

## Converging on Cannibals

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## An Introduction to Cannibal Talk

The problem with cannibalism is that even when it is “real” it is always “symbolic.”

—Marshall Sahlins

LATE IN the year 1599, the Imbangala war leader named Imbe Kalundula was looking for a way to carry his warriors across the Kuvo River and attack a group of agriculturalists on the other side. His men and boys were fierce, trained for war. They lived as a highly mobile armed band roaming the countryside, looking for lands to sustain themselves. Fueled by their affinity for an alcoholic drink made from palm tree sap, they stole cattle and besieged villages that would not submit to them. When they conquered a village they incorporated the younger boys of fighting age and some girls into their camp as slaves. A boy could earn his freedom, but only by committing to the military structure centered in the mobile camp (*kilombo*) and ultimately returning from battle with the head of a victim. Sometimes Kalundula's victorious warriors cast enemy heads at his feet after battle as a sign of his great victory, and sometimes they brought the bodies of the deceased back to be eaten.

As Imbe Kalundula considered how to cross the Kuvo, he noted a small group of strange slave traders approaching. These traders were Portuguese and hailed from the city of Luanda farther north on the Atlantic Coast. Among their ranks was an English mercenary named Andrew Battell. Kalundula and his men introduced themselves to these traders as Guindas, though he likely did not know that the Portuguese traders translating for Battell referred to his group as “Jaga.” Kalundula promised to provide captives to them as slaves if they ferried his warriors across the river in

their boats to attack the residents on the other side. The traders obliged and even actively participated in the attack by firing their muskets as they approached the banks to help Kalundula's men drive the enemy out of their defensive positions. After a bloody battle, where many of the agriculturalists were killed and many others enslaved, some of the cadavers were brought to Kalundula by his warriors to be eaten. Years later, Battell, according to an Anglican preacher in England, rather coolly recalled the cannibal feast as "strange to behold." This first attack near the Atlantic Coast of Angola on the Kuvo River set in motion a series of events that would eventually encourage Kalundula's kilombo to strategically incorporate Battell as a slave-capturing brother-in-arms for about sixteen months in the years 1600–1601, during which time he claimed to have witnessed other such acts of flesh-eating in battle and during prewar rituals.<sup>1</sup>

### Of Cannibals

I have never had a particular interest in the macabre. Though I have grown accustomed to the reality that I am writing a book on cannibalism, nothing about my initial interests in African history suggested that I would do so. So, what led me to create this work? Like many others before me, I read Andrew Battell's narrative from his "strange adventures" because I was fascinated by this moment in history when total strangers from Europe showed up on the shores of lands unknown to them and tried to carve out lives for themselves among the indigenous peoples. And after the initial contacts were made, how did peoples from completely different cultural backgrounds, with radically different religious beliefs, patterns of government, family structures, and economic strategies, work together to begin creating what became the modern world system of which I am an inheritor? As we will see, some of my initial questions were based on misunderstandings, the very sort of misunderstandings that I write this text to clarify.

Returning to Battell, his story is interesting in this analytical regard as well as "strange" to behold. As a professional historian, I read a lot of—how can I put this kindly—bland documents: letters from one king to another asking for priests, complaints about unfair trade agreements or imprisonments, baptismal records, and so on. Battell's narrative, on the other hand, was intriguing: He described animals like manatees as if they were unreal monsters. He told stories of capture, escape, deadly fevers, slave raiding, infanticide, a boy raised by a gorilla, a crocodile that ate a group of slaves chained together but then drowned from the weight of the chains in its

stomach, and, of course, cannibalism. Like the Science Fiction Hall of Fame writer Robert Silverberg, who adapted Battell's story as the basis for his novel *Lord of Darkness* and many others, I found Battell's account seductively entertaining.<sup>2</sup>

Andrew Battell's account also seemed disarmingly simple. His narrative was recorded only after he returned to England, sometime between 1607 and 1611, by the Anglican minister Samuel Purchas. Purchas published small bits of interviews that he seems to have conducted with Battell in 1613, made revisions to it in 1614 and 1617, and published a full account that was represented as in Battell's own words in 1625. Questions about this rather obsessive production of the Battell texts will be dealt with at length in the chapters that follow, but here let's examine one seemingly simple interaction from his story as an example of what is at stake for historians who want to tell African history as Africans lived it, as I do, when they read Battell's account.

