The Pardos' Triumph: The Use of Festival Material Culture for Socioracial Promotion in Eighteenth- Century Pernambuco

Miguel A. Valerio

Washington University in St. Louis, United States

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ABSTRACT

On September 13, 1745, the pardo (mixed-race Afro-Brazilian) brotherhood (lay Catholic association) of Nossa Senhora do Livramento (Our Lady of Emancipation) of Recife, Pernambuco, in collaboration with the pardo brotherhood of Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe (Our Lady of Guadalupe) in neighboring Olinda, enthralled Pernambuco's largest city with a great festival in honor of Blessed Gonçalo Garcia (1556–97). Like many colonial festivals, the festivities included fireworks, artillery salvos, five triumphal carts, seventeen allegorical floats, five different dance performances, and jousting. Yet never before had such an extravagant display of material wealth been made by an Afro-Brazilian brotherhood. The pardo *irmãos* (brotherhood members) had two important issues they wanted to settle once and for all with this festival. One was the question of Blessed Gonçalo's pardoness, since the would-be-saint was the son of a Portuguese man and an East Indian woman, and pardoness in Brazil had been defined as the result of white–black miscegenation. The other issue was the popular notion that mixed-race Afro-Brazilians constituted colonial Brazil's most deviant and unruly socioracial group. In this article, I analyze how mixed-race Afro-Brazilians used the material culture of early modern festivals to publicly articulate claims about their sacro-social prestige and socio-symbolic status. I contend that material culture played a central role in the pardo *irmãos*' articulation of their devotion to Blessed Gonçalo and claims of sacro-social and socio-symbolic belonging, and that they used this material culture to challenge colonial notions about their ethnic group.

1. See Caio César Boschi, *Os leigos e o poder: irmandades leigas e política colonizadora em Minas Gerais* (São Paulo: Editora Atica, 1986); Lucilene Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas: irmandades de africanos e crioulos na Bahia setecentista* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2011); Elizabeth W. Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary: Memory and History in Minas Gerais, Brazil* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); Larissa Viana, *O idioma da mestiçagem: as irmandades de pardos na América portuguesa* (Campinas: Editora UNICAMP, 2007); Célia Maia Borges, *Escravos e libertos nas irmandades do Rosário* (Juiz de Fora: Editora da UFJF, 2005); and J. R. Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists: The Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Bahia, 1550–1755* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968). In accordance with Brazilian custom, when re-citing a work, I use the paternal last name.

2. See Fritz Teixeira de Salles, *Associações religiosas no ciclo do ouro* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2007).

3. See Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists*, 213; Frei Agostinho de Santa Maria, *Santuário mariano e história das imagens milagrosas de Nossa Senhora milagrosamente manifestadas e aparecidas em o Arcebispado da Bahia*, vol. 9 (1707–23; repr., Salvador: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico da Bahia, 1949), 86.

4. Frei Antonio Santa Maria Jaboatão, “Discurso histórico, geográfico, genealógico, político

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Colonial Brazil (1500–1822) was home to a staggering number of religious brotherhoods, or lay Catholic associations (called *irmandades*) dedicated to a particular Marian and/or saintly devotion and charitable work.¹ Like colonial Brazilian society, these brotherhoods were mostly segregated along socioracial lines: Portuguese nobles, Portuguese-born whites, American-born whites (called *mazombos*), mixed-race Afro-Brazilians (interchangeably called *mulatos*, *pardos*, and *mestiços*), Brazilian-born blacks (called *crioulos*), and lastly, African-born, enslaved blacks (called *pretos*). The most prestigious *irmandade*, the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, for example, only admitted Portuguese nobles and wealthy Portuguese-born whites and *mazombos*.² Yet, regardless of socioracial status, Brazilian brotherhoods celebrated their patrons’ feast day with great fanfare, and sometimes Afro-Brazilian *irmandades* outshone their white counterparts.³ Such an instance took place on September 13, 1745, when the pardo brotherhood of Nossa Senhora do Livramento (Our Lady of Emancipation) of Recife, Pernambuco, in collaboration with the pardo brotherhood of Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe (Our Lady of Guadalupe) in neighboring Olinda, enthralled Pernambuco’s largest city with a great festival in honor of Blessed Gonçalo Garcia (b. 1556; martyred February 5, 1597, beatified 1627, canonized 1862). Like many colonial confraternal festivals, the festivities included fireworks, artillery salvos, five *carros triunfais* (triumphal carts), seventeen *figuras* (allegorical floats), five different dance performances, and jousting. Yet never before had such an extravagant display of material wealth been made (nor would be made again) by an Afro-Brazilian brotherhood.

The pardo *irmãos* (brotherhood members) had two important issues they wanted to settle once and for all with this festival. One was the question of Blessed Gonçalo’s pardoness, that is, that he was indeed a pardo, since the would-be-saint was the son of a Portuguese man and an East Indian woman, and pardoness in Brazil had been defined as the result of white–black miscegenation. In this first aim, the pardo *irmãos* were much aided by the Franciscan missionaries in Recife at the time, since Blessed Gonçalo had been martyred as a lay Franciscan brother. Desiring to spread the cult to Blessed Gonçalo among Brazil’s mixed-race black population, a Franciscan friar, Frei Antonio de Santa Maria Jaboatão (1695–1779), preached a sermon on September 12, the eve of the would-be-saint’s feast, “proving” Blessed Gonçalo’s pardoness.⁴ Additionally, another Franciscan, Frei Manuel da Madre de Deus Bulhões (1673–c. 1750), wrote an account of the festivities, *Summa triunfal da nova e grande celebração do glorioso e invicto mártir São Gonçalo Garcia* (1753), which he published under the pseudonym Sóteiro da Silva Ribeiro (fig. 1).⁵ It is from Bulhões’s account that we know the details of the festival, although Bulhões leaves many aspects of the festival out, which this article will seek to account for.

e encomiástico," in *Jaboatão mystico* (Lisbon: António Vicente da Silva, 1758), 167–224.

5. Sôteiro da Silva Ribeiro [Manuel da Madre de Deus Bulhões], *Summa triunfal da nova e grande celebridade do glorioso e invicto mártir São Gonçalo Garcia* (Lisbon: Pedro Ferreira, 1753). Although I am in possession of a digital copy of a microfilm copy of the editio princeps, I was unable to ascertain which institutions have one, especially to reproduce a good color image of the title page in this article. I cite from José Aderaldo Castello's 1969 edition in *O movimento academicista no Brasil, 1641–1820/22*, 3.2: 11–105, itself a reproduction of a 1928 edition of Brazil's History and Geography Institute (IHGB), which rendered *summa* (summary) as *súmula* (diminutive of *summa*), though *summa* is what we can read on the editio princeps. A good image of the title page of the editio princeps is reproduced in Rita de Cássia Barbosa de Araújo, "A redenção dos pardos: a festa de São Gonçalo Garcia no Recife, em 1745," in *Festa, cultura e sociabilidade na América portuguesa*, ed. István Jancsó and Iris Kantor (São Paulo: University of São Paulo, 2001), 1: 417.

6. Brazil was governed by what was called a *padroado real* (royal patronage), with the monarch having oversight of ecclesiastical matters and the church being implicated in civil governance: see C. R. Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion, 1415–1825: A Succinct Survey* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 63–67. On the work

Figure 1. Pedro Ferreira, title page of *Summa triunfal*, Lisbon, 1753. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

The other issue the pardo *irmãos* wished to address was the popular notion that mixed-race Afro-Brazilians constituted colonial Brazil's most deviant and unruly socioracial group. This is why the pardo *irmãos* had expressed a preference for the term *pardo* instead of the sullied one of *mulato*, popularly associated with licentiousness and ungovernability. As discussed below, mixed-race Afro-Brazilians had accumulated a great deal of material wealth, especially in Pernambuco, but had not attained the socio-symbolic status they hoped that wealth would bring. Thus, understanding that in colonial Brazil socioracial hierarchies worked through religion, they chose Blessed Gonçalo as the vehicle that would help them redefine their ethnic group and achieve the socio-symbolic status they thought they deserved.⁶ Thus, as Ronald J. Morgan has observed about the use that religious communities, towns, lay brotherhoods, and individuals made of would-be-saints in colonial Latin America, the pardo *irmãos* used Blessed Gonçalo's spiritual prestige to enhance their own sacro-social status.⁷ While the Franciscans helped them advance toward these aims with the sermon and *Summa triunfal* (though these also served the Franciscans' own goals), the pardo *irmãos* articulated their claims about the true sacro-social nature of their ethnic group through the extravagant material wealth they deployed in the festival.

