

Festivities and Power: Celebration, Politics and Culture in 18th Century Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract:

Employing a theoretical apparatus composed of authors such as Bakhtin, Kantor, Maravall, Bentes Monteiro, Tinhorão, and Mary Del Priore, we observed that the Metropolitan political power in 18th-century Portuguese America employed festive practices originating from Iberian and global culture in which fireworks were the summit of people's amazement. In Rio de Janeiro, the capital of the Viceroyalty as well as the Atlantic axis of Portuguese maritime empire during the crisis of the colonial system, the festivities and their traditions strengthened loyalties, contained tensions, and restored order in the context of cultural interconnection and monarchical power.

Palabras Clave: Power, Culture, Fireworks, Square, Festivities

Introduction – Why celebrate power

Festivities were a cultural, religious, and political need that had to be satisfied in a fideistic society such as Portuguese America. The collective procedure for leisure in society, as Tinhorão states, sprang from an official determination and a religious determination, both

derived from the spheres of power. The printing and reading of reports of these celebrations in the metropolis must have read like an advertisement for a successful empire (Voigt 33). Festivities occurred in Rio de Janeiro over the 16th and 17th centuries in public places such as squares and streets. The French philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote that men, when they realized that they were living in a state of unhappiness, invented the party to feel happy. For Anabela Couto, there are times, especially in Portuguese America, that, because of colonial slavery, the general state of unhappiness is sharper in the self in others, that the fun is produced and through the party it reaches a state of mind similar to that of the complete stun (Couto 850).

In this context, there were professional hosts (*festeiros*) who prepared the celebrations and their different rituals, managing the economy of the event. The *festaioilli* of the Italian Renaissance are an example of such hosts, according to Jacob Burckhardt (402). As reported by Simão Ferreira Machado, an 18th-century chronicler from the Captaincy of Minas Gerais, Brazil, during the arrangements for the Eucharistic Triumph celebrated in Vila Rica in 1733, "There was so much commitment that, from the city of Rio de Janeiro" and other areas of the colony, "a great and precious part of the apparatus was gathered" (Ávila, 242).

However, in the 18th century, the festivities acquired a new meaning: The direct celebration of royal power whose production was managed by cultural agents of the Portuguese Crown. In the words of Chartier, the festivities were composed of symbolic representations, expressed through ceremonies, gestures, and rituals. The civic parades, the general processions, and the princes' entries were modernized, bringing a new meaning to the political ritual (221). According to Castelnau L'Estoile, the celebrations in Portuguese America and the Empire were encouraged by the Council of Trent's provisions. In the European and colonial Catholic world, these provisions established the procession as a triumph over heresy, a festive celebration of the power of the monarch and the Church, both vying for the same urban space where the celebration unfolded (49).

According to Burkhardt, religious feasts such as the Feast of Corpus Christi were a culmination of Renaissance urban life in Italy (418). As with the medieval Italian carnivals and festivities, these were celebrations determined by a political function. The glory of the crown and its power were celebrated, and the relationships between social groups and the modern State were built. In this ambience, figurative social equalities and inequalities became the correct world order. In the second half of the 18th century, these celebrations acquired an erudite, bookish, and international taste, reflecting advances in the domain of illustration and global cultural connections (Shivelbush 138). In face of the strengthening of royal power through symbolic representations, the festivities encouraged the acceptance of the monarchy and the contextualization of the subjects in the new sphere of power of the Portuguese *Ancien Régime*.

According to Figueiredo (2001, 264), during presentations of the spectacle of power, colonial actors who wanted reforms in certain aspects of that power employed the theatrical choreography of protest thus making colonial anxieties and uprisings a recurrent object of negotiation and accommodation.

Precision was present in these interventions as political practice. The entrance, procession, and triumph could be constituent elements of a political language peculiar to the Portuguese city under the Ancien Régime. Lisa Voigt notes that in the existing sources, the perception that the audience established a kind of "pluridirectional" dialogue, and communication created channels of dialogue between the audience and the monarch, as the royal entrances were designed to express royal magnificence but also served to communicate the high moral and intellectual quality of the local celebrants. By analyzing two celebrations distant in time, Voigt demonstrates that there are strong points of contact between the two that, in her view, are consolidated into one rhetoric (20).

As with other cities of colonial America, the city of Rio de Janeiro was surrounded by tropical nature. The fireworks and lighting fixtures were visible against the natural canvas of rugged hills and lush green forests, given that the regular layout of the city and the buildings, streets, and squares were the background for the lighting: "On that night, the city was seen so embellished by lights, shining with inventions, illuminated by fireworks, and restless due to popular cheers in the streets and the artillery of ships and fortresses that, from a certain angle, it looked as though the sky had moved the stars to the windows" (*Relação da Aclamação*).