When Imbe Kalundula met the trading party that included Battell, we find out in the full version from 1625 that they called themselves Guindas, or Jaga, and that they were newcomers to this area from their homeland in Sierra Leone thousands of miles to the northwest. In fact, nearly every word in that statement is an equivocation or a misunderstanding, and every single word is a translation of recollections fifteen or so tumultuous years after the event. Neither Kalundula nor the Portuguese were speaking in English, which is the language of Battell's narrative. And Battell does not note the language of the conversation. Did Kalundula's group speak Portuguese that they might have picked up in earlier trading interactions? Did someone translate Kalundula's native language into Portuguese, which Battell assuredly spoke at that time, after several years in Portuguese jails and infantry lines? Might they all have spoken the creole compound of Portuguese and African languages from the Gulf of Guinea island São Tomé that was used at this time as the general trading language throughout the Atlantic Coast of Africa? Beyond whatever might have been lost in at least one and potentially two translations, other statements are simply false. Kalundula's group was not from Sierra Leone. They were an evolving group of men, known collectively as Imbangala, who hailed from the central highlands of Angola, though this specific band could have included Guindas who had joined the kilombo. Also, Kalundula almost certainly did not refer to himself as "Jaga," which was a term of fear applied by other Africans and Portuguese to these warrior kilombo communities. If we cannot trust Battell even on his identification of Imbe Kalundula's group, what are we to make of the much more

complicated problems that arise from his recollections of slaving, infanticide, or cannibalism?

The scholars who have used Battell's narrative most often are Africanists trying to reconstruct the late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history of the region of modern-day Angola as it became the site of rampant raiding for captives to enslave. From these violent beginnings, it became the largest single exporter of people as property in the subsequent Atlantic trade in slaves. The vast majority of these historians analyze these texts while specifically seeking African history as opposed to the history of Europeans in Africa, and I intend this book to do the same, because we cannot assess what Battell reported, or the accounts of several other Europeans on the scene, unless we understand how the Imbangala and other Africans themselves viewed what they were doing.

The first generation of scholars in what we'll call the modern study of Angola, from roughly 1960 to 1990, were entirely skeptical about narrating authentically African history while relying on sources written by Europeans quite ignorant of what they were seeing. Instead, these scholars preferred oral traditions, which they recorded in painstaking research on the ground during the Angolan civil war that started in the 1960s. Alien accounts such as Battell's were used only sparingly to corroborate what they gleaned from African informants. Even those who privileged the written documents sought to interpret them through the analytical categories denoted by Africans. This book relies confidently on these pioneers—Jan Vansina, Joseph C. Miller, John Thornton, and Beatrix Heintze, among others—and their names appear repeatedly in the notes. This first generation of scholars assumed that the bulk of texts such as Battell's were flawed by European biases, what scholars call Eurocentrism, and therefore spared relatively little analytical attention for something as embarrassing as cannibalism. They busied themselves with the more respectable tasks of detailing the rise and fall of states, trading networks, and, of course, the throbbing drums of violence and warfare necessary to produce the slaves sent across the Atlantic to the New World. When scholars examined Battell's narrative in particular, they stuck with the mundane questions it raised. Above all, they tried to clarify Battell's contradictory statements about who the "Jaga" might have been: Guindas, Mane or Sumba from Sierra Leone, Imbangala, or—especially—Jaga. In modern terminology, they sought to identify this elusive warrior band with modern or historical ethnic groups.

Battell's is not the only narrative of an allegedly coherent Jaga group. They appear also in a text written by a Portuguese man named Duarte Lopes who had visited the Kingdom of Kongo during the years 1578 to 1584, two decades before Battell's strange encounter, and who gave an account that was published in Rome by an Italian aristocrat, Filippo Pigafetta. The Kingdom of Kongo lay just on the south side of the Congo River, far to the north of where Battell met Imbe Kalundula. Lopes claimed that the Jaga in his story had invaded Kongo from still farther to the northeast in 1568, a decade or so before he arrived on the scene. Kongo kings also placed Jaga near their territory. Moreover, about thirty years after Battell, Portuguese visitors in Angola such as the Jesuit Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi da Montecucolo, who spent time around the self-declared Jaga queen Njinga of Matamba, wrote extended, seemingly first-person, narratives of their history. According to them, Njinga adopted Jaga military and cultural practices, including cannibalism, for a time as part of her rise to power, before eventually reconverting to Catholicism late in her life. The first generation of scholarship about the Jaga ran out of steam once all groups in the stories seemed properly identified and the scholars determined that instead of a "Jaga" ethnic group, *jaga* (lowercase "j") was a strategy of mobile raiding and warfare that anyone living in the broad region around the Congo River could adopt, and many did, as the chaos of slaving flared everywhere.

