'accent,' comparable perhaps to Black English in the United States, rather than constituting the pidginized speech of foreign-born slaves. There is abundant evidence that by this time, several generations of native Spanish-speaking blacks had been born in Spain. Nearly all were freeborn, and many worked as artisans, soldiers, and entrepreneurs. To the extent that they were at least partially integrated into Spanish society, a grudging acceptance of blacks as unremarkable human beings began to occur. Spanish writers began to differentiate between European-born blacks, whose speech was usually rendered in standard Spanish, and (African-born) slaves, who continued to

speaking a pidginized Spanish, sometimes laced with Portuguese elements. A good example of the contrast is El valiente negro en Flandes, by Andrés de Claramonte (ca. 1640) (Claramonte 1951):

Preto *zamo*, hombre de bien y cayamo, que también *sa* gente preto...

Mira si *sa* aquí el falso cagayera...

Si este *sa* el Duque, poner podemos al mundo espantos...

) Si ora también acá *sa* soldada gente preta?

) Yo *sa* vil negro?...

Está *sa* el Rey jurandioso.

Ya podemos decir que aunque negro, gente *samo*...

The 17th century saw several other plays and skits in which bozal language was used. Many were patent imitations of earlier works which had achieved popularity. Lope de Vega's El negro del mejor amo gave rise to at least two offshoots. The first, with the same title, is attributed to Antonio Mira de Amescua (1574?-1644), although Cotarelo y Morí (1931: 167-9) rejects this authorship (Mira de Amescua 1653). Many critics attribute the play in question to Luis Vélez de Guevara, whose Negro del seraphín (1643) is nearly identical (Sánchez 1979). A glance at the two texts suffices to demonstrate that one has been copied from the other, or both from a common source:

From NEGRO DEL SERAPHÍN:

... *zi çamo* galga la negla galgo *zamo* su mercede y así bucamo lo galgo pala anda
cuçiendo lieble...

... si oy laviamo con quelelte no *sa* busance mas linda.

... mas çiola non despleciamo que *sa* galano y valente ...

Preguntamo que *sa* cortes cagaiero...

Jesuncrisa *sa* conmiga...

... valor me de Jesucrisa si Rosanbucó *sa* muerto...

Samo plessa hasta agloa ...

Mixor padre flay Moltela *sa* por hazer...

que aunque negla *samo* honrada...

Andamo muy nolambuena que *sa* diferençia mucha cumpligona omiserera ...

... mas esto aparte dejanda como *sa* la santa nuessa flai Benito nueso Padre...

... que *samo* en Palermo sabidora de su muerte mallugrado ...

From Mira de Amescua's NEGRO DEL MEJOR AMO:

Zi *zamo* galga la negla, galgo *zamo* su mercede ...

Ezamo plesa hasta angora...

... aunque negla, *çamo* honrada...

Since the authors of both plays were obviously mimicking Lope de Vega's play, written several decades before, it is possible that neither of the later playwrights had firsthand experience with bozal language, which by all indications was fading out by the middle of the 17th century. By this time, the accumulated intertext of habla de negros, in drama, poetry, and music, was so considerable, that writers could and undoubtedly did invent passages in this dialect without ever having heard an African speak Spanish.

In the second half of the 17th century, Pedro Calderón de la Barca included brief passages of bozal Spanish in several skits written between about 1650 and 1670. The plays in question are La rabia--primera parte, Las carnestolendas, La pandera, and La casa de los linajes (cf. Calderón de la Barca 1682, Lobato, 1989). Another brief fragment comes in the play La sibila de oriente y gran reyna de Saba. Calderón did not place the same emphasis on stage dialects as Lope de Vega, and his literary attempts at imitating Africanized Spanish are hardly to be taken as accurate specimens of Afro-Hispanic speech in the second half of the 17th century. As in other plays of the later 17th century, his African

characters' speech is principally confined to phonetic modifications. In sharp contrast to the generally correct verb conjugations, including use of subjunctive, past, and perfect forms, Calderón employs the copula za to occasionally replace both ser and estar. It is hard to imagine that Africans who so deftly handled Spanish verb morphology would at the same time use this pidgin form:

From LA SIBILA DE ORIENTE Y GRAN REYNA DE SABA :

Muy pleguntonsica *za*...

No *za* pozible, que la muzica ze va ...

Mucho en zalir *za* talda ...

Turo aquezo *za* embeleco ...

mira, siola, no cleas que la gente branca *za* mentiroza ...

Aquí *zaré*...

Parece que *za* dulmiro al zon de lo ezturnento ...

From LA PANDERA :

... peldone voçansé que *zaba* hablando con otra plima ...

From LA CASA DE LOS LINAJES:

lo neglo)*sa* gente ruin ...

Sitting astride the transition from Peninsular to Latin American bozal language are the writings of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, who incorporated Afro-Hispanic pidgin in several villancicos written towards the end of the 17th century. In Sor Juana's writings, sa alternates with correctly conjugated copular verbs (Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz 1952):

... que il alma rivota blanca *sá*, no prieta...

Pue vamo turu a Belé, y a lan Dioso que *sa* yoranda ...

... no habra palabra, pluque *sa* milando, su boca cayada.

Bien dici, Flacico: tura *sa* suspensa ...

(Nombre de mi Dioso, que *sa* cosa buena!

... que non blanca como tú, nin Pañó que no *sa* buena ...

A number of anonymous poems, plays and songs round out the Spanish Golden bozal corpus, which extends well into the 18th century, past the time when bozal language was common in the cities of Spain. Many of them use sa and its congeners in a manner identical to the examples just surveyed. Given the anonymous and formulaic nature of these texts, it is doubtful whether any additional insights into Afro-Hispanic language are contained therein.