In this article, I analyze how mixed-race Afro-Brazilians used the material culture of early modern festivals to publicly articulate claims about their own sacro-social prestige and socio-symbolic status. While the pardo *irmãos'* festival, and especially *Summa triunfal*, has received a great deal

that race does through religion, see Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Race in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1–18.

7. Ronald Jay Morgan, *Spanish American Saints and the Rhetoric of Identity: 1600–1810* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2002), 3.

8. Some studies of the festival include: Araújo, "A redenção dos pardos"; Janaína dos Santos Bezerra and Suely Creusa Cordeiro de Almeida, "'Pompa e circunstância' a um santo pardo: São Gonçalo Garcia e a luta dos pardos por inserção social no XVIII," *Histórias Unisonas* 16, no. 1 (2012): 118–29; Bezerra, "Um culto a um santo pardo: a festa de São Gonçalo Garcia na visão de dois franciscanos (XVIII)," *história e-história* (2010): <http://historiaehistoria.com.br/index.cfm> (full URL could not be relocated); Andrea Simone Barreto Dias, "Os incômodos da cor parda no Pernambuco colonial: olhares sobre a festa de homenagem à São Gonçalo Garcia" (MA thesis, Universidade Federal de Campina Grande, 2010). On the centrality of material culture to early Afrodescendants' experiences, see Cécile Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); "Dancing for the King of Congo from Early Modern Central Africa to Slavery-Era Brazil," *Colonial Latin American Review* 22, no. 2 (2013): 184–208; Carmen Fracchia, "Black but Human": *Slavery and the Visual Arts in Hapsburg Spain, 1480–1700*

of attention in Brazil, it has not been approached from a material culture studies perspective, even though recent scholarship has demonstrated that material culture was central to how early modern Afrodescendants in the Atlantic conceived of and expressed themselves as well as engaged with and challenged colonial norms and expectations.⁸ I contend, therefore, that material culture played a central role in the pardo *irmãos'* articulation of their devotion to Blessed Gonçalo and claims of sacro-social and socio-symbolic belonging, and that they used this material culture to challenge colonial notions about their ethnic group.

But the festival has broader implications. It underscores, for one, how subaltern subjects in the early modern world in general and colonial Brazil in particular engaged with the material culture of early modern festive culture to fashion potent public statements about their subjectivities, economic and artistic agency, group identity, and sense of belonging to the wider host society. While the presence of non-Europeans in early modern European festivals often suggests the exoticization of the foreign, nonwhite Other, Recife's festival shows that subaltern subjects not only found ways to exercise agency in shaping early modern festivals but could be responsible for months-long festivals in which their white counterparts participated under their auspices. Recife's festival also demonstrates how the racialized could mobilize festive culture to redefine their socioracial status. It thus marks early modern festivals as engines of self-(re)fashioning or socio-symbolic change.

Colonial Brazil, "Mulatos and Mulatas' Paradise"

As stated above, a central component of the festival was establishing the pardo *irmãos'* social legitimacy. As scholars of race in colonial Latin America have argued, although Iberians "increasingly marked both native and African ancestries as impure and generally saw mixture with either group in negative terms, it was black blood that was more frequently and systematically construed as a stain on a lineage," as historian María Elena Martínez put it.⁹ Also, as noted above, in Brazil, the children of Portuguese colonizers and Africans were alternatively known as *mulatos*, *pardos*, and *mestiços*.¹⁰ Yet, as Martínez's statement suggests, colonial discourse was disproportionately skewed against mulatos/pardos/Afro-mestiços, who were associated with "laziness, dishonesty, slyness, arrogance, and lack of trustworthiness."¹¹ It was along these lines that in the eighteenth century, the Italo-Portuguese Jesuit André João Antonil (1646–1716) declared Brazil "mulatos and mulatas' paradise" in his 1711 *Cultura e opulência do Brasil* (Culture and Opulence of Brasil).¹² What Antonil meant was that mixed-race Afro-Brazilians had free rein to pursue their desires, many of which he considered criminal or immoral. In this manner, Antonil echoed colonial authorities' uneasiness with racial mixture. The pardos that sponsored Recife's festival sought to distance themselves from this stigma. It is against this background therefore that Recife's festival must be studied.

As Antonil's epithet underscores, mulatos/pardos/(Afro)mestiços' bad reputation was the product of colonial discourse.¹³ In the most comprehensive study of this discourse in colonial Brazil, *Gente sem sorte* (literally, unlucky people, but also without classification), Raimundo Agnelo Soares Pessoa notes that "none of the colonial references to mulatos allude to a single honest attitude or action by this ethnic group."¹⁴ Pessoa adds that "with regards to pardos the opposite is true."¹⁵ It should not surprise us, then, as Pessoa points out, that "the term pardo was categorically preferred to the detriment of the term mulato."¹⁶

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Ximena Gómez, "Nuestra Señora: Confraternal Art and Identity in Early Colonial Lima" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2019); Matthew Francis Rarey, "Assemblage, Occlusion, and the Art of Survival in the Black Atlantic," *African Arts* 51, no. 4 (2018): 20–33; and Tamara J. Walker, *Exquisite Slaves: Race, Clothing, and Status in Colonial Lima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

9. María Elena Martínez, "The Black Blood of New Spain: *Limpeza de Sangre*, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004): 484. See Raimundo Angelo Pessoa Soares, *Gente sem sorte: a invenção dos mulatos no Brasil colonial* (Goiânia: Editora UFG, 2013); and Viana, *O idioma da mestiçagem*.

10. See Frei José dos Santos Cosme e Damião, *Serman de S. Gonsalo Garcia, pregado no terceiro dia do solenissimo triduo, que celebrão os homens pardos de cidade da Bahai na cathedral da mesma cidade* (Lisbon: Miguel Rodrigues, 1747), 4.

11. Viana, *O idioma da mestiçagem*, 27. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

12. André João Antonil, *Cultura e opulência do Brasil, por suas drogas, e minas* (1711; repr., Recife: Museu do Açúcar, 1967), 24. Available in English as *Brazil at the Dawn of the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Timothy J. Coates (Darmouth: Tagus, 2012).

13. I have chosen to keep the

As Larissa Viana further observes, colonial discourse about mulatos' presumed impurity was rooted in Iberian discourse on *limpeza de sangue*, or blood purity.¹⁷ Viana contends that this discourse became ingrained in Brazil's colonial culture in the seventeenth century. She offers the example of Manuel Gonçalves Dória, who in 1628 was awarded the knightly Order of St. James by Philip III of Spain (also Philip II of Portugal) for helping the Spanish recover Salvador from the Dutch in 1625.¹⁸ Two inquests into Dória's ancestry, a prerequisite for entering the military-religious order, found that he suffered the "impediment" (*impedimento*) of "mulatiness" (*mulatice*) and was therefore inadmissible to the prestigious brotherhood. As Dória's case shows, mulatiness/pardoness/Afro-mestiçoness was seen as a stain, which barred those associated with *sangue negro* (black blood) from many privileges, such as being admitted to honorific orders or holding public office. To this effect, Viana offers the example of a 1671 royal decree that stipulated that "every person, before entering a public office, should be investigated to ascertain whether he has Jewish, Moorish, or mulato ancestry, or is married to a woman with some of these defects."¹⁹ Thus, by appealing to a saint, Pernambuco's pardos were seeking to rid their ethnic group of this stain, a huge impediment to the socio-symbolic ascendancy they desired; the pardos' impurity would be cleansed by Blessed Gonçalves's blood, itself purified by martyrdom.