Since about 1990 or so, scholars, especially younger historians trained in Brazil and Portugal, have returned with renewed interest to what I will call the "Jaga story." This second wave of scholars, native speakers of Portuguese, the language of the great bulk of the relevant documentation, is a bit more diverse than the first, but one method that binds them is a strong return to the European texts as primary sources, in contrast to privileging the African oral traditions, which have died out in the intervening thirty years of civil war in independent Angola. As such, some of us in this second wave have focused on interrogating the production of the European texts to understand exactly what sort of European biases might lurk in them, and then correcting for those to discern the worlds of the Africans whom we seek to understand. Others have sought to supplement the major Jaga narrative from Lopes, Battell, and Cavazzi by finding many other references to Jaga in lesser-known accounts by various European traders, Portuguese officials, and Catholic missionaries who lived in or visited Angola. Still others see the alleged cannibalism in the primary sources as an early form of

modern witchcraft discourses in Africa that condemn social, political, and economic inequalities and oppression.

In modern contexts, African politicians and businessmen who are seen as greedy might be labeled “bad witches” and require counterwitchcraft from those whom they oppress as a means of leveling the playing field. Noting links in many African traditions between bad witchcraft and cannibalism, these scholars have returned to the Jaga story as evidence of an African narrative critiquing the violence, greed, and inequalities of transatlantic slaving in which raiders like Imbe Kalundula and traders like Andrew Battell participated. For much of the more recent scholarship, the point is to understand how Europeans, especially the Portuguese in Angola, manipulated and were manipulated by these mobile warrior groups living as Jaga. This newer scholarship tends to consider the Jaga story as a challenge to broader interests in historical methods or the narratives of Portuguese military occupation of the region and the long and tragic tale of slavery there.

*Converging on Cannibals* builds on these earlier works with the specific aim of centering the analysis on cannibalism as the heart of the Jaga story. It sets the many inadvertent converging components of this myth against the African histories that it distorts. Whatever else the accounts of Lopes, Battell, and Cavazzi might tell us about African history, they became important and popular in their day because they related sensational stories about cannibalism. Perhaps cannibalism was not the only reason they were popular, but it was a significant contributor to the fact that Lopes’s account could be found, translated into multiple languages, in nearly every major library in Europe, and why Battell’s “adventures” have been republished at least once a century since it first appeared. Continuing into our own times, I will argue in the conclusion that one of the reasons modern scholars have returned to these documents so frequently for the last half century is also because the cannibalism continues to resonate even today. It must be made clear at the outset that accusations of cannibalism also mattered and matter still to Africans. Western scholars must engage the myth of cannibalism because the enduring presence of cannibalism in local witchcraft beliefs and oral traditions dictates that any authentically local history consider it. This book interrogates cannibal talk during the opening era of violence and transatlantic slavery in Angola by focusing on the Jaga story as told primarily by Lopes and Pigafetta, Andrew Battell, and the Capuchin priest Antonio Cavazzi, who wrote at length about Queen Njinga. It is the story of the invention of cannibalism in sixteenth-century Kongo and seventeenth-century Angola.



Specifically this book contributes to scholarship on the Jaga story by placing it in historical and academic contexts broader than those considered by scholars until now. Perhaps because other historians have been so interested in writing decidedly “African” history, the scholars who have written about the Jaga story have done so by referencing other cannibal events only in Africa and scholarship written only by Africanists. But in fact, the Jaga story is part of a broader pattern of cannibal narratives told by Europeans about indigenous peoples throughout the world, from Jews in Europe to the Huron in North America to the Tupinambá in Brazil. The Jaga story also flourished during the height of witch crazes in many colonial spaces where Europeans sought to control the wilderness (environmental and human) they confronted by exterminating practices and beliefs that their fears provoked them to consider dangerous. The Salem witch trials of 1692–1693 are perhaps the most famous of these panics, but other activities ranging from the Spanish Inquisition to the witch-hunting craze in seventeenth-century Germany all bear suspicious similarities to narratives of Jaga cannibalism. Even more often than drawing these specific historical comparisons, I will rely on the rich and extensive literature about cannibalism produced by anthropologists, literary critics, and historians working on regions of the world beyond Africa. While much of this literature interrogates stories about cannibalism as part of Eurocentric myths about the world, many excellent studies show the ways in which various peoples throughout the world used cannibal stories to their own advantage as they confronted Europeans intent on conquest and slavery.