The art of the ephemeral had been established in Rio de Janeiro since its founding in 1567. Throughout the 17th century, the city revelers, employing playful strategies, gained fame in the colony because of their competent performance. The use of gunpowder and fireworks came to America with European expansion, and in 1624, in the context of the Dutch attack on Bahia, when sending a contingent of soldiers to Rio de Janeiro, the Royal Council of Finance informed that "a firework man" was included among those "in service to His Majesty" (ABN, Vol. 39, 1917).

In this essay, three festivities celebrated in Rio de Janeiro are examined to demonstrate how, with the use of fireworks, the city became a scene of celebration in public spaces specifically developed for that purpose by its legal body, the Câmara, and the Crown. In the 18th century, the city became an unavoidable intersection, within the Portuguese Empire, of routes and communication between East and West, in which official festivities contributed to exalting an ecumenical monarch. As Russell-Wood states, the festivity became a mechanism available to the crown to remind the Portuguese of the colonial status of their cultural, religious, and national heritage, in addition to their fidelity to God, king and country (Russell-Wood 1998, 194).

In Portuguese America, it was difficult to forge primary ties because of colonial slavery. And even more, of the contradictions and ambiguities resulting from the relationship between master versus slaves, since slavery as a social relation was dominant, though not exclusive. The hardships resulting from the relations between masters and slaves, and the relations between the slaves themselves, created an existential discomfort that was attenuated by the festivities. It was in the celebrations that there were occasions for these social extremes to enter into fleeting contact, but the basic cleavage remained unabated (Novais 28).

Portuguese America, the strengthening of the royal power, and the city of Rio de Janeiro

The city of São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, founded in 1567, grew slowly until the last two decades of the 17th century. It developed with the design of a chessboard initially limited by four hills, a limit that was exceeded in the last decades of the 18th century. Meanwhile, inside this board of flat, rectilinear streets, some spaces were transformed into squares. The most notable square in the city, Praça do Carmo, was located by the sea. It was crossed by the most important street in town, *Rua Direita*, and was the site of some of the most important buildings of the 17th and 18th centuries (Alvarez 2016, 296).

For Schwartz, the cities in the Portuguese maritime empire served as mooring points and places of military and administrative rule. It was in these cities that the local authorities and those of the crown represented themselves through ceremonies, such as processions, which dramatized the tensions endured by colonial society (Schwartz 177).

In the final decades of the 18th century, the discovery of gold and diamonds in the captaincy of Minas Gerais shifted the political, economic, and administrative axis of Portuguese America from the Northeast to the Central South (Russell-Wood, 1998, 70). The city of Rio de Janeiro became the main port for the export of metals as well as the administrative center and a military base, housing shipyards and armories, from which troops and supplies departed (Possamai 2010, 23).

The increased importance of the colony to the metropolis made it possible for the consulate of the Marquis of Pombal to introduce innovative mercantilist economic practices. According to Kenneth Maxwell, "in the decade of 1740-1750, in the port of Lisbon alone, the annual movement of ships exceeded 800 boats, of which some 300 were Portuguese and one-third of these were directly dedicated to traffic with Brazil" (Maxwell 1978, 24).

The enormous increase in business and the circulation of riches attracted new residents and slaves. The city's design of flat streets with squares to be used for festivities was expanded in the last decade of the 17th century out to the field of Rosário, next to the Rosário dos Negros church.

The regularity of the streets of Rio de Janeiro surprised the French military, René Court de la Blanchardière. When he visited the city in 1748, it seemed "more or less the size of Brest but was built more properly". While walking down the streets, he found them "narrow", "however well aligned, except the one that starts in the mountains of the Benedictines and leads to the (Carmo) square, which is wide and gives passage to three carriages. The houses are two-story buildings covered with tiles. In front of each door and window, there are blinds as in Cádiz" (Ferrez 98).

Urban forms in the regular chessboard shape emerged in the 16th century in Europe. Given that they were inapplicable there, they found in America their ideal field (Rama 32). In this regard, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda analyzed the differences in the rigor of application of the urban code between Portuguese and Spanish, which was apparently more rigid among the latter. According to Mauricio Abreu, the less strict style used by the Portuguese "eventually became a good quality, not a defect" (Abreu 157). Nonetheless, de Holanda highlights the peculiarity of Rio de Janeiro (Holanda 104), whose layout was regular, as confirmed by the Spanish military officer D. Francisco de Aguirre. He registered that, in 1782, the town had a "quadrangular format and has excellent streets, laid out in the directions of N, NW, S, and SW. The blocks are extremely well aligned, and only a few streets present at their end a small curvature" (Franca 146). It was therefore on these flat and rectilinear streets and regular squares that political and religious festivities would take place, enabling the use of heavy wheeled vehicles.