Colonial Brazil's larger-than-life satirist, the *mazombo* Gregório de Matos e Guerra (1636–96), often targeted mulatos/pardos/(Afro)mestiços in his satires. Like Antonil and his contemporaries, Matos saw the desired Portuguese colonial order going awry through racial mixture. One of many examples of his anti-mulato invective reads:

I do not know what it is
To be born a white, honest
Man, with no other race,
In this plague-stricken Brazil.

Land so rude and crass
Where no one is respected
Except those who show
Some sign of being mulatos.²⁰

Matos's satire underscores how embedded in colonial culture anti-mulato discourse was; thus, Pernambuco's pardos were up against a great force. In fact, more than half a century of devotion and economic ascendancy had not guaranteed them the social legitimacy they so ardently desired. In this festival, they hoped that their lavish display of material wealth, cloaked under religious devotion, would finally do the trick.

Pernambucan Pardos' Economic Advancement

Colonial anti-mulato discourse was rooted to a great extent in a resentment of mixed-race Afro-Brazilians' rise in socioeconomic status, which white colonizers saw as an affront to their vision of what should constitute a proper colonial order. Just as Manuel Gonçalves Dória's fate was changed by the Dutch invasion of Bahia in 1624, so too would be that of many mulatos/pardos/(Afro)mestiços by the Dutch invasion of Pernambuco in 1630. What attracted the Dutch to Brazil was its monopoly on sugar and tobacco production at the time; and while the Spanish Empire

Portuguese nomenclature and spelling throughout, except for adding Afro- to distinguish Afro-Amerindian mestiços from Amerindian-Portuguese mestiços. Mulato and pardo should each be understood as encompassing all three categories.

14. Pessoa, *Gente sem sorte*, 50.

15. Ibid., 53.

16. Ibid., 58.

17. Viana, *O idioma da mestiçagem*, 51–58.

18. Ibid., 47–49. From 1580 to 1640, Portugal was under Spanish rule, during what is called the Iberian Union; see Jean-Frédéric Schaub, "The Union Between Portugal and the Spanish Monarchy (1581–1640)," in *The Iberian World: 1450–1820*, ed. Fernando Jesús Bouza Álvarez, Pedro Cardim, and Antonio Feros (New York: Routledge, 2020), <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9780429283697/chapters/10.4324/9780429283697-7>.

19. Viana, *O idioma da mestiçagem*, 54. *Limpeza de sangue* (*limpieza de sangre* in Spanish) statutes emerged as a way of barring Iberian Jews from public office in fifteenth-century Toledo, Spain: see Albert M. Sicroff and Mauro Armijo, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre: controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII* (Madrid: Taurus, 1985); João de Figueirôa Rêgo, *A honra alheia por um fio: os estatutos de limpeza de sangue nos espaços de expressão ibérica, sécs. XVI–XVIII* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste

(which then included the Portuguese realm) was able to recapture Bahia in 1625, the Dutch would remain in Pernambuco until 1654.²¹ This changed not only the geographic makeup of colonial Brazil for the duration of the Dutch occupation but also its socioeconomic reality for decades to follow. As a consequence, for example, Brazil lost its monopoly on sugar and tobacco, and the sugar barons that had dominated Pernambuco up to that point fled the region. Thus, immediately after the Dutch left, Pernambuco became a sparsely populated region.

But many colonists, from all socioracial strata, from Europeans to *pretos*, found in the region a fertile soil of socioeconomic opportunity. Mulatos/pardos/(Afro)mestiços particularly took advantage of this opportunity, moving to the region, starting businesses, and rebuilding the region's cities. It was this newfound wealth and Pernambuco's post-occupation state that led Pernambuco's mulatos to lay a claim to the more neutral term *pardo*, which they could mold according to their desires. Some of these self-fashioned pardos are known by name, such as the architect Manuel Ferreira Jácome (c. 1677–36); the painter José Rabelo de Vasconcelos (c. 1719–1800); the priests Jerônimo de Sousa Pereira (dates unknown) and Felipe Néri da Trindade (dates unknown); the latter's brother, the musician Manuel de Almeida Botelho (dates unknown); and their father, Francisco de Almeida Pessoa (dates unknown), also a well-known musician from the period.²² As these pardos' professions demonstrate, Pernambuco allowed them to move away from manual labor and into more socio-symbolically prestigious vocations, including the priesthood, from which Afrodescendants were normally barred.²³ This suggests that some pardos may have taken advantage of the possibility to pass as white.

One such pardo, Antônio Ferreira, is said to have started the cult of Blessed Gonçalo in Pernambuco, when he supposedly brought a statue of the would-be-saint from Lisbon in the first decades of the eighteenth century:

It must be about thirty years since a pardo man from Pernambuco named Antônio Ferreira, having gone to Portugal, where he was told that Blessed Gonçalo Garcia was considered a saint of his own color and accident [i.e., pardo], brought a small statue of the saint. He kept the statue with great love and devotion for some years until he died, and when he died he gave it to a devout matron of this land, and today it is kept in the [private] chapel of Manoel Alves Ferreira, the lawyer for the Franciscan monastery of St. Anthony in Recife.²⁴

However, Bulhões, the only source for this legend, may have been downplaying the Franciscans' role in promoting Blessed Gonçalo among mixed-race Afro-Brazilians, perhaps hoping to give the impression, as he does, that the pardos started the devotion of their own accord. But the most likely scenario is that the Franciscans, in whose monastery the statue was located, albeit in Manoel Alves Ferreira's chapel, were the ones who first promoted the cult of Blessed Gonçalo (fig. 2). Moreover, the matron who inherited the statue and Manoel Alves may have very well been white. What is clear, however, is that this economic advancement provided the pardo *irmãos* with the resources to stage one of colonial Brazil's most lavish festivals. Another thing that has been demonstrated is that these pardos began to form brotherhoods and build their own churches to form community; practice their devotion to Blessed Gonçalo, the Virgin Mary, and other saints; celebrate their feast day as well as their corporate identity; and thereby stake a claim to a better reputation.²⁵ It is also known, for example, that Jácome, Vasconcelos, Botelho, and Pessoa, were *irmãos* of Nossa Senhora do Livramento.²⁶

Gulbenkian, 2011); and Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

20. See Fernando Rocha Peres, "Negros e mulatos em Gregório de Matos," *Afro-Ásia*, nos. 4–5 (1967): 59–75.

21. See Gaspar van Baerle, *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia et alibi gestarum* (Amsterdam: Ioannis Blaeu, 1647); *The History of Brazil under the Governorship of Count Johan Maurits of Nassau, 1636–1644*, trans. Blanche T. van Berckel-Ebeling Koning (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011); C. R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695–1750: Growing Pains of a Colonial Society* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1962); and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550–1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

22. Araújo, "A redenção dos pardos," 432; Bezerra and Almeida, "Pompa e circunstância," 121–22.

23. See Júnia Ferreira Furtado, "Return as a Religious Mission: The Voyage to Dahomey Made by the Brazilian Mulatto Catholic Priests Cipriano Pires Sardinha and Vicente Ferreira Pires (1796–1798)," in *Religious Transformations in the Early Modern Americas*, ed. Stephanie Kirk and Rivett Sarah (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 180–204.

24. Bulhões, *Summa triunfal*, 16.

Figure 2. Statue of St. Gançalo Garcia in Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe, Olinda, Pernambuco, nineteenth century. Courtesy of Andrea Simone Breto Dias.

The Pardo *Irmãos'* Deployment of Material Culture

According to Bulhões, the festivities for Blessed Gonçalo actually started on May 1, 1745; however, the most important days were Saturday, September 12—when Jaboatão preached the sermon during the vigil mass for the would-be saint's feast the next day—and Sunday, September 13. While prayerful devotion dominated the vigil, lavish displays and performances would fill the feast day celebration. *Summa triunfal* shows that eminent *irmãos*, including members of the governing board (*juizes*) of each *irmandade*, took leadership roles in the festivities, sponsoring particular aspects of the festival, especially the most expensive, which were the five triumphal carts and seventeen allegorical floats (table 1).