### Misrepresentations and Deceptions

Situating the Jaga story within these broader historical and academic contexts demonstrates the specific ways in which the myth grew as a product of interactions on the ground between (mostly) Africans and (a few) Europeans. And at that encounter, we have, finally, arrived at the crux of the argument. The Jaga story traced here is the product of a particular time and place, as peoples interacted and strategized in their own interests according to their own differing logics. If we return to the initial conversation between Battell, his Portuguese companions, and Imbe Kalundula, it becomes clear how uncertain and opportunistic those interactions were—for the participants on both sides.

Much of the broader scholarship on cannibalism is more theoretical than what I need to engage to trace the convergence of misunderstandings that

created the Jaga myth, but it includes the useful point that discourses of cannibalism—“cannibal talk” as one scholar put it—are a common enough feature in many, if not all, human communities that it served as a point of reference for everyone involved, anywhere.<sup>3</sup> In some, probably very few, cases, people may have ingested the flesh of other people, but members of the different mutually uncomprehending cultural groups much more often manipulated the nearly universal fears and taboos about such activity as they interacted warily with one other. Telling cannibal stories or presenting themselves in ways that emulated the inhuman brutes in those stories created opportunities to, for example, instill such fear in enemies that they might be unwilling to counter an attack, which Imbe Kalundula admitted was his strategy. In the case of Europeans, both the Spanish and the Portuguese Crowns passed laws in the early 1500s that limited legal enslavement to cannibals. Is it mere coincidence that the majority of cannibal stories written by Portuguese visitors to Africa date to the years between 1580 and 1640, when the Portuguese Crown was joined with the Spanish Crown, giving Portuguese slavers unprecedented rights and demand for their human cargoes in the silver-rich colonies of Spain in the New World? Probably not. The context of mutual misapprehension, as well as miscommunication, is the fertile ground from which “cannibals” sprouted. The “Jaga cannibals,” which were coproduced by Europeans and Africans during the so-called Age of Discovery and immediately after, were not only products of the human psyche but also creations of a specific historical context—encountering strangers.

Cannibal talk had a functional, but deeply flawed, utility for peoples from vastly different cultures as a way to interact in limited but mutually comprehending ways. Specifically, Europeans and African had shared taboos about flesh-eating, but the particular beliefs, symbols, and practices that they would have associated with the image varied a great deal. In fact, these specifics varied so profoundly as to be mutually unintelligible. Further complicating this issue was that even people within the large modern categories of “African” (e.g., Kongo and Imbangala) and “European” (e.g., Portuguese and Italians and English) might have had very different beliefs and practices regarding cannibalism among themselves. This book analyzes how people converged both wittingly and unwittingly within the differences of their own cannibal talk to form this new Jaga cannibal discourse.

Many of the historical working misunderstandings noted in this book arise from the problems of language, not unlike the problem of translation in the form of Battell’s “strange adventures.” The primary sources here often

record Africans rather vaguely as saying they “ate” or “consumed” others. The verb meaning “to eat” food in fact has a much broader semantic field covering any sort of “taking in,” so an allegation of “eating flesh” might have been deployed to mean they killed, imprisoned, or enslaved people. Europeans unfamiliar with Bantu languages mistakenly interpreted the expression literally in their own terms to mean “man-eating.” An example from the early 1900s shows how tricky linguistic and ideological translations can be. A rather astute linguist, named Dennett, worked with the Vili people in Loango (a region north of the Congo River, just north of the region this book analyzes) in the late 1800s and noted a chance killing of a boy by a leopard in the village where he was staying. The chief called on the local healers to use magic to identify who had sent the jaguar. A man from a neighboring village, an outsider, was determined to have sent the magical retribution that killed the boy. Once the perpetrator was identified, the father of the slain son stated, “Very well; now I want to know who ate the flesh of this man.” Dennett translated the phrase “ate the flesh” to mean “done him an injury.” There was no cannibalism involved in this incident, but there was a discourse among the Vili for interpreting seemingly magical attacks by outsiders that consumed the flesh and lineage of villagers as “flesh eating.”<sup>4</sup> Dennett was clever and experienced enough to realize the intricacies of translating such language and ideas; the Africans and (especially) Europeans analyzed in this book took allegations of man-eating much more literally.