4. Additional examples of sa in Afro-Hispanic texts from Latin America

Turning to a wider range of 17th and early 18th century texts produced in Latin America, literary bozal language is scattered across a wide area, from the mines of Bolivia, Peru, and central Colombia to Guatemala and Mexico. Most of the texts in question continue the Peninsular Golden Age habla de negros, and it is not until the 18th century, when the African population of Latin America became concentrated in coastal cities instead of highland mines, qualitatively different linguistic patterns emerge. The African population in highland Peru reached its height in the mid 17th century, diminishing rapidly thereafter due to a combination of high mortality, minimal reproductive possibilities, and intermingling with the indigenous population. There are, however, important documents which purport to represent the speech of bozal Afro-Peruvian speech of this time. These are primarily songs or poems associated with religious services. Particularly popular was the villancico, especially Christmas songs based on events surrounding the birth of Christ and the arrival of the Reyes Magos. However, despite the not insignificant corpus of early Afro-Peruvian materials (more than a dozen texts), sa only appears in

a single example, an anonymous song apparently composed in Bolivia, 'Esa noche yo baila' (Claro 1974: lxxv-lxxvii; Fortún de Ponce 1957):

Plo mi Dios que *sa* acuya ...

In Colombia, two 17th century Afro-Hispanic texts show use of invariant sa (Perdomo Escobar 1976):

Anon., 'Cucua cucua':

... la pranta se mueve de alegre que *sa* gurumbe ...

Anon. 'Teque leque':

... sarangua sarangua que *samo* neglito que andamo ...

... si quando venimo hablamos y *sa* niño y no pantamo que aunque neglo no tiznamo porque
sa de bona fe.

Several Mexican texts, apparently from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, also exhibit invariant sa (Mendoza 1956, Megenney 1985, Zimmermann 1993):

sá blanco não *sá* moreno e may *sá* nosso palente...

... Queremo que niño vea negro pulizo y galano que como *sa* noso hermano ...

aunque neglo *samo* caravali gente *samo*.

Si parida San María *san* pañol su coraçon

In the 19th century, a large outpouring of Afro-Hispanic texts comes from Latin America, representing Cuba, the Buenos Aires/Montevideo area, and coastal Peru, in descending order of magnitude. The language of these texts is qualitatively much different from the Golden Age specimens surveyed above, and bears a much greater resemblance to contemporary vernacular Caribbean/coastal Spanish. Grammatical pidginization is still evident, but the patterns shift away from those found in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Invariant sa is virtually nonexistent in the later bozal corpus. No

examples are found in the several dozen Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan texts, nor in the coastal Afro-Peruvian documents. In the 19th century Afro-Cuban corpus, by far the largest combined source of bozal Spanish, sa was used only by the humorist José Crespo y Borbón, a Spaniard who spent most of his life in Cuba, and who wrote under the pen name Creto Gangá (Cruz 1974):¹⁰

bindito *sa* Dio que lo vamo tené Jópera güeno ...

...Bindito *sa* Dio que ya se cabá toro mi pena ...

5. Summing up: sa in Afro-Iberian language

In partial summary, Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Portuguese language, at least as represented in literary and folkloric documents, made use of a set of related copular verbs which cannot be ascribed to a simple continuation of any known Spanish or Portuguese form. The basic copula was uninflected sa, with variants essá, ensá, sar, etc. These forms alternated with samo, ostensibly a first person plural verb, but in practice often ascribed to singular or non-first person reference. Judging by the textual evidence, sa and its congenors arose during the very earliest Afro-Iberian linguistic contacts, possibly in West Africa or in mid 15th century Portugal. From Portugal, again judging by literary texts, invariant sa spread to the African population of Spain, where it apparently persisted in Afro-Hispanic pidgin long after other traces of early pidgin Portuguese had disappeared. The same literary reconstruction indicates that sa crossed the Atlantic, if not in the mouths of Africans, then at least in the imagination of Peninsular-born or educated writers and composers. Around the turn of the 18th century, the trail of sa abruptly disappears, despite the renewed interest in the literary representation of Afro-Iberian pidgin in Spanish America, and to a lesser extent in Brazil. This rather erratic trail of written attestations, further exacerbated by the fact that nearly all the literary documents make use of crude humor and racial stereotyping, casts doubt on the very existence of sa, or at least of its persistence past the early 16th

century Iberian Peninsula. Did sa ever really form part of Afro-Iberian pidgin, and if so, for how long, and over how wide of an area?

The only collateral evidence that can be mustered by way of a response is the consideration of Iberian-based creoles throughout the world, most of which were formed between the end of the 16th century and the early 18th century. Of these, only the creoles of the Gulf of Guinea and Macao have sa/sã, which at least serves as evidence that such a form enjoyed some currency among pidgin Portuguese-speaking populations of previous centuries.

6. Theories on the origins of creole Portuguese sa

From the earliest observations of the creoles of the Gulf of Guinea and Macao creole Portuguese, researchers have speculated on the origin of the invariant copula sa/sã, which also doubles as a preverbal aspectual marker in São Tomense. Among the earliest was Adolfo Coelho, who in 1878 observed the preverbal particle sâ in Cape Verdian (Coelho 1962: 21): nhu sâ tâ passado 'como tem passado,' sâ tâ dal 'lhe tem dado,' and confessed that both the precise meaning and the origin of this particle were obscure. For Macao, Coelho (1962: 62) observed the nasalized form sam (China sam tolo 'o china é tolo'), without commenting on its etymology.¹¹ França (1897: 201) felt that Ptg. são was the source of the copula in Macao creole Portuguese, which he reproduced as são: 'do verbo ser toma-se são. E assim se diz: no presenta tá são; no preterito já são; no futuro, logo são. Isto para todas as pessoas do singular e plural.' Batalha (1974: 26) refers to the verb form sam still found among a few older people: '... do verbo ser, que foi usada em português antigo para a primeira pessoa do singular, e naturalmente empregada em Macau para todas as pessoas gramaticais, como na tão vulgar expressão das velhotas: nunca sam (não é). Ferreira (1978: 28) also believes that Macaense sã comes from Portuguese são. Azevedo (1984: 55) gives the Macaense copula as sang, stating that 'o

verbo ser emprega-se apenas na terceira pessoa do plural do indicativo presente ...' Azevedo also notes that Macao was for a long period administered and supplied directly from Goa; he also gives examples of linguistic elements possibly transferred straight from Goa to Macao. Thus some form of Indo-Portuguese creole may have arrived in Macao from Goa, in addition to the indirect influence through Malaccan Papia Kristang. Goan Portuguese creole, Papia Kristang, or a combination of both may have brought the preverbal particle ta to Macaense (the only creole to have both the copula sã and the particle ta), but the fact that neither of these creoles exercised an overwhelming force on the development of Macaense creole is demonstrated by the lack of any copula based on Portuguese ter in the latter language.