Table 1. Carts and floats		
ORDER	CART/FLOAT	SPONSOR
1	Allegory of Asia on a horse	Captain Mariano de Almeida
2	Allegory of a horse (<i>cavalo</i>)	Brother Antônio Nunes
3	Allegory of happiness on a horse	Brother Manuel Alves
4	Allegory of meditation (<i>meditação</i>)	Brother Antonio Pereira de Andrade
5	Allegory of zeal (<i>zelo</i>)	Brother José Duarte
6	Allegory of prayer (<i>pregação</i>)	Brother Francisco Talles de Meneses
7	Allegory of martyrdom (<i>martyrio</i>)	Brother Felipe Santiago Melo
8	Allegory of worthiness (<i>merecimento</i>)	Dona Seraphina Bezerra
9	Allegory of reward (<i>prêmio</i>)	Brother Manuel Barreto
10	Allegory of the seraphic religion (<i>religião seráfica</i>)	Brother Francisco de Freitas Silva

25. See Araújo, "A redenção dos pardos," 427–38.

26. Araújo, "A redenção dos pardos," 432; Bezerra and Almeida, "'Pompa e circunstância,'" 121–22.

27. See Patricia A. Mulvey, "Black Lay Brotherhoods: A History" (PhD thesis, City University of New York, 1976)."

11	Allegory of Jupiter	Brother Manuel Alves Cardoso
12	Allegory of perfect love (<i>amor perfeito</i>)	Brother Francisco Cardoso
13	Cart of Nossa Senhora do Bom Parto	<i>Irmãos</i> of Nossa Senhora do Bom Parto
14	Allegory of the fear of God (<i>temor de Deus</i>)	Brother Lino Pereira Façanha
15	Cart of Nossa Senhora da Soledade	<i>Irmãos</i> of Nossa Senhora da Soledade
16	Allegory of divine love (<i>amor divino</i>)	Brother Luis dos Santos Barreto
17	Cart of the Infant Jesus	<i>Irmãos</i> of Santíssimo Sacramento
18	Allegory of the knowledge of God (<i>conhecimento de Deus</i>)	Brother Antônio N.
19	Cart in the form of a ship (<i>navio</i>)	<i>Irmãos</i> of Nossa Senhora do Livramento
20	Allegory of charity (<i>caridade</i>)	Brother Antônio Quaresma
21	Allegory of faith (<i>fé</i>)	Sister Maria Aranha
22	Cart of martyrdom (<i>martyrio</i>)	<i>Irmãos</i> Manuel dos Santos, Francisco Correa, João Lobato, and Caetano Alemão

SOURCE: Bulhões, *Summa triunfal*, 24–48. Compare with Bezerra and Almeida, "'Pompa e circunstância,'" 126.

Not all the carts or floats were sponsored by Livramento or Guadalupe *irmãos*. As the table shows, the allegorical floats of Asia and worthiness (*merecimento*) were sponsored by two prominent white Pernambucan *mazombos*, Captain Mariano de Almeida and Dona Seraphina Bezerra, respectively. Perhaps Captain Almeida and Dona Bezerra were white benefactors of Nossa Senhora do Livramento, as white benefactors were not an uncommon aspect of Afro-Brazilian *irmandades*.²⁷ Also, the white confraternity of the Santíssimo Sacramento (Most Blessed Sacrament, i.e., the Eucharist) sponsored the cart with the Infant Jesus (*Menino Jesus*). This was probably due to the importance of Eucharistic brotherhoods in the early modern Iberian world but may also suggest that there were good relations between this *irmamdade* and that of Livramento. Another white confraternity, Nossa Senhora da Soledade (Our Lady of Solitude), also participated in the festivities. This underscores the pardo *irmãos'* capacity to attract white *irmandades* to their celebration; certainly the white brotherhoods, like the pardos, did not want to miss the opportunity to publicly express their devotion. Additionally, another pardo brotherhood, Nossa Senhora do Bom Parto (Our Lady of Good Birth), was allowed to include a cart with a statue of their patron. This underscores the kind of group cohesion the *irmãos* fostered.

The allegorical floats represented the religious ideals of the *irmãos* and colonial society as a whole: meditation, zeal, prayer, martyrdom, worthiness, perfect love, fear of God, divine love, knowledge of God, charity, and faith. These allegories symbolized both Blessed Gonçalo's life and the ideals toward which the *irmãos* and colonial society should aspire. Faith, meditation, and prayer were a path to knowledge of the divine. Zeal led to accepting martyrdom, which led to the reward of divine love in paradise. Charity fulfilled the gospel's mandate to feed the hungry, quench the thirsty, shelter the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the imprisoned, which was also rewarded with God's divine love.²⁸ Finally, Asia symbolized Blessed Gonçalo's birthplace.

28. See Matthew 25: 35–36.

29. Emanuel Araújo, *A mão afro-brasileira: significado da contribuição artística e histórica* (São Paulo: Técnica Nacional de Engenharia, 1988); Edward J. Sullivan, "The Black Hand: Notes on the African Presence in the Visual Arts of Brazil and the Caribbean," in *The Arts in Latin America, 1492-1820*, ed. Joseph J. Rishel and Suzanne L. Stratton-Pruitt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 39–56.

30. See Dias, "Os incômodos da cor parda," 21; and Bezerra and Almeida, "'Pompa e circunstância,'" 121–22.

31. See Germain Bazin, *A arquitetura religiosa barroca no Brasil*, vol. 2, trans. Glória Lúcia Nunes (original 1956–8; Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 1983), 168–94 and Miguel A. Valerio, "Architects of Their Own Humanity: Race, Devotion, and Artistic Agency in Afro-Brazilian Confraternal Churches in Eighteenth-Century Salvador and Ouro Preto," *Colonial Latin American Review* 30, no. 2 (2021):

The pardo *irmãos'* use of triumphal carts and allegorical floats, whose use dated back to Renaissance pageantry, constituted a poignant statement of their economic prowess. As sponsors, rather than performers, the pardo *irmãos* financed the construction and display of the carts and floats. They thus presented themselves as the festival's patrons. As such, they must have hired local artists and artisans and even artists and artisans from other parts of Brazil to build and decorate their floats. These artists and artisans may have come from all of Brazil's ethnoracial groups. However, as Emanuel Araújo and others have demonstrated, Afro-Brazilians of all ethnicities dominated the arts in eighteenth-century Brazil.²⁹ Indeed, some of colonial Brazil's best-known artists identified or have been identified as mulatos or pardos. Among these were colonial Brazil's best-known architect and sculptor, the Afro-mineiro mulato Antônio Francisco Lisboa (1730/8–1814), better known as Aleijadinho; the Afro-carioca pardo Valentim de Fonseca e Silva (known as Mestre Valentim, c. 1745–1813; fig. 3), an important urban planner of Rio; and the freed Afro-Bahian mulato painter José Teophilo de Jesus (c. 1758–1847), who painted a well-known series of allegories of the four continents. While these artists were too young or had not been born in 1745, their Pernambucan predecessors, such as Vasconcelos, may have been among those who built and decorated these floats, for, as Araújo and others point out, the first Portuguese missionaries and architects, sculptors, and artists to settle in Brazil began teaching their trades to Afrodescendants from the earliest years of Portuguese colonization. This would not be out of character, as well-known artists and artisans often took on such commissions.³⁰ Moreover, the pardo *irmãos*, like their Afro-Brazilian counterparts elsewhere, had employed the region's best-known artists and architects (some of whom, like Vasconcelos, may have been *irmãos* themselves) in the building and decoration of their churches.³¹ Finally, even though Bulhões does not state so, the sponsoring *irmãos* may have even hired local individuals, especially black Afro-Brazilians, to pull the carts and floats through the streets of Recife.

Figure 3. João Francisco Muzzi (c. 1730–1802), Mestre Valentim hands over the plan for the Monastery of Nossa Senhora do Parto to Viceroy Luís de Vasconcelos e Sousa. *Joyful and Speedy Reconstruction of Nossa Senhora do Parto*, Rio de Janeiro, 1789, detail. Courtesy of the Museu Castro Maya, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

32. Iván Bautista de Valda, *Solenes fiestas que celebró Valencia a la Imaculada Concepción* (Valencia: Gerónimo Vilagrasa, 1663).

33. See Carolyn S. Dean, "Copied Carts: Spanish Prints and Colonial Peruvian Paintings," *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 1 (1996): 98–110.