Anthropologist Wyatt MacGaffey adeptly called these sorts of shared and double misunderstandings “dialogues of the deaf,” which is a wonderful metaphor for the miscommunication happening in real time.<sup>5</sup> When such double misunderstandings converged to produce an outcome that both sides considered positive (e.g., a successful trade for slaves), I will refer to them as convergences. Over time, these convergences could become more strategic uses of the ambiguities among differing cannibal talks that astute cultural observers might use to their advantage. So, again, to take a generic example of instances found in the sources, if European slavers showed up in an African village looking for “cannibals” (whom they could enslave legally), the villagers might send the Europeans in the direction of another nearby village of peoples who raided them frequently to solve the problem at others’ uncomprehending expense.

To illustrate this game of chance in a more relevant example, some Africans may have performed as cannibals (according to their own cannibal

talk) in the presence of Europeans by engaging in the violent, greedy business of slaving, expecting their performance to benefit them somehow; however, different Europeans might have interpreted their performances as cannibals in contradictory ways at different times. The historical narrative of the Jaga story tracked in the chapters that follow highlights the varied ways in which Jaga and/or Catholic Africans and Europeans interpreted and acted upon cannibal performances as they converged, collaborating and contesting, around such encounters as trade, religion, and political authority. Sometimes people living a jaga life managed to perform as cannibals in ways that encouraged the Portuguese to hire them as mercenaries in their slave-raiding wars; at other times cannibal performances ended in payments for war captives as slaves; and at still other times the cannibal performances resulted in resolute European attacks against such “savagery.”

I assume that cannibal talk was a strategy of terrorizing others, and the chapters that follow will work out the specific ways in which some people in Angola used this particular African discourse of cannibalism—Jaga cannibalism—as they interacted in a churning world of uncertainties, terror, and trauma. One statement must be clear from the beginning when thinking about cannibal stories as historical strategies. First, the word *cannibalism* in this context cannot carry the connotations of a *story* about man-eating at the same time that it designates real *instances* of man-eating. I therefore follow convention in the broader scholarship on cannibalism and refer to any instance or practice of eating human flesh either as anthropophagy, an English word derived from the Greek words for “eating humans,” or as man-eating. In contrast, I will use the term “cannibalism” only to refer to discourses, practices, symbols, or rituals that invoke the taboo of flesh-eating, regardless of whether or not they involved ingesting human flesh. For example, the Catholic ritual of Holy Communion is said to be cannibalistic in this metaphorical sense because of the belief that the wine and bread are transubstantiated into the body of Jesus Christ and then eaten by the coreligionists as a symbolic reaffirmation of their oneness with one another and with Christ; however, the Eucharist is not anthropophagy because Catholics are in fact eating wafers and drinking wine.

This book is a narrative of people who chose to live and behave as Jaga that takes context and their motivations into account, focusing in particular on the usefulness of terror. The Jaga story told here that echoes the cannibal and witch hunts elsewhere throughout the world Europeans knew in the sixteenth century begins with a study of the Kongo polity that was

attacked in 1568, as narrated by the Kongo victims. It then focuses on the quite distinct—but similarly designated—Imbangala gangs who rampaged in northern Angola at the turn of the seventeenth century. Next, it shows how these gangs resolved into the violent political machinations of Queen Njinga as she took on the mantle of a “Jaga” to establish her power. The narrative tracked here is of African peoples who confronted worlds unknown as cannibals, how they ordered the world around them as cannibals, and how they were themselves brought to order by a world of commercial slaving that was equally cannibalistic in its consumption of human lives.

### Chapter Overviews

Chapter 2 begins the analysis of cannibal talk with an extended anecdote from Kongo more than a half century before the first mentions of “Jaga” cannibals in west-central Africa. In 1509 a scion of the ruling family in Kongo fought a rival challenger for political authority in the area and won. In the process the victor, the self-styled Catholic king Afonso I of Kongo, altered history as he directed prestige and authority in Kongo through the idioms of Catholicism. He required those who wanted to affiliate with him to accept baptism, and the elite of his own family might even have been trained to read and write Latin and Portuguese in Afonso’s Catholic school. But in the process of attempting to create a Catholic kingdom, Afonso and the Portuguese missionaries and traders he allowed in his presence were accompanied by evils that would plague the region for more than a century.