Câmaras and local elites diminish the centralization of the Crown's power

In the first decades of the 18th century, there was a progressive strengthening of royal powers in the Portuguese empire, increasing the number of offices, ceremonies, and officials. However, this did not preclude the permanence of local authorities. As political bodies, their coexistence with respect to the king was implied through images (Subtil 157). This embodiment led the metropolis to demand that the State and its representatives be represented with growing pomp, commissioning works displaying insignias and objects associated with monarchical power (Chartier 228).

In Portugal, the progressive absorption of peripheral and city council powers toward the center occurred well before the Pombaline period as a process of redevelopment and conciliation rather than absolutist centralization. This desire is present under the Pombaline consulate and is understood as a dynamic power, concerned with balancing and relativizing central power in relation to local power (Pujol 1991, 131). However, Brazil was too vast and resources were too scarce to achieve complete control of the territory and its population (Monteiro 2001, 146) so that the actions of the crown's appointees had a greater effect in the large urban centers than in more remote areas.

One of the representatives of royal authority was the Câmara, which acted as municipal administration and court of first instance. The participation of the local elite in its circuits did not imply simply fulfilling duties and exercising powers. It associated the local nobility with the monarch, integrating the presence of the king who, although distant, was present through images (Schwartz 177). The wealthy local elite participated in the management of the empire, either by voting as a responsible member or by being elected to the council. They could also participate in first-instance judicial bodies and be commanding officers of militias. These were activities that also served as spaces for negotiation between the royal powers and local authorities (Pagano de Mello 14).

At a time when the symptoms of crisis of Iberian colonization and the Ancien Régime were beginning to appear in Europe and America, the Portuguese monarchy began to empower its subjects. It became important for subjects to participate in academies, city councils or in administrative, judicial, and militia posts.

Under the long rule of the Marquis de Pombal, the ideas expressed among the most prominent Portuguese intellectuals of the time reflected a peculiar form of Portuguese Enlightenment (Maxwell 1995). The establishment of academies in Rio de Janeiro and the city of Salvador in the 18th century contributed to turning the reporting of celebrations published in the metropolis into literary occasion that exalted Portuguese American wealth. These reports linked the celebration to the empire's greatness, legitimizing and extolling the dynasty's farsightedness. Their publication and dissemination was a consequence of the great development of urban life, enhancing the importance of the city (Schulz 32). The activity of influential subjects in the academies thus strengthened the imperial image and that of the monarch at a time of crisis in the old colonial system (Novais 222).

The Baroque City and Fireworks in Europe

In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Europe's festival strategies devised new customs resulting from the technical progress and the modern sociability of street lights. Streets and squares of baroque cities became an undifferentiated theater where social life and the celebration of the ephemeral played equal roles (Argan 45). The square distanced itself from the irregular medieval format, surpassed by modern standardization of social disciplines, sociability, circulation and appearance. Thus, since the fifteenth century, the cities were outlined with rigorous geometry, which constituted the royal squares connected to the power of the State (Benevolo 1970, 509).

Whereas, according to Maravall, the Baroque city of the seventeenth century was a conflicting medium (215) where human action was studied and kept under control, the Baroque “social situation” was imbued by a culture “whose unruliness is ascribed to a regulated and disciplined system”. Among European capitals, Rome was the first Baroque metropolis to develop and try the new festival routes, because it had, since the sixteenth century, straight-line avenues connecting points of interest.

Another capital city that implemented a routing system connected to the celebration of royal power was Paris. When consolidating the great ceremony of the royal entry into the seventeenth century, J. M. Apostolidés showed that its route was presented as a dramatized symbol of imaginary elements of power (17). For Jean Delumeau, Baroque Europe has known a procession of civilizations whose pathways followed a poetic and sensitive geometry, where each devotion or saint followed a symbolic route marked by accidents, places and insignias (90).

At night, the festivities were enhanced by fireworks, without which these events wouldn't have been complete. Since the sixteenth century, European festivities included fireworks generated by gunpowder used in hack butts, muskets and artillery. Used since the thirteenth century on European battlefields, the use of fireworks became widespread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a medium for the visual and festive arts. Around 1760, countless works on pyrotechnics were published, such as *Traité des feux artificielles pour l'espectacle* (1747), confirming the existence of this art form in the Republic of Letters, vying for recognition by the public, and having Leibniz resort to alleged secret pyrotechnics from China, while the young Lavoisier declared the science of pyrotechnics as equal to that of chemistry.

The growing presence of rationalism in engineering and artillery weapons transformed the knowledge originating from these into useful and practical. Their results were diffused in printed manuals, as it happened with the book by Brigadier Alpoim (1700-1765), *Exame de Artilheiros* (A Survey of Artilleries), the first book in the genre written in Portuguese America, published in Lisbon in 1744. Appendix IV of this book was dedicated to “fireworks”.