34. See Affonso Ávila, ed., *Resíduos seiscentistas em Minas: textos do século do ouro e as projeções do mundo barroco* (Belo Horizonte: Secretaria de Estado de Cultura de Minas Gerais, 2006). Raymond Williams theorized that every culture has some residue of the preceding epoch; see *Marxism and Literature* (1977; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

35. See Boxer, *Golden Age of Brazil*.

36. Dom João V was hoping to obtain certain privileges for the Catholic church in Portugal: see Luca A. Chracas, *Embaixada de D. Rodrigo Anes de Sá, Almeida e Meneses Marquês de Fontes enviada por D. João V ao Papa Clemente XI, Roma, 8 de Julho de 1716* (Lisbon: Museu Nacional dos Coches, 1996).

37. Antônio Francisco Soares, *Relação dos Magníficos carros, que se fizerão de arquitetura, perspectiva; e fogos: os quais, se executaram Por Ordem Do Illust^{mo}., E. Excel^{mo}. Senhor Luis de Vasconcelos Capitão General de Mar e Terra, e Vice Rei dos Estados do Brazil, nas Festividades dos Despozorios Dos Serenissimos Senhores Infantes De Portugal Nesta*

Although Bulhões, who mainly focuses on the moralistic message of each cart or float, does not offer much detail about what the carts and floats looked like, a large collection of images of baroque carts and floats, the Spaniard Iván Bautista de Valda's *Solenes fiestas que celebró Valencia a la Imaculada Concepción* (1663), may give us some notion.³² Not only does Valda's book contain the largest number of images of baroque carts and floats, but it is known to have circulated in the Americas.³³ This comparative approach, moreover, is warranted by the fact that, as scholars have demonstrated and the Recife festival shows, eighteenth-century Brazil retained much from the high baroque period of the previous century.³⁴ Indeed, the eighteenth century has long been seen as Brazil's "golden age."³⁵

It is also warranted by the fact that the extant images of Brazilian carts and floats show carts and floats that may have been too lavish to match those Bulhõe enumerates (fig. 4). Likewise, three Portuguese examples, from Dom João V's (r. 1706–50) 1716 embassy to Pope Clement XI (r. 1700–21), are too extravagant (fig. 5).³⁶ Indeed, these sumptuous carriages (representing the four oceans, Lisbon, discovery and navigation) were designed to display the wealth of Portugal's golden age and are therefore very luxurious, perhaps more luxurious than the material conditions of coloniality, such as lack of access to certain materials and tools, would have allowed the pardos to fashion their own carts and floats. In 1786, moreover, Antônio Francisco Soares (dates unknown) designed several allegorical floats for Rio's celebration of the double nuptials of the Portuguese *infantes* Dom João VI (1767–1826) and Dona Mariana (1768–88; fig. 4).³⁷ Like Dom João V's 1716 ambassadorial carts, from whose artistic conventions Soares indubitably drew, Soares's own carts may have been far more lavish than those used in Recife in 1745, as suggested above. Soares's carts mirrored Dom João V's 1716 Vatican carts because they were commissioned by the viceroy, Luís de Vasconcelos e Sousa (r. 1778–90), who could import the finest materials for the carts.

Figure 4. Antônio Francisco Soares, *Carro das cavalhadas*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1786. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Cidade Capital do Rio de Janeiro

Em 2 de fevereiro de 1786

Feita na Praça mais Lustroza e

publica do Paseio desta cidade

Executados, e ideados pelo O

minimo subdito Antonio Fran^{co}

Soares Ajudante agregado,

Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil,

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1786). See

Maria Clementina Pereira Cunha,

"Veneza, África, Babel: leituras

republicanas, tradições colonais

e imagens do carnaval carioca,"

in Festa, cultura e sociabilidade,

1:55–74; Ecos da folia: uma

história social do carnaval carioca

entre 1880 e 1920 (São Paulo:

Companhia das Letras, 2001),

277–303; José Ramos Tinhorão,

As festas no Brasil colonial (São

Paulo: Editora 43, 2000), 105–16.

38. On Valencia's black

brotherhood, see Debra

Blumenthal, "La Casa dels

Negres: Black African Solidarity

in Late Medieval Valencia," in

Black Africans in Renaissance

Europe, ed. T. F. Earle and K. J.

P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge

Figure 5. Allegorical carriage of the oceans, Lisbon, 1716. Courtesy of the Museu Nacional dos Coches, Lisbon, Portugal.

Valda's book, on the other hand, depicts less lavish carts and floats that may resonate more faithfully with those used by the pardo *irmãos* in their festival. And as in Recife's festival, many of the carts and floats of Valencia's festival were sponsored by the brotherhoods in the city, especially professional brotherhoods. (There was a black brotherhood in Valencia, but Valda makes no mention of it in his book.³⁸) For example, like the pardos' main cart, which carried their statue of Nossa Senhora do Livramento, many of the carts and floats in Valencia were shaped like ships (fig. 6). Other carts and floats in Valda's book may have resembled those that carried other statues of the Virgin Mary in Recife (fig. 7).

Figure 6. Unknown artist, "Carro de los esparteros y alpargateros," Iván Bautista de Valda, *Solenes fiestas que celebró Valencia a la Imaculada Concepción* (1663), fol. 485. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain.

Figure 7. Unknown artist, "Carro de los calceteros," Iván Bautista de Valda, *Solenes fiestas que celebró Valencia a la Imaculada Concepción* (1663), fol. 499. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain.

Even though the pardos' carts and floats may have been humbler, again, given the material limitations of the colonial environment, they may have resembled those depicted by the anonymous artists in Valda's book. Yet they may have been just as impressive, as the material conditions of coloniality often resulted in creative, ingenious artistic works, as the other Brazilian festivals that included Afro-Brazilians cited here show. Finally, as in Valencia and modern parades, the pardo sponsors may have ridden on the carts and floats as honored guests of the festivities, showcasing their high socioeconomic status.

As these examples suggest, Recife's carts and floats would have been built of wood and possibly gilded with gold leaves and bejeweled with precious and semiprecious stones or glass. As such, they would have been designed by artists or artisans and built by the latter, especially pardo carpenters. And like them, they would have been set on visible or invisible wheels. For example, in 1610 an Afro-Mexican brotherhood participated in Mexico City's celebration of the beatification of Ignatius of Loyola with float shaped like a castle, set on invisible wheels:

As the procession came out of the Cathedral, it was met by forty-four canons that were fired next to a beautiful seven-yard-high castle, of well-feigned masonry, that the black creoles of a confraternity they have in the convent of the most glorious Father Saint Dominic, urged by those fathers (who, on this occasion, labored to favor us), as well as by the devotion which the same blacks have for Our Holy Father Ignatius, offered this performance. This castle, which was set on four invisible wheels, was drawn by twenty-four savages dressed in long animal hide from head to toe, and who were wearing masks, according to their custom.³⁹

As this example shows, festival floats were not static, but rather lavish displays on wheels. As the float also demonstrates, festival floats were feats of engineering that required great technical skill; besides being aesthetically appealing, a good float needed to be functional, sturdy, neither too light nor too heavy. Like this float, however, Recife's played with shapes, and the artists and

University Press, 2005), 225–46.

39. Anonymous, "Relación de las fiestas insignes que en la Ciudad de México se hicieron en la dedicación de la iglesia de la Casa Profesa y beatificación de Nuestro Santo Padre Ignacio" (c. 1610), in *Corónica y historia religiosa de la provincia de la Compañía de Jesús en Nueva España*, ed. Pérez de Rivas (c. 1600–50; first printed edition:

artisans who designed them may have let their imagination run wild, as baroque artists often did. Think, for example, of Albrecht Dürer's fanciful *Great Triumphal Car* (1512; fig. 8) or Soares's own (fig. 4).

Figure 8. Albrecht Dürer, *Great Triumphal Car*, 1512. Courtesy of the National Art Gallery, Washington, DC.