First, Afonso cultivated his connections with Portugal and the broader Catholic world by allowing Europeans to purchase slaves in Kongo. Though he had briefly banned the practice in the 1520s because it was causing strife in Kongo, he would go to his grave in ca. 1542–1543 sanctioning the practice. And second, by privileging Catholicism in Kongo, Afonso helped foster stories that identified Africans who did not convert as epitomes of evil. In African terms they were witches, a categorization that allowed for draconian punishments, including capture and sale into slavery. For the Europeans, branding people as “enemies of Christendom” provided the legal cover for their enslavement. Though the cannibal story is not specifically mentioned in Afonso’s narrative, his choices of politics and religion set the stage for the story’s exploitation by others who invented “cannibals” where none existed.

Chapter 3 will narrate and assess alleged events of 1568 in the Kingdom of Kongo as a way to establish some of the key terms and contexts for the rest of the monograph. In that year, a mysterious group (allegedly) attacked a

centralized, militarily powerful Kongo polity. The invaders reportedly (but only belatedly so) drove the Catholic king recognized by the Portuguese and his court from their capital of Mbanza Kongo, ransacked the countryside, and engaged in rampant anthropophagy before finally being driven out after a Portuguese military force from the nearby island of São Tomé arrived to save and reinstall the Kongo ruler. A Portuguese trader named Duarte Lopes was told this story still later, when he visited Kongo in the late 1570s. Upon Lopes's return to Europe, a well-known Italian humanist named Filippo Pigafetta published his story in Rome in 1591 as *Relatione del Reame di Congo*, which in 1881 was translated into English by Margarite Hutchinson and published under the title *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo*. This supposed event—which some have argued was entirely fabricated—in Pigafetta's hands made its Jaga invaders a paradigmatic troop of savage, anti-Christian cannibals in European intellectual circles and might have provided a paradigm for later Africans seeking to overthrow political authorities in other contexts. The term "Jaga" became useful to both Africans and Europeans as a sort of working misunderstanding that allowed interactions and interferences in political and economic endeavors, especially slaving.

Chapter 4 analyzes the uses of cannibalism by Imbangala groups operating in the area inland from Luanda in Angola in the first two or three decades of the seventeenth century. Many Africans engaged in trading with the Portuguese and Luso-Africans resident in Luanda or Old Benguela (near the Kuvo River). Increasingly these transactions included slaves, and more Africans began devising methods for procuring people to sell for the wine and other goods the Portuguese had to sell. Though most resident populations, like the Mbundu and the majority of Imbangala groups, produced captives for sale through small-scale raiding and through condemning growing numbers of debtors to be sold, some Imbangala groups resorted to a primary strategy of systematic, terrorizing violence. They developed innovative military technologies and strategies, violently recruited child-soldiers to maintain their numbers, stole other local resources, practiced infanticide among themselves, and used the threat of cannibalism as a tactic to immobilize their victims with fear. Imbe Kalundula, leader of the band whom Battell knew and reported about in his narrative, led one of the most dominating of these Imbangala groups. Kalundula's group explicitly banned or grotesquely and tauntingly perverted practices basic to resident (and reproducing) communities, like child-rearing, motherhood, and commemorating ancestors.

In their stead, he and his commanders awarded membership in their band based only on individual valor and victory in battle and rewarded material possession and consumption. As such, from local notions of cannibalistic witches, loners who inverted the practices that held communities together, Kalundula's group portrayed themselves as man-eaters and destroyers in the disorienting world of Angola as it was being reconstructed by new political and economic strategies increasingly focused on slaving. The chapter recounts the terror that leaders like Imbe Kalundula inflicted on those they attacked and on their own young warriors. His band explicitly operated as cannibals within the local cannibal talk by insatiably wasting natural resources, destroying local populations, inverting normative practices for creating and reckoning kinship—including institutionalized infanticide—and capturing child-soldiers for his war band, known as a *kilombo*. The details of these dynamics of perpetual destruction were related by the English sailor Andrew Battell in his experiences as a participant observer of Kalundula's alleged Jaga anthropophagy.