We finally conclude that the military was, in the eighteenth century, the most coherent and prestigious European system in operation to the point that a royal decree in France raised the military uniform to the level of courtly attire. Thus, its use became the identifying link between the ruler and the army. Military science was consolidated with the fruitful activity of the French Royal engineer, Sebastien Le Preste de Vauban (1633-1707), in addition to studies of the resistance of material coming into its own during the Seven Year War (Barros, 19). According to Leonardo Benévolo, a great number of important military academies emerged in France at the end of the seventeenth century (1974, 18). In Portugal, at the King's service, the growth of the military apparatus was slow, but the Portuguese army was reorganized and imbued with a more consistent military knowledge. In Portuguese America, alongside with the metropolitan regiments, there were a great number of militia troops under the command of officials and members of the local elite. Nevertheless, the role of military engineers had grown, heading various activities, starring the ubiquitous Brigadier Alpoim. A real jack-of-all-trades under the government of Gomes Freire, Brigadier Alpoim designed and built important buildings in the colony, even the city of Mariana in Minas Gerais. The architecture produced by these military engineers was described as following “compass and ruling pen” for its rigorous, modern lines. (Bueno, 47).

The War of Spanish Succession in Portuguese America

In the final decades of the 17th century, the discovery of gold raised the importance of the captaincy of Minas Gerais to the metropolis with conflicting consequences for the American colony. Initially, its importance grew because of the valuable mineral reserves found, but its location by the sea, while connecting it to the Portuguese Empire, also increased its vulnerability in the event of a conflict (Russell-Wood 1998, 24). When the War of the Spanish Succession began in 1701, the blocs of power started to seek European hegemony. They assumed global connections, which caused the conflict to be fought in non-European areas, disrupting the order of the markets (Cardoso and Vainfas 120).

In its bid for continental hegemony, France faced its rival, Great Britain, for whom a powerful France represented a threat. Portugal abandoned its traditional alliance with England and allied with France because, to Portuguese continental micro politics, the best outcome would be for France to absorb Spain. However, over the course of the conflict, Portugal realized the great threat to its sea lanes posed by the British navy and, in a sensational defection in the year 1703, broke with France and resumed its alliance with Great Britain, leading France to seek retaliation against Portugal by attacking Rio de Janeiro (Bicalho 43).

France, instead of employing its naval force, *La Royale*, entrusted the reprisals to private individuals, whose first move occurred in 1710, led by Jean François Duclerc (Anais do II CHN). Warned by the metropolis, the colony remained alert. The watchtower of Cabo Frio spotted the fleet and informed the defenses of Rio de Janeiro (Anais do II CHN). Duclerc's squad attempted to enter the Bay of Guanabara on the 17th of August. Repulsed by the fortress, the fleet sailed to Ilha Grande, in the vicinity of the city, and gathered information on the region from slaves. Then, it landed at Guaratiba and marched for a week between the mountains of Gávea and Corcovado, until reaching the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. (Anais do II CHN). The Governor, Gregorio de Castro Morais, camped with his army in the field in front of the Rosário dos Negros church, which was still under construction.

The defense of the city made use of its regular outline. Trenches were dug on the corners, the artillery was able to shoot down the straight streets, and the regular alignment of the streets baffled the attackers (AIHGB 622/71). The

troops under Duclerc's command descended from Santa Teresa to the field of Rosário where the Governor was on horseback. Meanwhile, most of the units went down the road of Mata-Cavalos, the present-day Rua do Riachuelo, "tomando a rua que fica defronte de N. S do Parto, a que chamam travessa de São José, por ir dar defronte à sua igreja, e lhe foi fácil à entrada à Rua Direita, que fica beira mar por a nossa gente estar metida na boca das ruas por não lhe saber o intento" (AIHGB 622/71).

When entering the regular town contour, the French units were attacked by the defenders, trapped, and forced to retreat to the Trapiche, the Governor's Palace, and the Alfândega (Customs).

Surrounded, they capitulated and were saved from a massacre by the intervention of the Jesuit priests. On the 15th of October, the survivors who were still on the ships, raised anchors and left the city (RIHGB, Anais do IV Congresso 152).

Celebration of the short-lived victory over Duclerc in 1710

The victory celebrations lasted nine days starting the evening of the 20th of October with the lighting of fixtures. Because the religious aspect is predominant in a fideistic society, the image of the Dead Christ was "exposed in nine churches, playing, during those days, the reveilles (alvoradas) performed by many snare drums, trumpets, marimbas, and fifes" (AIHGB 622/71).

As Stuart Schwartz noted, the Catholic calendar was full of such ceremonies, and the use of symbolic language personified the power of authority. The direct observation of such objects promoted love and affection for the monarch. Cities represented a community structure, a legal, sociopolitical, and ideological conjunction. In the metropolis and empire, cities also represented a space of Catholic rite (Schwartz 178). The use of fireworks in Portuguese America was not exclusive to it and was included in the list of festive strategies, such as processions.