Another Brazilian example further illustrates what the pardos' carts and floats may have looked like. On January 19, 1729, the heir apparent of the Portuguese throne, then Prince José (the future king Dom José I), married the Spanish *infanta* Mariana Victoria. Like many cities in the Portuguese Empire, Salvador marked the occasion with great public rejoicing. As on other occasions, Salvador's black brotherhoods participated in the festivities. An account of the celebrations, José Ferreira de Matos's *Diário histórico das celebrações* (1729), describes (though briefly) the float of the city's premier black Rosary brotherhood. The brotherhood, in fact, occupied first place in the procession:

The first one was the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary at the Portas do Carmo. It was composed of two dances and five confraternities, which they have in this mother church, with their standards, crosses, and other insignias. In last place came a float covered with cloth, with border and gold laces. On a throne was the Image of Our Lady of the Rosary, bejeweled with many diamonds.⁴⁰

Mexico City: Sagrado Corazón,
1896), 1: 250.

40. José Ferreira de Matos, *Diário histórico das celebrações, que na Cidade da Bahia se fizeram em ação de graças pelos felicíssimos casamentos dos Sereníssimos Senhores Príncipes de Portugal, e Castela* [1729], in *O movimento academicista no Brasil, 1641-1820/22*, ed. José Aderaldo

Although Bulhões does not describe the appearance or material makeup of the pardos' carts and floats in detail, they may have resembled this typical baroque float. The pardos' may have included textile material as well. This in turn would signal two important facts. First, that both blacks and pardos used the material culture of early modern festivals to stake claims to socio-symbolic prestige. In other words, both groups availed themselves of the material culture of the dominant group. Second, that as much as the pardos may have wished to be seen as superior to their black counterparts, the former did not behave much differently than the latter.

Another example, this time from Portugal, further hints at what Recife's carts and floats may have looked like. On May 27, 1731, the city of Braga, in northern Portugal, celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi, one of Catholicism's most solemn feast days. As elsewhere in the Iberian world, the celebrations in the city's streets included, among its seventeen performances, a *bayle dos negros*, or "black dance." This was not a dance in our modern sense, but rather a dance as understood in early modernity, that is, a quasi-theatrical performance, similar to what we see in carnival today. "Black dances" took the form of early modern Afrodescendants' best-known performative genre: festive kings and queens. According to their status, the king and queen were to parade on a float:

Castello, vol. 3, pt. 1 (São Paulo: Conselho Estadual de Cultura, 1969), 159.

41. Anonymous, *Breve extracto do augustissimo triunfo, que a augusta Braga prepara em obsequio do Santissimo Sacramento* (Coimbra: Colegio das Artes da Companhia de Jesu, 1731), f. 2.

42. See Peter Fryer, *Rhythms of Resistance: African Musical Heritage in Brazil* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 67; and Lisa Voigt, *Spectacular Wealth: The Festivals of Colonial South American Mining Towns* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 130.

43. See Fryer, *Rhythms of Resistance*, 72–73; Voigt, *Spectacular Wealth*, 130. The European dances were *folias de Espanha* (Spanish foils), *langra*, and *calhas-trazes* (shut-up-and-bring-on), neither of which I could find much information.

44. On black Afro-Brazilian festive culture, see Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary*; and Marina Mello e Souza, *Reis negros no Brasil escravista: história da festa de coroação de Rei Congo* (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2006).

45. See Kiddy, *Blacks of the*

There will be an elegant float drawn by two lions, there will be two eagles in the front of the float, and on the back there will be a cave, inside which will travel the king and queen. On top of the cave there will be a parasol held by a black person dressed in African custom. There will be many birds on top of the float, such as macaw, parrot, as well as monkeys. The dwarfs will ride on the lions, and finally everything will be done according to their custom.⁴¹

While it is unlikely that the pardos staged a similar representation of Africa, as they sought to portray themselves more as Europeans than Africans, their carts and float may have included some elements of the blacks' float, such as the lion and the eagle, which were symbols not only of empire but also of two evangelists: Matthew and John, respectively.

The table which we included earlier only mentions the triumphal carts and allegorical floats, but the September 13 festivities also included five European-, African-, and American-derived dances. The mixture of dance elements and costumes meant that pardo identity was not only constructed by Frei Jaboatão but also performed by the *irmãos* through material culture. One dance, *talheres*, for example, was already associated with mulatto women, who normally performed them.⁴² Another, *quicumbis*, though not performed by Amerindians themselves, imitated them.⁴³ These two dances, moreover, illustrate how much the pardos borrowed from their black forebears and counterparts, whose festive traditions were well established in Brazil by this time.⁴⁴ *Talheres* and *quicumbis*, for example, normally formed part of the well-known *rei do Congo* (Congo king) performance staged by black Afro-Brazilian brotherhoods on the feast of their patron, the Virgin of Rosary, on the first Sunday in October, from the earliest days of the colonial period.⁴⁵ Although Bulhões does not state who performed the dances, while the triumphal carts and allegorical floats were sponsored by powerful *irmãos*, the dances may have been choreographed and performed by poorer, less powerful *irmãos*, especially *irmãs* (female brotherhood members), from among whose ranks only one, Maria Aranha, had sponsored an allegorical float. Pardo tailors and seamstresses may have designed and sewn colorful costumes for the dancers.

As the dances suggest, music was another central component of the festivities. Indeed, Janaína dos Santos Bezerra (possibly a descendant of Dona Seraphina Bezerra) and Suely Creusa Cordeiro de Almeida have identified Trindade, his brother, Botelho, and their father, Pessoa, as contributors to the music of the festivities.⁴⁶ Given these musicians' generic range between sacred and popular music, the music in the festival likewise must have ranged from the classical to the popular. Moreover, other musicians, possibly many of them pardos *irmãos*, may have contributed other music, as they may have done with the dances. Again, pardo tailors and seamstresses may have designed and sewn costumes for these musicians, while pardo artisans may have constructed some of the instruments the musicians played in the festivities.

Whatever the appearance, material composition, provenance, or authorship of the festival's floats, carts, costumes, and musical instruments, the pardos' dazzling display of their economic abilities (cloaked under devotion to Blessed Gonçalo) demonstrates how they engaged with the material culture of early modern festivals to try to redefine their socio-symbolic and ethnoracial status by impressing their host society. This in turn illustrates how subaltern subjects in colonial Latin American and elsewhere, regardless of ethnoracial makeup, used the material culture of early modern festivals to make potent statements about their subjectivities, or understanding of

Rosary; and Souza, *Reis negros*.

46. Bezerra and Almeida, "Pompa e circunstância," 121–22.

47. See Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary*; Souza, *Reis negros*; Fromont, "Dancing for the King of Congo"; and Jeroen Dewulf, *From the Kingdom of Kongo to Congo Square: Kongo Dances and the Origins of the Mardi Gras Indians* (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2017).

48. See Voigt, *Spectacular Wealth*, 121–50; Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*; Borges, *Escravos e libertos*; Dewulf, *From the Kingdom of Kongo to Congo Square*, 65–104; and Silvia Hunold Lara, *Fragmentos setecentistas escravidão, cultura e poder na América portuguesa* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2007), 173–218.

49. According to an Augustinian friar, Frei Agostinho de Santa Maria, the pardo began expressing a predilection for Our Lady of Guadalupe during the Iberian Union (1580–1640), when a statue of the Virgin was taken to Salvador's Sé (Cathedral) in 1628: Santa Maria, *Santário mariano*, 9: 6.

50. Catherine Vincent, *Les confréries médiévales dans le royaume de France: XIII^e-XV^e siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994); Jonathan Scott Perry, *The Roman Collegia: The Modern Evolution of an Ancient Concept* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

51. See Blumenthal, "La Casa dels Negres"; Fracchia, "Black but Human," 48–55; Isidro Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los*

their personhood, sense of belonging, and beliefs, as well as their economic and artistic agency. In other words, the pardos' festival demonstrates how they sought to use the material culture of festivals to redefine how they were seen. Recife's festival thus marks early modern festivals as engines of socio-symbolic change.