Chapter 5 follows the calculated cruelty of Queen Njinga of Matamba (1583?–1663) as she deployed cannibalism as a tactic to instill fear and gain political power on the ground in Angola. “Africa’s Warrior Queen” is now famous for resisting Portuguese colonial advances. She commanded Imbangala bands and claimed political authority in an area just east of the Portuguese military *conquista* (conquest) that was ruled for many years, finally converting to Catholicism as a trading partner of the Portuguese late in her life, when it became clear that the military power of the invaders was overwhelming and as her followers abandoned the intense demands of the Jaga warrior life. While her earlier battles against the Portuguese are now celebrated as anticolonial resistance struggles, sources at the time refer to those activities as a “Jaga” phase in her career. Demonizing images of a warrior Njinga as a Jaga cannibal served the Portuguese in justifying the enormous effort and expense of their long military struggle against her, but they also served Njinga as a terrorizing tactic both to keep the Portuguese at bay and to ensure loyalty from followers too terrified to challenge her. Njinga’s life story, in reality and in its narrative retelling by Italian missionaries, encapsulates the analytical trajectory of the Jaga strategy as a whole. She began using cannibalism as a fear tactic with the Portuguese before coming (back) to Catholic salvation and thereby establishing a relatively peaceful political order in her lands. Her narrative demonstrates how cannibalism as a set of ideas, symbols, and practices was socially constructed in contexts of the

upheavals of slaving in the early 1600s but by the later 1600s faded to irrelevance as the chaos of the earliest decades of slaving gave way to routinized cruelty in business as usual.

Chapter 6 interrogates how people in Europe thought about rumors of Jaga invaders in Kongo and the decisions by Imbangala on the ground in Angola in terms of the only remotely related issues of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. In the violence of the central African slaving frontier, Kalundula and other Imbangala (for example) found the image of cannibalism to be a useful tool for maximizing their material situations, while in Europe stories of cannibalism were more useful for intellectual exercises in ordering the chaos of new religious worlds of their own. This chapter ranges broadly across time to track how European compilers and publishers of travelers' tales from around a vast new world of disorienting diversity revised and edited the stories told to them by claimed witnesses to Jaga cannibalism. Using evidence the editors left as they revised their presentations of these tales, the chapter argues that preachers and publishers in Europe used these terrifying stories of "inhuman" humans to think about the violence of confessional rivalries of the Counter-Reformation and the intellectual and political upheavals of the Renaissance then plaguing Europeans. Depicting faraway Africans as horrible, savage Jaga, and using their brutality to think about the dangers of turning away from a single omnipresent God, allowed the publishers to displace uncomfortable conversations of disturbances and upheavals at home onto peoples—in fact not even real people, but stereotyped myths—who posed no immediate threat to their readers. However, to create compelling drama in these morality tales and make them memorable for the readers, and hopefully prompt them to ponder the deeper truths of true religion, the publishers linked the distant "cannibals" to imminent threats in Europe like the Ottoman Turks who were then moving massive armies toward Vienna, capital of the Holy Roman Empire. In doing so, these editors and publishers elevated the "Jaga cannibal" from a figure in a cannibal talk that might have been relevant for about a century (roughly 1560 to 1660) in west-central Africa to a figure that has continued to inform Western narratives about Africans into the twenty-first century.

Chapter 7 revisits the parade of converging utilities of the Jaga for diverse interests on two continents with a focus on how an emphasis on "cannibalism" as a discourse, created in a time of violence and terror, can help modern scholars enrich their analyses of times of profound uncertainty and



upheaval. The “cannibal Jaga” of Angola served as a local exclamation of the trauma of similarly dramatic upheavals in Europe and the New World, with one of the more infamous examples being the Salem witch hunts in 1692. With the increased engagements between strangers of the 1600s along the frontiers of homogenizing world systems of religion, culture, and economics, the resisters were to be feared and converted if possible, but brought to order at all costs. To the considerable existing literatures on these encounters, this history of the Jaga adds the insight that cannibalism was not just sensational and terrifying, but it was a necessary symbolic field for thinking about profound disturbance. By continuing to engage the Jaga, even today, scholars implicitly acknowledge that the important point of the Jaga is not to discern whether anyone ever ate anyone else in the clichéd sense or even exactly what cannibalism meant to any specific group in any particular place or time, but rather to acknowledge that the myth of cannibals was a historical outcome of the creation of our shared modern world.