According to Georges Delumeau, processions in European cities outlined their paths following a sensible geography in the city territory. The same occurred in Rio de Janeiro: at each point of the city where the battle occurred, celebrations were made in a singular manner. In the Jesuit College, situated at the top of the Morro do Castelo, the celebration began on the 21st of October, "Because it was the first church where the victory was celebrated" while the battle was still in progress (AIHGB 622/71). On the 22nd of October, celebrations occurred in the convent of St. Anthony "because his church was on the right side of the army" and, during the battle, an image of the Saint had been placed by the friars in the gunwales of the convent facing the city. The friars argued that the Saint protected the city during the battle. He took Portugal's side and during the fight was always sad, "look only at the Menino Jesus had in his arms". The Provincial priest then left to go to the field along with the Governor, Castro Morais, and before the army, both knelt down and worshiped an image of the saint placed on an artillery piece. The saint had been promoted by the king to the rank of Captain and was receiving payment. On that day, the votive lamp was lit in the convent and it remains lit to this day (AIHGB 622/71).

On the 23rd of October, "festivities did not occur because it rained heavily," although the lighting fixtures and tolling of bells "did not fail". On the 24th, the celebration occurred at the Convent of Carmo and, on the 25th, at the Nossa Senhora do Parto church, next to another location where an intense struggle was fought. On the 26th of October, it rained again, however, the weather improved the next day, and the celebrations resumed in the church of Rosary, which was exactly "positioned in the center of the army" (AIHGB 622/71).

On the 28th of October, the ceremony was held at the "Conceição Church where the Bishop presides because it was the right side of the army and because Conceição is the Patroness of the Kingdom of Portugal". On the 29th, once again, the festivity was held in the place where the fierce struggle was fought, precisely in the vicinity of the Nossa Senhora do Desterro church in Santa Teresa "because it was here that the battle began", whereas the following day, "Where our soldiers broke our enemies". On the 31st, "no festivities occurred" because the triumph that would exhibit the captured military spoils was being prepared. On this evening, in addition to the lighting fixtures, the "large parade of knights" occurred, displaying "a triumphant car (sic) at great cost." On the 1st of November, All Saints' Day, a special date in the Catholic and peninsular calendar, the procession pompously began "na Sé (Cathedral) de São Sebastião", where the patron saint of the city of Rio de Janeiro presides and it is to him that one owes the victory "because he fought for his" ancient town "as the strong soldier that he was. The testimonies attest to his participation in the fray. Some of the French prisoners had asked their captors who was that "majestic corporal who terrified them in such a way that they turned their backs" (AIHGB 622/71).

On the afternoon of the same day, the procession of The Deum Laudamus left the Cathedral, circled the walled town of Morro do Castelo, and then went downhill to the plain. Leading the procession were eight knights "dressed in grand galas, garnished with much gold and precious stones." The first among them was bringing "the Portuguese flag undulating," followed by "knights with the captured, lowered flags of France that the handsome knights had won in the defeated battle." Following them came two immense allegorical chariots, which were "triumphant and very grandiose in size and cost, with the first car going to Santo Antonio, in the second, to São Sebastião." The parade incorporated all the religious brotherhoods of the city with their galas and biers, "garnished with much gold and precious jewels". They were followed by all of the religious convents, accompanied by the "Behind the Cathedral, the *Santíssimo*

Sacramento, which the Lord Bishop took, behind the Governor, followed the *tercos* (regiments) of infantry who gave many loads of musketry when collecting the Procession". When they reached the Saint Joseph church, a thunderous last round of gun salutes was fired from all the forts and by "ships and sumacas (slops) that they found in these port" (AIHGB 622/71).

The 18th-century celebrations under Gomes Freire

The prosperity of metropolitan Portugal in the 18th century was linked to the flow of precious commodities that came from Portuguese America in the form of gold, diamonds, tobacco, and sugar. Keeping control over Brazil was thus essential for the existence of the kingdom of Portugal (Maxwell 1978, 24-25). During the 18th century, Portuguese America shifted its economic, social, and political center from the colony's impoverished northeast to the prosperous south-center.

The boom of precious minerals consolidated an economic system that included two poles. The first was the captaincy of Minas Gerais, whose population was distributed in a pattern of fixed urban occupation. The second pole was Rio de Janeiro, the port that exported the gold, which was linked to Minas Gerais by the supplementary agricultural and livestock belt, with roads connecting both poles. This entire system housed masses of free and enslaved people – all eager to participate in the festivities and to celebrate their monarch and their identity in the framework of the Ancien Régime.

The Governor of the Captaincy of Rio de Janeiro, Vahia Monteiro, nicknamed "The Jaguar", wrote to Diogo de Mendonça Corte Real, on the 10th of June 1728 to acknowledge receipt of another letter, signed "by the royal hand to celebrate the wedding of the princes". In the letter sent to the sovereigns, he reported in detail on these festivities as well as those prepared by the Chamber which included "comedies, bullfighting, parades of horsemen (cavalhadas), and other demonstrations" (ABN Tomo XLVI). This repertoire, in accordance with Tinhorão, represented Iberian cultural models borrowed from local elites along with popular practices (143).