This becomes clear if we investigate why the pardos chose a festival to make their statement. Were there not better avenues available to them? Scholars of early modern festivals know that the answer is no, for in early modernity, festivals were the most common form of public action used by all social groups, from kings to slaves, to make such statements.⁴⁷ Festivals had the potential to reach wide, varied audiences as they transformed early modern cities into vibrant, convivial spaces. Though ephemeral and not always memorialized, festivals made lasting impacts on the cultures from which they arose. The pardos no doubt hoped that their dazzling material display would impress upon all, from the highest to the lowest, that they deserved to be counted among Pernambuco's most distinguished citizens. Additionally, the festival shows how subaltern subjects could use material culture normally deployed by the dominant group to make parallel statements about their desired high socioeconomic status; that is, the festival demonstrates how subaltern groups could manipulate dominant culture to their advantage, artfully availing themselves of the language of socio-symbolic prestige. While this tendency among black Brazilians has been extensively studied, it has received less attention among mulato/pardo/(Afro)mestiço Brazilians.⁴⁸

A Saint of "Their Own Color and Accident"

As did their black forebears and counterparts, who had numerous brotherhoods in colonial Brazil, the pardo saw brotherhoods, saints, and festivals as the best way to showcase their economic advancement and thereby build a new reputation for their ethnic group. In this spirit, some thirty or forty years before the festival, as they ascended Pernambuco's social ladder, the pardos of Recife and Olinda each established their own brotherhood: Livramento in Recife and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Olinda. The pardos of Recife, who were free, as were those of Olinda, named their brotherhood in honor of Our Lady of Emancipation. *Livramento*, which refers to the act of freeing or setting free, was perhaps thought to be a more appropriate moniker for a brotherhood of freedmen. Or perhaps the freedom they sought in this name was from their ethnic group's negative image. *Livramento* here, then, has a sacro-social meaning, that is, both real and spiritual freedom, the faith that frees and the faith of the free. Those of Olinda chose a distinctly American Marian advocacy, perhaps to mark their Americanness.⁴⁹

Confraternities (also known as brotherhoods [*irmandades*] and sodalities) emerged in the Middle Ages as a Christian resuscitation of Roman *collegia*, which were civic-religious associations of select membership.⁵⁰ In medieval Christendom, confraternities became the principal site of lay devotion. But they were also social institutions of kinship and mutual aid. Blacks in late medieval Europe, especially in the Iberian Mediterranean, recognized the instrumentality of brotherhoods for ameliorating their diasporic precarity and joined or founded sodalities starting in the mid-fifteenth century.⁵¹

Following this Iberian precedent, blacks in Brazil joined and started brotherhoods from the earliest years of colonization in the 1550s.⁵² It may indeed be said that nowhere else in the world

negros de Sevilla: etnicidad, poder y sociedad en 600 años de historia (Seville: University of Seville, 1997); and Jorge Fonseca, *Religião e liberdade: os negros nas irmandades e confrarias portuguesas (séculos XV à XIX)* (Lisbon: Humus, 2016).

52. See Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*; Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary*; Borges, *Escravos e libertos*; Mulvey, "Black Lay Brotherhoods of Colonial Brazil"; "Slave Confraternities in Brazil: Their Role in Colonial Society," *The Americas* 39, no. 1 (1982): 39–68; and "Black Brothers and Sisters: Membership in the Black Lay Brotherhoods of Colonial Brazil," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 17, no. 2 (1980): 253–79.

53. Mulvey, "Black Lay Brotherhoods of Colonial Brazil," 304.

54. See Viana, *O idioma da mestiçagem*.

55. *Ibid.*, 97–139.

56. José Ramón Jouve Martín, "Public Ceremonies and Mulatto Identity in Viceregal Lima: A Colonial Reenactment of the Fall of Troy (1631)," *Colonial Latin American Review* 16, no. 2 (2007): 180.

57. On Afro-Brazilian confraternal churches, see Valerio, "Architects of Their Own Humanity."

58. Bulhões, *Summa triunfal*, 16.

59. Damião, *Serman de S. Gonsalo Garcia*, 4.

did sodalities become so central to Afrodescendants' lives as they did in Brazil, becoming their main provider of health care, funerals, and other essential services. This is borne out by the fact that colonial Brazil was home to largest number of black sodalities: 165 compared to 69 in the whole of Spanish America.⁵³ Thus, in establishing brotherhoods, Brazilian mulatos/pardos/(Afro)mestiços were literally following their parents' example (table 2).⁵⁴ However, as Larissa Viana has noted, Brazilian mulatos/pardos/(Afro)mestiços would use brotherhoods to position themselves as superior to their black parents.⁵⁵ And this was one of the principal aims of the festival. José Ramón Jouve Martín has explored this tendency in Lima vis-à-vis a 1631 reenactment of the fall of Troy that a group of Peruvian mulattos staged for the city's celebration of the birth of Prince Balthasar Carlos (1629–46). As he observes, "their staging of the fall of Troy was intimately linked to their attempt to differentiate themselves from the much larger black population."⁵⁶ Recife's festival had a parallel aim.

Table 2. Mulato/pardo/(Afro)mestiço Brazilian brotherhoods, 1700–1800	
NAME	CITY, CAPITAINCY
São Gonçalo	Salvador, Bahia
Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe	Salvador, Bahia
Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe	Recife, Pernambuco
São José dos Bom-Casados	Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais
Bom Jesus da Cruz	Salvador, Salvador
Minimos do Cordão de São Francisco	Mariana, Minas Gerais
São Francisco dos pardos do Cordão	Sabara, Minas Gerais
Nossa Senhora do Livramento	Recife
Ordem Terceira de São Francisco de Paula	Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais
Nossa Senhora da Conceição	Goyanna, São Paulo
Nossa Senhora das Mercês	São João del Rei, Minas Gerais
Nossa Senhora da Conceição	Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro
Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte	São João del Rei, Minas Gerais
Nossa Senhora Mãe de Deus	Paraíba, Pernambuco
Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte	São Paulo, São Paulo
Nossa Senhora da Conceição	Cochoeira, Bahia
Nossa Senhora do Amparo	Iheos, Bahia
Nossa Senhora do Amparo	Minas de Paracabu, Pernambuco
Nossa Senhora do Livramento	Iguraçu, Pernambuco
SOURCE: Mulvey, "Black Lay Brotherhoods of Colonial Brazil," 289–303.	

Also like their black counterparts, each brotherhood built its own ornate church (figs. 9 and 10).⁵⁷ So, in 1745, the pardos of Pernambuco had everything they needed to showcase their wealth except one thing: a certified "saint of their own color and accident," that is, ethnicity.⁵⁸ The Franciscan missionaries in Pernambuco, who had been trying to get a cult to Blessed Gonçalo started for decades, saw this as an opportunity to promote the mixed-race martyr beatified on September 14, 1627, by Pope Urban VIII. Consequently, both parties enthusiastically embraced the idea of a grand celebration in honor of Blessed Gonçalo. Yet one problem remained: since Blessed Gonçalo had been born of a Portuguese father and an East Indian mother, his pardeness was not a given, and was in fact contested, as noted above.⁵⁹ Therefore, proving Blessed

Gonçalo's pardiness became a major task of the festivities. This task, as noted above, was taken up by Frei Jaboatão, who would preach on Saturday, September 12, the eve of the would-be-saint's feast.

Figure 9. Nossa Senhora do Livramento (18th century), Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. Photo courtesy of Recife Department of Tourism and Leisure..

Figure 10. Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe (18th century), Olinda, Pernambuco, Brazil. Photo courtesy of the Prefeitura de Olinda.

To “prove” that Blessed Gonçalo was indeed a pardo, Frei Jaboatão argued, through an expansive review of natural history, that East Indians were black. According to Jaboatão, East Indians “are

60. Jabotão, "Discurso histórico," 181.

61. Ibid., 186. On race in classical antiquity, see Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

62. Jabotão, "Discurso histórico," 179.

63. Ibid., 183–88; Alonso de Sandoval, *Un trato sobre la esclavitud*, ed. Enriqueta Vila Vilar (1627; repr., Madrid: Alianza, 1987), 60–61. Jabotão seems to have consulted the 1647 edition, which was simply titled *De instauranda Aethiopum salute*.

64. Anna More, "From Lines to Networks: Carl Schmitt's *Nomos* and the Early Atlantic System," *Política Común* 5 (2014), <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/pc/12322227.0005.004?view=text;rgn=main>.