Schuchardt (1882: 910), in describing the copula sa of São Tomense, believes that this form comes either from the Portuguese third person plural são (citing Coelho's observation of sam in Macao creole Portuguese), or from ser, or possibly from a mixture of both forms.¹² As for the origin of sa, Schuchardt (1888: 213) believes it is a mixture of são and está 'wie im Santhom.' [sic.]. Schuchardt (1889: 472) postulates a similar origin for sa in Príncipe Portuguese creole. Valkhoff (1966: 93; 107) believes that São Tomense sa is 'probably' from Portuguese são. This opinion is echoed by Bartens (1995: 90) for São Tomense. She accepts Schuchardt's mixture of são and está for Príncipe creole (p. 106). For Macao creole Portuguese, Bartens (1995: 202) postulates only são as an etymon. Stolz (1987: 52) hints that sa in the Gulf of Guinea creoles, which has replaced the particle ta in Cape Verde Crioulo, Guinea-Bissau Kriôl, Papiamentu, and the Asian Portuguese creoles, may also come from está.

7. The origins of sa in medieval Portuguese

The origins of sa and its congeners in early Afro-Portuguese pidgin must be sought in the interface between 15th century Portuguese and a cross-section of West African languages. There are

no common denominators among the latter languages which would provide a ready model for pidgin Portuguese sa.¹³ Nor is there a single unequivocal source in Portuguese, although a much clearer reconstruction can be posited.

Old Portuguese contained a proclitic possessive adjective sa (Williams 1962: 155), later replaced by sua. However, there is nothing in the behavior of this determiner which would influence the development of an invariant copula with the same phonetic shape. More to the point, the archaic and regional form samos instead of somos was also found occasionally; Williams (1962: 235-6) attributes this form to analogy with estamos.¹⁴ However, the most revealing clues as to the development of copular sa in Afro-Iberian pidgin arises upon consideration of alternative forms of ser in 15th century Portuguese.

In modern Portuguese, the forms of the verb ser are highly differentiated, cogate with the corresponding Spanish forms: sou, es, é, somos, sois, são. However, early Portuguese forms were often quite different, particularly the first person singular and the third person plural. In the first person singular, Latin sedeo (from the verb sedere) gave sejo, but this early form was soon replaced by the reflexes of Latin sum (from the verb esse). In the earliest Portuguese documents, the corresponding form appears as som or sõ, representing a nasalized vowel. Occasionally, this form was written são in Old Portuguese.¹⁵ Latin sunt also gave som in Old Portuguese, yielding modern Portuguese são following the regular diphthongization of final [ã] and [õ]. In the early Cancioneiros, both first person singular and third person plural were represented by similar or identical forms, involving nasalized [õ] (Braga 1945):¹⁶

Eu *são* tan muit' amador do meu linhagen ... (p. 78)

... de quantas cousas eno mundo *son* (p. 7)

Sequeira (1943: 47) observes that in the Cancioneiro Geral, pam, dam, gualardam and Johan rhyme with coraçam, tençam, etc. At the same time, tençam rhymes with mão, nam with vilão, and conclusam with irmão. The obvious interpretation is that all orthographic variants represented a nasal diphthong by the turn of the 16th century. Said Ali (1964: 38) reaches a similar conclusion.

The Cancioneiro Geral of Garcia de Resende is an appropriate document to consider carefully, since it contains the first specimens of Afro-Portuguese pidgin. The following examples are taken from Guimarães (1917). In this collection não is generally represented as nam. Of more interest are the first person singular and third person plural forms of ser, all generally represented as sam, by a variety of authors spanning more than half a century. The third person plural is occasionally represented as são, but this spelling is never used for first person singular:

Pedro D'Almeida:

... sabey quee com entender maas rrepostas quã maas *são*. (15)

Jorge de Resende:

... meus dias nysto ssoo *sam* acupados ... que meus dias nam *ssam* em al acupados. (26-7)

... mas se *sam* do coraçam, que *ssa* de calar coelas. (40)

Os meus dias sacabaram, por que estes ja nam *ssam* ... eu nam posso sentir o que mais *ssão* me sseria ... (42-3)

Minha vida *ssam* tristezas ... vosas obras *sam* cruezas ... (47)

... aos que vossos nam *ssam* (48)

Joam da Sylueyra:

Sã gentys homesq farte ... (58)

Alvaro Fernandez D'Almeida:

As trouas *ssam* acabadas ... malas v' *ssam* doluidar ... (67)

... mas cuidarey que ssinays *sam* profiçyas mayores (69)

Symão de Sousa:

... senhora, eu contrafaço, & *sam* perdido ... posto que sejam tamanhos como *ssam* (106-7)

... Da senhora dona Joana de mendoza me chamo eu, por esta *ssam* ja sandeu (115)

Males que nã *ssão* de fora ... (117)

O costume deste rreyno dilo ey, que nam *ssam* mudo (119)

Estrybeyro Moor:

... quem começo tam perdido perdidos *ssam* nos finays ... com ssinays de fremosura, nam *ssam* de vida segura (135-6)

Françisco Mendez:

Nam *ssam* frade pera sser santeficado (145)

... direy que *ssam* frade ... (148)

Anrrique da Mota (a huma negra):

eu *ssam* aquy o culpado, & outrem nam, eu *ssam* o denificado & eu *ssam* o magoado, eu o *ssam* (198)

Goayas, que *sam* destroçado ... (202)

... segundo me tem amor, por que *ssam* sseu servidor ... (205)

... eu o *ssam* (212)

... *sam* prantadas por estas santas mãos m̃has (214)

... assas demffada *ssam* de chorar (242)

... mas cuydoq̃ *ssam* pecados ... (250)

... por que *sam* de concertar o precurador co juiz (265)

Manuel de Goyos:

Eu *sam* o que me vengy ... (277)

... Eu a tenho, & *sam* culpado ... (280)

Trabalho por enganar, por que *sam* desenganado ... (288)

Garçia de Rresende:

... *sam* assy afydalguados (317)

Sam muy veçido damores ... (338)

... por quas cousas de querer nam *sam* por leys nem degredo (340)

... massentay por caualeyro, pois o *ssam* muy verdadeyro ... (376)

Todas estas cousas *sam* ... (392)