The last Governor-General of the Captaincy of Rio de Janeiro, was Gomes Freire de Andrada, Earl of Bobadela (1685-1763). Appointed in 1733, he was an active administrator and defender of Lights in the colony, overseeing an extensive program of public works and creating short-lived academies and publishing presses (Alvarez 2009, 261). His desire to promote local elites was criticized by the second viceroy, Earl da Cunha, for whom Gomes had the serious defect of preferring to employ Brazilian born administrators instead of Portuguese (RIHGB, vol. 254). His rule extended from Rio de Janeiro to the Minas Gerais, Goiás and Mato Grosso, and despite the job responsibilities, or because of them, he was an aficionado of parties (Lavrado 1978,72). Following his death in 1763, the vicerealty was transferred from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro, as we have seen, for strategic reasons.

The political festivity of 1762

On the 24th of January 1762, news of the birth of Prince D. José, the first-born child of Queen Maria I, reached Portuguese America. For the monarchies of the Ancien Régime, eager for dynastic stability, the birth of a male heir was a special occasion for rejoicing (Apostolidès 16-17). For a few months, the colony "was consumed by arrangements, attractive fireworks, and sumptuous to their preciousness; both the excellence of art and the appeal of nature competed to embellish them" (Epanáfora Festiva). Initially, there were lighting fixtures and the tolling of bells in every church. On the 7th of May, a sumptuous celebration was held in the monastery of St. Benedict, with a huge influx of people. The poor and the rich alike "all expensively dressed" (todos custosamente trajados)". The Governor, Gomes Freire, attended, accompanied by the Bishop, in his chariot pulled by six horses. In the abbey church, portraits of the princes were placed in the noble tribune, which was "exquisitely lined" (primorosamente forrada) (Epanáfora Festiva). This peinture represented them and received the devotion of those present, attesting to the representative role of power, which, as Bourdieu states, invests the symbolic capital embodied in objects (Bourdieu 12-13).

The social hierarchy of the Portuguese *Ancien Régime* was rigidly followed on these occasions. All were properly displayed: members of the local elite, priests, authorities of the Crown, judges, the military high ranks, and the Câmara.

The multipurpose space of the Baroque cities, with a regular outline composed of streets and squares and its visual contributed to the brilliance of the festivity. Along the rectilinear streets, lay the regiments of the garrison in parade and in full uniform.

Their march was brightened by military music, drums, fifes and trumpets, that galvanized the public with his martial songs. The windows of the houses were richly encased while in the harbor, the boats, large and small, were decorated with flags. When the cannon in of the ships fired followed at the artillery of the forts, the greater triumph and the joy of the public responded. At night, "The whole city was enlightened, and as if the earth were abbreviated a map for the description of so many lights, the sea, which was overwhelmed with vessels and subdued with strongholds, was also full of flames." (Epanáfora Festiva).

The bishop's palace was decorated with lamps that formed a peristyle of flames that were prepared chemically to resist the wind. The nine arches of the facade windows had illuminated letters forming the words "God save the King".

In the Governor's Palace of Gomes Freire, the luminárias reached an impressive visual effect, where the fireworks were manipulated with meticulous techniques drawn from artillery and fireworks knowledge where the facade was found illuminated by "four thousand stars".

Then the court paraded in triumphant cars, preceded by the governor on horseback and numerous entourages, beautifying the streets and cheering the villagers (Epanáfora Festiva).

The academic who wrote the description introduces an interesting notion of historical time and the feeling of belonging to an ample world, personalized by imaginary representing bullfighting: "this barbarous sport reminiscent of the Roman amphitheaters, which the nations of Spain religiously conserve in the performance of their feasts. The symmetry of the amphitheater (curro), the arrangement and the sun-like decoration of the stages, the spectacular action - everything was superb. "

After the ground was cleaned by a company of the garrison, the master of ceremonies announced the celebration, and the square became the scene of dances performed by girls whose abilities elicited such enthusiastic applause from the audience that the chronicler wondered if they were moved by the beauty of the show or the beauty of the girls. Soon thereafter, there was a medieval reenactment followed by a parade featuring a triumphal float paid for by the city's goldsmiths which showed "the four parts of the world and other figures, which were images of various pagan gods" alluding "to the happy birth we celebrate". The shoemakers appeared with another float "that had the figure of a mountain. In it, some native Indians could be seen hunting the beasts of the country."