Eu *ssam* muy antremetido ... eu *ssam* muy gentil galante ... sã be desposto ...

sey bem cantar, & tanjer, algas *ssam* em mim deuotos, e *ssam* prezado das damas ... eu
ssam muyto destimar ... *sam* destarte zombador ... (410-12)

The same forms were still in place--albeit becoming archaic--during the 16th century, when the kings of the Kongo Kingdom carried on an extensive correspondence with the Kings of Portugal, using KiKongo-speaking scribes who had been trained in the use of Portuguese (and who occasionally committed errors reflecting their somewhat tenuous grasp of that language). Use of sam as first person singular occurs frequently in letters as written on behalf of the Kongo kings. For example, in a 1516 letter (Brásio 1952: 359): `... que me lança em rosto que se eu *sam* crystãom e vasallo delrrey nosso Jrm ...' A letter dated 1517 contains the line `... que deles se n seguja nenh prouejto, do que *sam* mujto desconsolado ...' (Brásio 1952: 406). The (phonetically similar or identical) *som* also appears, in a letter from the Kongo king written in 1530 (Brásio 1952: 540): `... por que de sua converçassam *som* muyto comssollado ...' A 1547 document has `... como Rey christ o per direito *sam* obrigado que

eu poder a sua santidade e a seus subcesores ...' (Brásio 1953a: 175). A letter from a Kongo king in 1575 has '[eu] *S o* informado que pera comseruaç o do Reyno de Comguo ...' (Brásio 1953b: 125).

In the third person plural, both *sam* and *s o* are used. For example, from 1549: '... hos q ue bem servem *sam* dynos de gualardam ...' (Brásio 1953: 218). In another document from the same year, we have '... *sã o* tã o desausalutos ...' (Brásio 1953: 226). The first person plural *samos* also occurs; for example in a 1550 document: '... nós nos dias *samos* muy velho pera tanto sofrermos' (Brásio 1953: 244). The diphthong *-ã o* was sometimes written *-ã* , for example *Basti [o]* (Brásio 1953: 251, 257), in 1550.

These examples must be interpreted with considerable caution, but they do suggest the beginnings of the invariant copula sa (at times also represented sã or sam) in early Afro-Portuguese pidgin. The most important consideration is the fact that two of the six present-tense forms of ser were identical, exhibiting moreover a canonical CV ([s] + V) shape which was ideal for adaptation by a wide cross-section of speakers of West African languages. The second and third person singular forms, es and é, respectively, would be confused by speakers whose phonotactic systems did not parse syllable-final /s/; the minimal syllable [e] did not enjoy the sort of prominence that makes for ready borrowing into pidgins. The second person plural, sois, when stripped of its final /s/ by the same phonotactic minimality, would fit into the [s] + V pattern of the {1 sg.}/{3 pl.} forms. Only the first person plural, somos, was both prosodically prominent and phonotactically parseable (through loss of the final /s/) by the common denominators of West African languages in contact with late 15th century Portuguese. Eventually this form would be drawn into pidginized Portuguese and Spanish, as samo; at times, this form would replace sa as the invariant copula. Thus from the outset late 15th century Portuguese contained the seeds for the use of an invariant copula with the canonical form [s] + V.

The textual data surveyed above, as well as the comments by Oliveira, reveal that the {1 sg.} and {3 pl.} forms of ser were identically pronounced at the time period in question, and represented graphically as sam. It has also been suggested that this grapheme already represented diphthongized -ão in all instances, but the textual data are more ambiguous in this respect. In particular, although the case that -am and -om represented the same sound is rather strong, the deduction that both sounds were also identical with -ão is more tenuous.¹⁷

8. Africans' realization of Portuguese nasal diphthongs

There is additional evidence that Bantu-speaking Africans reduced the nasal diphthong -ão, particularly with weak or tenuous offglide, to a simple [ã], [õ] or [ɐ̃]. Observations of the Portuguese spoken non-fluently by 20th century Angolans (typically speaking KiMbundu, Umbundu, or KiKongo) gives evidence of this change, particularly the reduction of não to na. This contrasts with the more frequent reduction of (especially unstressed) -ão to [o] in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese. Some Angolan examples are given in (Pereira 1947: 15; Rivas 1969: 84; Rocha 1977: 21; Andrade 1961: 126; Osorio 1961: 177):

Na côma, na béba, tem que morer (Pereira 1947: 15)

Antao num sâbi quê bâxi? (Rivas 1969: 84)

Você num viu? (Rocha 1977: 21)

Num fara mais, Valeta (Andrade 1961: 126)

Domingo num qué chorar (Osorio 1961: 177)

A similar example from the non-native Portuguese spoken on São Tomé is given in Muralha (1925: 41): In answer to the question `Tens cá maracujá?' a native of São Tomé responds:

nan, sior. Nan tá maduro.

In Macao creole Portuguese as well, many of the Portuguese nasal diphthongs have been reduced; Portuguese não is also realized as nã.

Another outcome of nasal vowels and diphthongs in European words borrowed into African languages is denasalization. This has been attested for both French and Portuguese nasal vowels as reinterpreted in a wide variety of African languages, and was also represented in Afro-Hispanic bozal language from the 16th to the 20th century (cf. Bal 1961, 1968, 1975, 1988; Atkins 1953; Dumont 1983; Faïk 1979; Lafage 1985; Likangama 1990; Lipski 1992, 1995; Martins 1958a, 1958b; Renaud 1979; Roulon 1972; Shyirambere; Bradshaw 1965; Cabral 1975; Kiraithe and Baden 1976; Prata 1983).¹⁸ Some typical examples of KiKongo adaptations of Portuguese nasal vowels and diphthongs are:

Sebastião > Sibatiau, limão > limao/dimau/nlimau/limanu, mamão > mamau/mamo,
serrão > selau, prisão > pelezo, kapitão > kapitau, lavandeiro > lavadelo, botão >
mbutayi, sabão > sabau, pão > dipâ

This tendency towards denasalization accounts for the presence of denasalized sa alternating with sã among Afro-Iberian creoles, and even in Macao.

9. Use of sa along the Portuguese Slave Coast and entry into Gulf of Guinea creoles

In addition to the literary imitations of the *língua de preto*, there is an important indication of the possible genesis of copular sa in a curious document written by Joseph de Naxara, a Spanish Capuchin priest, who lived in Allada (Ardra, later Whydah, along the coast of modern Benin) in 1659-60 (Naxara 1672). Naxara describes an African who spoke Portuguese and understood Spanish, and gave an example of his use of Portuguese:

Não me cheguè à èla, porque *sa* Ramera ... è meu Pai me votarà à ò tronco, se sabe
que mi falè co ela ... è mais, que mi non quero chegar à ela, porque *sa* Ramera ...

The use of sa is unique in coming neither from Portugal nor from the Angola/Gulf of Guinea region, but rather from the Portuguese Slave coast, where Kwa languages (e.g. Ewe/Fon) are spoken. There is no indication that Naxara was simply imitating literary examples of the period; indeed, since he spent much of his missionary career in Africa, it is not known how much of the rather frivolous Spanish and Portuguese literature in which 'Africanized' language occurred he was familiar with.¹⁹ The presence of the copula sa in the Naxara text is revealing in both its geographical location and the time period for which it is attested, and may provide a clue as to the presence and absence of sa in Afro-Iberian creoles. The data surveyed to this point provide a puzzling distribution of the invariant copula sa: it is present in the Gulf of Guinea creoles, but not in Palenquero (with strong Bantu roots), nor in any known variety of Angolan Portuguese. It is also absent from the Portuguese-based creoles of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. At the same time, sa makes its appearance in literary texts early in the 16th century, beginning with Gil Vicente. The first major Portuguese writer to use Afro-Lusitanian pidgin was Gil Vicente, in several plays written in the first decades of the 16th century. Although by this time Portugal had already established relations with the Kingdom of Kongo, the number of Bantu-speaking Africans in Portugal was apparently still rather small, in comparison with groups from the Senegambia and to a lesser extent the Gold Coast and the Bight of Benin.²⁰ It has been shown that sa makes its first appearance in Portugal at the beginning of the 16th century, and in Spain very shortly thereafter. This is precisely the time when the area stretching from the Windward Coast (Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, and Liberia) to Calabar (eastern Nigeria) was supplying a large proportion of African slaves to Portugal and Spain, possibly the largest proportion. The Portuguese fort at Elmina and the Slave Coast (Benin) outposts were among the most important staging areas for slave shipments during this time period. If sa

as an invariant copula first arose in the pidginized Portuguese spoken by and with Africans along the Slave Coast in the early 16th century, this would explain its appearance in the early bozal texts from Europe. If this innovative copula were taken directly from the Bight of Benin to the Iberian Peninsula, by Africans and those who traded in slaves and African merchandise, this would explain the conspicuous absence of sa in the creoles which arose in Cape Verde and later on the mainland in Guinea-Bissau and Casamance. Sa could also have been taken to São Tomé and the other islands in the Gulf of Guinea, where it became part of the developing creoles. Despite the proximity of the Bantu-speaking Congo Basin to São Tomé, São Tomense contains many elements taken from the Bight of Benin.²¹ If sa arrived in São Tomense and the remaining Gulf of Guinea creoles (which appear to have a common origin--probably on São Tomé), this would explain the absence of this element in Angolan Portuguese, as well as another Luso-Bantu congener, Colombian Palenquero. The absence of sa in Papiamentu is not unexpected, given the lack of a definitive Slave Coast component to this creole, which exhibits much greater similarity with Cape Verdean Crioulo.

10. The arrival of sã in Macao

The final unexplained facet of the invariant copula sã is its presence in the far-flung Portuguese creole of Macao, together with its absence in the intervening Asian Portuguese creoles. The path to an answer lies in the fact that considerable numbers of African slaves were taken to Macao, especially during the first two centuries of the Portuguese colony. (Amaro 1980; Batalha 1974, Teixeira 1976).²² Little is known with certainty about the presence of Africans in Portuguese Asian colonies, since there was never an organized slave trade of the magnitude assumed by the supply of slaves to the Americas. The case of Macao was apparently quite different from Portuguese colonies in India, since the tiny Portuguese enclave on the Chinese coast drew slaves, free workers and colonists from other parts of

the world in much greater proportions than in the Portuguese Indian colonies. Indeed, Macao was a hub through which passed people and languages from Timor to Diu and Damão. This was part of a massive network of slave and indentured labor routes, which crisscrossed Asia, southern Africa, and the southwestern Pacific.²³ Black Africans in Macao were known as cafres (similar to the term Kafirs used in South Africa), and their presence is mentioned as early as 1577 (Teixeira 1976: 5). These Africans were used as servants and sometimes as guards and even soldiers, to protect the Portuguese settlements (particularly Jesuit properties) from attacks by native Chinese.²⁴ The presence of black Africans in Macao was more extensive and longer lasting than in the remaining Portuguese colonies in Asia; African-born slaves were evidently present in the colony over a period of more than 300 years. The regional origin of these Africans slaves is not known, but probably followed the trends set by the Portuguese slave trade in other parts of the world. During the 16th and 17th centuries, this would imply that most of the slaves would have come from the Bight of Benin, and from São Tomé, as well as from the nearby Angolan coast.

Given the documented presence of sa along the Slave Coast as early as the 17th century, and its presence--perhaps at first only in a rudimentary Portuguese pidgin--on São Tomé, it is likely that sa was taken to Macao directly from the Bight of Benin or the Gulf of Guinea by African slaves.²⁵

11. Summary and conclusions

The preceding reconstruction is admittedly speculative, but it is consistent with the historical and synchronic data. Table 1 provides the basic elements of the solution. The basic elements in the formation of sa/sã are the following:

(1) realization of first person singular and third person plural of ser as [sã]/[saõ] in 15th and early 16th-century Portuguese.

(2) Early confusion of ser and estar in Afro-Iberian language; creation of transitory hybrids such as essar and sar.

(3) existence of samos as a dialectal alternative to somos in some varieties of Portuguese.

(4) Interpretation of a Portuguese nasal vowel or incipient nasal diphthong as either a nasalized [ã] or denasalized [a] by Africans in the Bight of Benin, Angola, and São Tome.

(5) transference of an already partially stabilized copula sa from the Slave Coast/Bight of Benin to the developing Portuguese creole on São Tomé.

(6) transference of the copula sa/sã from the Slave Coast and/or São Tomé to Macao, probably in the 17th century.