For this celebration, the theater where various plays were performed for the public was built in the square. The party was financed by private individuals and the Câmara. The royal judge pressured other judges "with supplication and persuasions" to support the party. The Câmara played an essential role in the administration of urban revenue in the 17th century. However, in the 18th century, because of the loss of their administrative positions to the central power, the members of the local government were no longer able to regulate the physical space of the city or to manage its incomes (Bicalho 382).

On the 6th of June, Gomes Freire granted a banquet for magistrates, war officers and the local elite. In the evening, the royal party employed fireworks, recreating in the "field they call St. Dominic" a battle between a simulated sailing ship and a castle. After the battle, a wooden machine that was painted with the image of a castle was reduced to ashes (Epanaphora Festiva).

According to Bentes Monteiro, monarchical power reached its apotheosis in the Gomes Freire government. "The governor, the bishop, and other figures of projection in the city were praised; they were the main personalities embodying royal power, which was the divine, absolute, and moral support – even if from afar – of the colonization and its authorities vis-à-vis the population. They enabled the king's presence and action in the colonial city's context" (Monteiro 1992, 318).

The celebration of royal power in 1786: The apogee of fireworks

Don Luís de Vasconcelos e Sousa was Viceroy of Brazil from 1779 until 1789. As a young man, he witnessed the Pombaline reconstruction of Lisbon, devastated by the earthquake of 1755. His governance represented a bridge between the Enlightenment and the practice of power, and he commissioned a significant number of works (Alvarez 2009, 259).

In 1743, the Governor, Gomes Freire, inaugurated the Paço, a building, conceived by the Brigadier Alpoim, that closed the east side of the square along the Rua Direita. On the south side stood the facade of the Convent of Carmo and its churches. The northeast was closed by the housings of Telles and Menezes. Vasconcelos was responsible for ordering a large stone pier and, to embellish the square at the sea side, a fountain. This last work was conceived by Master Valentim and established the square as the *sallotto dell'urbe*, alluding to the Praça do Comércio in Lisbon, "an open stage to the Tagus River" (Álvarez 2012, 129).

The second construction work ordered by Vasconcelos was the Passeio Público, a space inspired by the European experiences of the Lights, where the gardens were used as spaces for leisure, culture, and social contact. Following the project of the great mulatto artist, Master Valentim.

Vasconcelos filled the unhealthy Lagoon of the Boqueirão and erected a park containing a French garden with trees regularly aligned along rectilinear streets. This commission changed the face of the city, with the square giving it a civilized veneer that was, however, unable to hide the slavery system and colonial inequalities. It would witness the apogee of the use of fireworks in Rio de Janeiro in the 18th century, including firework displays, parades of complex floats, dances, music, bullfights, *cavalhadas* (cavalcades), and *argolinhas* (popular games).

The Vasconcelos festivities took place against a critical backdrop comprising the threat of political instability among the colonial elite and a crisis in mining production. For the authorities, these appeared to be good reasons to celebrate and reaffirm their firm and terrifying power, which may have led Vasconcelos to commission the grand celebration of 1786

(Voigt 33). In the following years, there was unrest in some colonial Portuguese-Brazilian circles and in Vila Rica. When Viceroy Vasconcelos ordered the quashing of the Minas Gerais Conspiracy (*Inconfidência mineira*) in June 1789, his days were numbered. On the 5th of March of that year, the crown appointed his successor.

The celebrations of 1786.

The 1786 celebration was carefully planned by the authorities, and its financing fell to the Council and the wealthy. It was to honor the marriage of the Portuguese princes in a context of crisis of the old colonial system, a time of aggravated tensions with constant unrest due to increasing taxation and the infiltration of revolutionary ideas (Novais 299).

It began on days 2, 3, and 4 of February and finished on the 28th of May, 1786. It occurred the Audience in the Carmo Square and surroundings, with its buildings as the stage setting after that, floats would pass by, and then bullfighting and parades of horsemen would occur in an ephemeral scenario located "in the Audience of the Passeio Publico. The path was magnificently illuminated from the Passeio along the church of Our Lady of Lapa ", where the corral was built (AIHGB, Lata51, Microfilme 1º, Prat. 2, Bin 3, folder 52).

The artist who devised the parade and the complex allegorical floats and their fireworks was Lieutenant Antônio Francisco Soares. He manufactured chariots equipped with "four wheels" and also the scenery in the great Arsenal of the Train where the chariots were equipped with the scenography of enormous complexity, using machinery to open and close trapdoors, reels to go up and down, and allegories, with safe conditions for the employment of abundant fireworks and "figures coated with all emblems" (AIHGB, Lata51, Microfilme 1º, Prat.2, Bin 3, folder 52). The story he wrote and illustrated was never published in the metropolis.

The fireworks represented a simulated and fanciful war. Unlike the risk of a real conflict, this simulation portrayed its author as a creative individual to be emulated across the empire.

The intense use of visual resources seems to have originated in the Middle Ages when the Maravall states, there was "a dispute over the superiority of the eye or the ear to communicate knowledge to others". For the same author, in the baroque era, the primacy of the visual was decisive in the festivities, given that it was also the basis for sensory experience, and the existence of illusion, "the deception of the eyes", was taken into consideration (Maravall 394).

The description of the badges that adorned the Tribune of the guests is reminiscent of the observations of Apostolides on similar objects observed in the royal entry of Louis XIV in Paris (18). In Vasconcelos' Tribune, the banners "showed the emblems according to the lineage, nobility, and house of each because these were military officers, prelates, noblemen, and prominent people". According to Bakhtin, the festivals with their carnival tone and with their forms, motifs, and symbols "marked 18th-century literature. However, it is a formalized influence: carnival shapes were transformed into literary procedures" (1999, 30).

The parade had five large chariots conceived by Lieutenant Antônio Francisco Soares. The Jupiter and Vulcan float was prominent; At its top, the name of the god could be read "between letters of fire" (AIHGB, Lata51, Microfilme 1º, Prat.2, Bin 3, folder 52).

Years before that celebration, to Rio de Janeiro bishop lamented that the African population had carried on with their drums, which it believed to be contrary to public order, although the prelate was aware of how much these drums were needed by this population (Schwartz 202). We would like to believe that the Greco-Roman polytheism peculiar to the Enlightenment, constantly present in the Promenade Public ceremonies, served as recognition of their African deities related to the natural forces of life and reproduction in a symbiotic relationship of divinity and nature. Thus, Bacchus, Vulcan, Hera, and Jupiter might have their counterparts in African religions.

The integrity of the 1786 celebration was certified by Vieira Fazenda, the erudite librarian of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute, who recorded in the late 19th century the testimony of an elderly woman regarding these celebrations. Vieira Fazenda does not refer to her as being of African origin, but the transcripts of her peculiarities of speech suggest she was. Asked about the modern celebrations, the old lady thought that the celebrations of years past were better in every way. The repertoire and vocabulary of these illustrated celebrations did not just delight but made sense to her, "which carnival, which coronation, not even the marriage of the emperor (sic). Nothing like the ride festivities. Nothing like the cars, the costumes and argolinhas of my time" (RIHGB Volume 86).

The chariot of Jupiter was surmounted by an eagle flapping its wings, leaving fire by the mouth while The classic Python was presented as "a serpent of length of two palmos and of height with five hands, with the wings open and still surrounded by the same mount with His head lifted and his mouth vomited flames of fire. " On Jupiter's chariot, which was made of trees and camp flowers, everything was decorated with artificial fire. Over the sphere, there was a trophy with the royal arms and two palms with two hearts "(AIHGB Lata51, Microfilme 1º, Prat.2, Bin 3, folder 52).

The parade continued through the evening: "leaving the same streets of the delightful Passeio Publico went to the churchyard of Our Lady of Parto da Lapa where the Viceroy was," when an arch of Triumph was set up, and was seen Behind the fire the sign: All is owed to Luiz" (AIHGB Lata51, Microfilme 1º, Prat.2, Bin 3, folder 52).

Conclusion

Brazil is a country that is identified with carnival festivity. Taking into account the analysis of Ávila concerning baroque festivity and carnival as a total festivity, in a meta-historical approach, Kantor proposes a new theme "for understanding the connections between national identity and the festivity" (Kantor I, 4). In the context of leisure as social practice, festivities were implemented from the first moments of the colonial enterprise. Since its founding, the city of Rio de Janeiro coexisted alongside festivities that incorporated elements from Europe that were common to Spanish America and local practices. The procession and the celebrations were an occasion to consolidate the system of power, opening spaces for protest and complaints against abuses. The celebrations integrated practices of communication and politics into a collective expression that included fireworks since the beginning of the colonial system in the first expansion of European modernity. Their practices were refined by the Enlightenment and an increasing knowledge of celebration.

In 18th-century Rio de Janeiro, with the absorption of the peripheral powers by the center, a greater representational discipline was implanted over the traditional repertoire of the celebrations. The compulsory financing of the festivities was conducted by the Câmara and private individuals, and the representatives of power were responsible for conceiving the party dedicated to royal power, held at the multi-purpose scenario of the streets and squares. The emergence, albeit ephemeral, of academies in cities such as Salvador and Rio de Janeiro allowed the local elite participating in the monarchy and empire to play a descriptive and interpretive role in that empire. Their descriptions of celebrations such as those of 1786 were printed and published in Europe and reported on the remarkable greatness and strength of the empire. The use of fireworks reached its apogee with practices of illusion and wonder that left a deep impression on the audience of their time. Political celebration in the 18th century focused on a new relationship between the administration and their subjects, allowing them to build an ephemeral order in a colonial world marked by improvisation and instability in a complex arrangement of forms of sociability that idealistically reflected the concept of a global Portuguese Empire (Kantor I, 180).

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