Much work remains to be done on the development of Afro-Iberian pidgins and creoles. The preceding remarks are intended to stimulate further discussion on these topics.

Notes

¹ This use of generic ssar alternates, in the penultimate line of the poem, with sser: nam sser mais que vinho 'it's only wine.' The first known Afro-Iberian text, a poem written by the court official Fernam da Silveira (dated 1455) and also published in the Cancioneiro geral. The poem imitates the speech of a tribal king from 'Sierra Leone,' and contains the first glimmerings of Portuguese-based creoles, as well as exemplifying the type of broad-spectrum interference that speakers of African languages would bring to Ibero-Romance. Sa is not found in this text, but use of estar for ser does occur:

A min rrey de negro *estar* Serra Lyoa ...

`I am a king of the Negroes from Sierra Leone'

folgar muyto negro *estar* vos rraynha...

`you are the queen of a lot of lazy Negroes'

The remainder of the poem contains other early inklings of Afro-Portuguese pidgin, which would develop into stable creoles in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and the islands of the Gulf of Guinea (São Tomé, Príncipe, and Annobón). Another brief poem fragment of the Cancioneiro geral, 'De dõ Rrodriguo de Monssanto a Loureço de faria da maneira que mandaua a hã seu escrauoq curasse hãa sua mula (Cancioneiro Geral, t. IV, p. 191 (A. J. Gonçalves Guimarães, ed. Cancioneiro Geral de Garcia de Resende, Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1915.), contains the lines

vos *estar* diabo you are [a] devil

com tanto mandar. for ordering so much

in which estar is also used instead of ser to introduce a predicate nominative.

² Thornton (1992: 214) asserts that Vicente's literary language 'is a creole rather than a pidgin and his characters can express themselves fully, suggesting that at least in Lisbon, it had reached linguistic maturity. Such maturity might never have been reached on the Atlantic coast of Africa, where conditions would not favor it being learned as a native language by anyone. However, it probably did become the language of the islands offshore, and given their extensive commerce with the mainland, including long-term settlement, probably came to be a lingua franca rather than just a contact pidgin.' In fact, Vicente's literary language is not representative of a true creole, in the sense of a grammatically restructured language, formed through extensive language contact and an ever-distant native speaker model of the lexifier language. Nor does it fit the definition of rough pidgin, unlike the texts in the *Cancioneiro geral* of Garcia de Resende. Rather, Vicente's examples show a rather wide range of dispersion, ranging from standard (16th century) Portuguese forms to drastically reduced or misinterpreted elements. Given the constant influx of new Africans into 16th century Lisbon, as well as the ready availability of native speaker models (even the most socially marginalized blacks in southern Portugal were never linguistically isolated from native speakers of Portuguese), Vicente's examples probably represent the furthest point on the road to creolization that Africans' use of Portuguese ever attained. It was precisely in the offshore islands, such as S o Tomé, Annobón, and the Cape Verde group that Portuguese-based creoles developed, but there is indirect evidence that some reduced and somewhat Africanized Portuguese also took root on the mainland, in the former Portuguese Congo and Angola (Lipski 1995).

³ In this text, the first use of santar as generic uninflected copula is also found:

Prutugá *santar* diabo! ...

Esse cousa *santá* marga...

saia *santar* secondido

⁴ The writer and recipient would be leaders of the African cofradias or religious brotherhoods and mutual aid societies which arose whenever Africans lived in Portuguese or Hispanic societies. In cities containing large African populations, these societies were divided along ethnic lines, with the language and culture of particular African groups being partially retained in each group. In this case, the term Angola refers most probably to speakers of Kimbundu, but possibly to KiKongo, while Mina refers to members of the Akan group, from present-day Ghana (the former Gold Coast). The letter in question is an invitation to join in a religious procession, possibly during Holy Week.

⁵ Russell (1973) uses indirect evidence to suggest that these coplas may have been written in the last decades of the 15th century (cf. also Cossío 1950); in any case, they were written no later than about 1510, which makes them the oldest Afro-Hispanic texts discovered to date. If the late 15th century dates proposed for his coplas are accurate, Reinosa could not have been inspired by the Cancioneiro Geral, nor by the writings of Gil Vicente, both of which were to appear several decades later. Although Reinosa's own coplas were apparently only published as literatura de cordel pamphlets, there is some indication that these seminal Afro-Hispanic texts were the source of direct inspiration, if not imitation, by some of the first Spanish writers to make use of Afro-Hispanic pidgin.

⁶ That black slaves might be literate at a time when literacy was a skill not enjoyed even by many members of the aristocracy is not entirely impossible, since the majority of blacks in Seville at the turn of the 16th century were employed as domestic servants (Carriazo 1954, Pike 1967). Africans were often entrusted with raising the children of affluent families, and it is not unreasonable to suppose

that at least some of the more favored servants and slaves might have been taught to read, at least simple texts. The existence of cofradías among the African community would ensure that group members who were literate might read these simple texts to illiterate compatriots.

⁷ Rueda evidently had firsthand knowledge of the speech of Africans in Spain, and it has been suggested that he himself may have played the part of Africans in productions of his plays. Together, the three plays provide a high degree of consistency in the use of Afro-Hispanic pidgin, which makes these texts among the most important early literary documents. The texts contain such a density of mocking humor and crude puns that it is easy to dismiss the entire corpus as xenophobic rambling. Veres (1950: 207) says the following of the jerga de los negros: '... presenta características más arbitrarias todavía y es difícil deducir qué es lo que puede haber de realidad en la transcripción de esta habla jergal; encontramos vulgarismos comunes en varias regiones dialectales, al mismo tiempo que otros fenómenos difíciles de explicar fonológicamente.' While Veres is correct in noticing the use of rustic and dialectal forms in Rueda's literary 'Africanized' language, he apparently was not familiar with African areal characteristics that might have influenced bozal Spanish; this stands in contrast to Veres' analysis of the jerga de moros. Cotarelo (1908: 312) dismisses the 'formas caprichosas que de seguro no usaban las interesadas, y que aunque así no fuese, en nada pueden ilustrar el idioma, porque eran tan variables como distintos los individuos.' Sarró López (1988: 610), on the other hand, believes that Rueda made use of actually existing linguistic modalities; she distinguishes (i) normal 16th century Spanish; (ii) vulgar or rustic language of the time; and (iii) a possibly Portuguese-influenced Afro-Hispanic pidgin. Other investigators, e.g. Chasca (1946), Weber de Kurlat (1962a, 1962b), have focused only on the phonetic component of these and other Afro-Hispanic literary texts, concluding that at least some African areal characteristics are in evidence.

⁸ Veres (1950: 216) attributes use of san as first person singular to confusion with the the third person plural. He seems to concede little linguistic importance to this verb, which is in fact a key common element in most Afro-Iberian texts, dismissing it as a 'pintoresca conjugación de las negras.'

⁹ The form ensá presumably represents a prenasalized consonant, re-interpreted as an epenthetic syllable en-, although conceivably a simple nasalized vowel could have produced the same results (Lipski 1992).

¹⁰ It is not inconceivable that simple phonetic reduction of sea is involved here, since there are no other attestations of copular sa in the Cuban bozal corpus, which numbers over one hundred texts.

¹¹ Coelho includes an article written in Macao Portuguese creole in 1865 in which the copula is variously written san and sam (pp. 63-65). In another letter written in Macaense in 1869, the copula is written são (Coelho 1962: 65-67).

¹² In contemplating the particle sâ in some varieties Cape Verdian Crioulo, Schuchardt also regards this element as having an obscure origin (pp. 910-11; cf. also Perl et al 1994: 164). In describing sa in Annobon creole Portuguese a few years later, Schuchardt (1888: 196) observes a variant form sam, which is no longer used in this dialect.

¹³ Unlike, e.g., the development of (a)mi as subject pronoun in Afro-Iberian pidgin, which combined a Romance disjunctive pronoun with a fortuitously similar first person singular pronoun in many West African languages, from the Atlantic, Kru, Kwa, and Bantu families (Lipski 1991).

¹⁴ Similar developments account for the variant semos, found to this day in dialects of Spanish and Portuguese.

¹⁵ According to Williams (1962: 235), this form was replaced by sou, by analogy with you and estou. For a time, som, são, sou and so apparently coexisted, with sou eventually triumphing. In the first Portuguese grammar, published in 1536 by Fernão de Oliveira, the coexistence of these forms is explicitly mentioned (Oliveira 1988: 103).

¹⁶ According to Williams (1962: 235), the second o of são was adopted 'by analogy with the first singular of other verbs.' Dating the transition from nasalized [ã] and [õ] to the diphthong -ão is a complex and controversial affair, exacerbated by the fact that orthographic vacillation persisted for several centuries. Williams (1962: 176) concludes that all relevant forms had become diphthongized by the second half of the 15th century, based on the fact that they rhyme consistently with each other in the Cancioneiro Geral. This is a relevant observation, since the first attestations of Afro-Portuguese pidgin come in the same compilation. Williams (1962: 177) suggests that this merger/diphthongization began sometime in the 13th century, citing an instance where -am rhymes with foam < Arabic folan. By the end of the 14th century, stressed -om/-õ was routinely replaced by -am in the orthography; the latter spelling is found nearly exclusively in the Cancioneiro Geral. In Williams' view, this can only mean that the sound represented first by -om and then by -am was already a diphthong. The orthographic representation -ão was largely restricted to diphthongs derived etymologically from two-vowel combinations (e.g. mão < manu). This attempted explanation leaves several facts unaccounted for. First, there is no principled reason why -om should be replaced by -am rather than vice versa. The major choice available to Portuguese scribes would be to retain etymological spellings even when the relevant vowels had diphthongized, or represent all diphthongized vowels as -ão, the eventual solution in final stressed position. If simple orthographic confusion based on the gradual merger of [-õ] and [-ã] as -ão were at stake, we should expect a rather haphazard mix of -am > -om, as well as the opposite shift.

In fact, -am > -om was found only in some verb forms (particularly in unaccented final position), and disappeared by the time of the Cancioneiro Geral (Williams 1962: 180). Williams (1962: 180) suggests that around the end of the 14th century, -ão was used principally to represent diphthongs derived from -anum/-adunt, -am to represent analogical -ão in stressed position, and -om to represent analogical -ão in atonic environments. In addition to the fact that the textual evidence does not fully support this distribution, Williams' hypothesis would attribute to late Medieval Portuguese scribes a perversely purposeful and systematic confusion, surely less likely a scenario than a general retention of etymological spelling (the path of least resistance), sprinkled with occasional random errors attributable to the spreading merger of [-õ] and [-ã].

¹⁷ Although some evidence of rhyming is found in the Cancioneiro Geral and other documents of the period, the theory is largely supported by the deduction that the shortest path by which both [ã] and [õ] could become [aw] is by the addition of semivocalic [w] to each, followed by the lowering of the first mora of [-ow]. Assuming that the latter phase did not occur instantly upon the diphthongizing of [õ], there should be a detectable interval in which [aw] represented the reflexes of, e.g. -anum, -ant, -adunt, etc., while the reflexes of -one were still distinct; in other words, etymological -ão should rhyme with etymological -am, but not with etymological -om. The textual data do not support such a hypothetical stage; to the contrary, the only firm conclusion is that [-ã] and [-õ] merged to SOMETHING, and that merger with etymological -ão followed shortly thereafter. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, there is no reason to ignore the philological data, which represent the merger of [-õ] and [-ã] (in stressed word-final position, at least) as the graphological change -om > -am. The most logical solution involves an initial unrounding and/or centralization of [-õ], bringing this sound closer to [-ã], which was already beginning to raise to its centralized position. Both nasalized vowels may have begun

to diphthongize in stressed position, but the diphthong would involve a slight rounded offglide. Technically, a short or monomoraic diphthong is postulated. At this time, -ão < -anum/-adunt was clearly a bimoraic combination (it remains bimoraic to this day), and was quite probably still bisyllabic. The 'rhymes' between -am/-om on the one hand and -ão on the other reflect the leftmost mora of -ão, the locus of stress. The fact that a rounded offglide might accompany a stressed [-ã] would enhance the possibilities of rhyme, but, in the Cancioneiro Geral texts at least, complete identity of -am/-om with -ão was not required. As an example of Africans' interpretation of the ambiguous status of 15th century Portuguese nasal vowels, the name of the 15th century Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão (often written Cam at the time) was borrowed into early KiKongo as *Ndo Dioko Kam* (Bentley 1900: 19).

¹⁸ Contemporary Colombian Palenquero also exhibits a few examples of denasalization, such as tambié < también (Friedemann and Patiño 1983).

¹⁹ Naxara also gives an example of Africans' use of Spanish in Ardra; the brief glimpse is much more broken than the Portuguese example, containing principally unconjugated verbs (p. 239):

Español está tanto mal Christiano, tiene una Margarita en Madrid, otra en Cadiz, otra en las Indias; mi, no tener mas que vna Margarita en Olanda, y auer treinta años que me casé, y no aver conocido otra Margarita ...

²⁰ This is indicated, for example, by the lack of neutralization of /l/ and /r/, a phenomenon which became commonplace in later Afro-Hispanic language. Among languages of the Senegambia, and the old Windward, Grain, and Slave Coasts, /l/ and /r/ are distinguished in most of the major languages.

²¹ Ferraz (1979) suggests Bini as one specific source, but the full complement of Kwa languages which went into the makeup of the Gulf of Guinea creoles will probably never be known. Bini

in particular cannot be the direct source for sa in the Gulf of Guinea creoles. Like other Kwa languages, Bini contains numerous adjectival verbs (alternately analyzed as a zero copula), as well as monomorphemic verbs which would translate into Portuguese or Spanish as a copula such as ser or the equivalents of 'become' plus an adjective. Bini also contains invariant copulas, including non, ro/re (used in equative clauses) and khin (used with extraposed equative clauses, together with verbalized adjectives which take the place of copula+predicate adjective in Romance, none of which resembles sa (Wescott 1963: 152; Dunn 1968: 30, 221). However, the presence of a monosyllabic invariant copula ending in a nasalized vowel (as did the presumably original Portuguese creole sã), used in circumstances which are similar to those of Portuguese ser and estar. Other Kwa languages which probably figured in the mix of slaves taken from the Benin have similar invariant monosyllabic CV copulas. This compares with Bantu languages of Angola, which provided the other major substratum source for the Gulf of Guinea creoles. These languages offer a much more complex panorama of copula verbs, which finds no ready equivalent in any full or pidginized form of Spanish and Portuguese.

KiMbundu, for example uses the stem ene for the habitual copula, preceded by a subject clitic (and optionally by a full subject pronoun) and followed by -ni or another suffix. In the negative, as with other KiMbundu verbs, a copy of the full subject pronoun comes after the copular verb (Chatelain 1888: 107). KiKongo uses several copulas, including kala and the suppletive stem na (Bentley 1887: 690): ngina/ndina (1 sg.), una/wina (2 sg.), tuna/twina (a pl.), bená (2 pl.) plus as many as a dozen each singular and plural forms, depending upon nominal class. Like sa in the Gulf of Guinea creoles, this verb can express the meanings of both Portuguese ser and estar. Iboko, another Congolese language, uses zero copula for predicate nominatives and adjectives, except occasionally for the use of nta (Cambier 1891: 86). Location is expressed by the verbal stem -lo-, which is only used in the present tense.

²² Batalha (1974: 24) explains:

‘Havendo entre eles muitos indígenas africanos ... isso explica em parte certas semelhanças, à primeira vista surpreendentes, entre o velho crioulo de Macau e os crioulos afro-portugueses, sobre tudo os de Cabo Verde. Explicará até algumas coincidências com o falar popular do Brasil, uma vez que este país ... recebeu ao tempo da sua colonização grande contingente de mão-de-obra africana.

The author adds the following clarification:

Mas em parte ... porque certos fenómenos que se repetem em vários crioulos não *viajaram*, mas resultam de leis psicológicas em todos os povos idênticos, como seja a tendência para a simplificação. Não é, pois, necessariamente de origem africana a redução de verbos, em Macau, a uma só forma que serve para todas as pessoas gramaticais (do tipo de *eu sabe, nós sabe, eles sabe*), ou a formação de perífrases para substituir os tempos verbais simples (como *tá vai* para o presente, *logo vai* ou *lô vai* para o futuro e *já vai* o *já vai já* para especificar a acção passada)' (24-5).

²³ The presence of Portuguese-supplied Malay speakers at the Cape of Good Hope is well known, and the Cape Malays have been implicated in the formation of a Portuguese pidgin or creole, which ultimately had an impact on the formation of the Dutch-based Afrikaans.

²⁴ Cafres helped Portuguese Macao fend off a Dutch attack in 1622. In fact, the Dutch complained bitterly that the Portuguese did not even have soldiers stationed in Macao (and only a paltry 180 men in Malacca), and that the entire defense force had been composed of African slaves (Teixeira 1976: 8). A Chinese uprising in 1602 was put down by the Portuguese, helped by black slaves (Rego 1946: 63). A description of Macao written in 1635 states ‘Os casados que tem esta cidade são

oitocentos cinquenta portugueses e seus filhos são muito mais bem despostos, e robustos, que nenhum que seja neste oriente, os quaes todos tem huns e outros seus escravos darmas de que os mais e milhores são cafres e outras nações' (Teixeira 1976: 5). Another description written in the same year described large numbers of slaves, of whom most of the men were cafres, and the women Chinese. Portugal even sent three Africans to its embassy in Japan. A Hungarian visitor to the governor's palace in Macao in 1771 noted 'certos negros das ilhas Canárias'; Teixeira (1976: 10) presumes this account to be mistaken, insisting instead that the Africans were from Portuguese colonies in Africa. Yet another account in 1776 describes African, Chinese, and Indian slaves in Macao. A bishop's description of 1777 lists some 6000 inhabitants, black and white, without specifying proportions. Harriet Low, who lived in Macao from 1829 to 1833, made frequent diary entries which referred to the cafres, who were visible in all public places. In 1836, the Marquês Sá de Bandeira issued a proclamation prohibiting the slave trade in all Portuguese possessions; slavery was officially abolished in Macao in 1856.

²⁵ Amaro (1980) has discovered similarities between traditional board games formerly played in Macao and similar games in West Africa. Batalha (1974: 23-4) observes the similarities between Macao creole and Gil Vicente's imitations of Africanized Portuguese. The latter come precisely during the Bight of Benin period.

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Table 1: Paths of evolution of sa/sã