65. Jabotão, "Discurso histórico," 211–12.

66. José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica*, ed. Didier T. Jaén (1925; repr., Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

67. Garcilaso de la Vega, *Primera parte de los comentarios reales* (Lisbon: Pedro Crasbeeck, 1614), fol. 255r. English from Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas, and General History of Peru*, vol. 1, trans. Harold V. Livermore (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 607; translation modified.

68. See Juliet Hooker, *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and*

blacker" (*mais negros*) than Africans.⁶⁰ One of Frei Jabotão's sources was Herodotus (fifth century BCE), who according to Frei Jabotão

Says that in India, which is in Asia, there are also blacks, or Ethiopians, as in Africa, who only differ [East Indians from Africans] in the sound of their voice [i.e., language] and their hair, because those from Asia, or from India, have loose, straight hair, and those from Africa, very curly and twisted; it thus becomes clear, and understood, that those from India, albeit they do not all have twisted hair, do not cease from strictly being black.⁶¹

Thus, Blessed Gonçalo, as the son of a Portuguese father and an East Indian mother, was a pardo, or as Frei Jabotão puts it, "partakes of both whiteness and blackness."⁶² The equation between Africans and East Indians may have been a ready-made one in Brazil, where the native population had been called *negros da terra* (slaves, but literally "blacks of the land"). But Frei Jabotão based his argument on those of the Spanish Jesuit missionary Alonso de Sandoval (1576–1652), who had proposed that East Indians were also black in his treatise on Africans, *Naturaleza, policía sagrada y profana, costumbres y ritos, disciplina y catecismo evangélico de todos los etíopes o De instauranda Aethiopum salute*, coincidentally first published the same year Blessed Gonçalo was beatified (1627) in Seville.⁶³ As Anna More has noted, Sandoval articulated "the first rudimentary vision of the global south based on racial phenotype," which Jabotão used to support his argument, homogenizing the Southern Hemisphere.⁶⁴

Not only did Frei Jabotão posit that Blessed Gonçalo was a pardo, he also proposed that pardos were superior to both blacks and whites: "pardo skin is more perfect than black and white skin, and it is indubitably so, for mixtures, as the philosophers know, are more perfect than the parts from which they are formed, because they partake of the perfections of these parts."⁶⁵ So, not only did Frei Jabotão give the pardos a saint "of their own color and accident" (*sua mesma cor, e acidente*), he also vaunted their ethnicity as the superior one, preceding the Mexican writer José Vasconcelos, who in 1925 would propose racial mixture as humanity's desired destiny, by nearly two hundred years.⁶⁶ Frei Jabotão's praise of pardons was highly significant for the pardos of Recife, who lived in a world where miscegenation was viewed in negative terms, as glossed above. In Frei Jabotão's sermon, miscegenation not only became positive, but salvific; miscegenation saved them because it distilled in them the perfections of their parents. This was a unique view of racial mixture, which, to the best of my knowledge, can only be found in the half-Indian, half-Spanish Peruvian mestizo Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616), who spent most of his life in Spain and only boasted of his ethnicity ("because it [i.e., the ethnonym mestizo] was used by our parents, as well as on account of its meaning, I call myself by it in public and am proud of it" [*por ser nombre impuesto por nuestros padres, y por su significacion me lo llamo a boca llena, y me honro de el*]), yet did not put forth a theory of pardo superiority like Frei Jabotão.⁶⁷ Thus, Frei Jabotão foreshadowed the mestizo futurism Vasconcelos and other Latin American intellectuals and politicians would champion in the twentieth century.⁶⁸ The future Frei Jabotão preached about may have taken shape, however briefly, the next day, with a grand parade of carts and floats, when the pardos showcased their newfound sacro-social prestige.

Through his sermon Frei Jabotão helped the pardo lay claim to a saint and avail themselves of preconceived notions of sacro-social prestige on which to build a new reputation for their ethnic group. At the same time, Frei Jabotão helped advanced the Franciscans' desire to promote Blessed Gonçalo, perhaps taking away a little from the Jesuits' all-encompassing

Vasconcelos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 155–94.

69. On the Jesuits in colonial Brazil, see Serafim Leite, *História da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, 10 vols. (Lisbon: Portugalia, 1938–50); and Paulo de Assunção, Maria Helena Simões Paes, and Iris Kantor, *Os jesuítas no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Atual, 2003).

70. Damião, *Serman de S. Gonsalo Garcia*, 4. Like most Franciscans at the time, Damião was not only in constant contact with his confreres in Recife, but was also stationed there for some time, perhaps bringing the devotion to Blessed Gonçalo to Bahia. See Augusto Victorino Alves Sacramento Blake, *Diccionario bibliográfico brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1898), 4: 184.

71. Ibid.

72. See Araújo, “A redenção dos pardos”; and Bezerra and Almeida, “Pompa e circunstância.”

73. Curiously enough, in 1763, the year Rio became the capital of colonial Brazil, a pardo group chose to stage a traditionally black performance, *rei do Congo* (Congo king)—considered to have originated in Africa and called by the author of that festival’s account “muito no uso daquelles africanos” (much in the manner of those Africans)—for the city’s celebration of the birth of the new heir to the Portuguese throne, José Francisco (1761–88). Anonymous, *Epanafora festiva, ou relação sumaria das festas, com que na cidade do Rio de Janeiro, capital do Brasil, se*

grasp on Brazil’s population.⁶⁹ In order to do this, Frei Jaboatão not only created a new category of blackness but raised pardoness from the lowest to the highest esteem. But this praise of pardos was not limited to Pernambuco. This event’s effect on the whole of Brazil is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that the pardos of Bahia, Salvador, colonial Brazil’s capital at the time, also adopted Blessed Gonçalo as their patron saint and offered a grand celebration in his honor exactly one year after Recife’s, of which only the sermon, published (in Lisbon in 1747) by the pardo brotherhood itself, survives. It may have been the publication of this sermon that moved the Franciscans to publish *Summa triunfal* in 1753. Curiously enough, however, in that sermon, preached by the also Franciscan Frei José dos Santos Cosme e Damião (1694–c. 1760), Frei Damião took the opposite route as Frei Jaboatão, calling Blessed Gonçalo “mulato or mestiço” instead of pardo, knowing full well that it could “scandalize” the pardos’ ears.⁷⁰ According to Frei Damião,

Saint Gonçalo Garcia was the son of a Catholic father and a gentile mother, of a European father and an Asian mother. His father was Portuguese, from Guimarães, and his mother Indian, from Vasai. For this reason to him genuinely belong, with full philosophical rigor, not just the beautiful title of neophyte, but also the specific predicate, or attribute of (and although I do not want to scandalize your ears, let me say it once) mulato, or mestiço, even if it [this ethnic group] is held in ill-repute by some.⁷¹

While Frei Damião has been criticized for refusing to use the term *pardo*, he was trying to raise mulatos to the same esteem Frei Jaboatão had tried to raise pardos.⁷² Frei Damião just chose not to play the identity politics game Recife’s pardos had chosen to play. Fully aware of mulatos’ negative image, like Frei Jaboatão, Frei Damião too chose to redeem them through Blessed Gonçalo, but as “mulatos or mestiços.”⁷³ The pardos, for their part, articulated this redemption through the deployment of festival material culture.

Conclusion

Recife’s pardo festival is a good example of the ways subaltern groups used devotion and public festivals to stake a claim to inclusion in colonial Brazil. In 1745 the pardos of Recife and Olinda availed themselves of Blessed Gonçalo to showcase their economic advancement. Having accumulated a good deal of capital, they wanted to translate their newfound status into cultural capital in order to redefine their social standing. In order to do so, they chose to play a game of identity politics through which they sought to separate themselves from the negative image associated with mulatos. For this end they sought a saint “of their own color and accident,” which the Franciscans were only too happy to supply. In so doing, they availed themselves of preconceived notions of sainthood, hoping it would give their ethnic group a positive image. Finally, the dances the pardos performed (or at least sponsored) on the festival’s main day constituted a true mirror of their ethnoracial mixture. Yet by sponsoring, instead of performing themselves, the festivals’ main attraction, eminent, powerful pardo *irmãos* positioned themselves on a high socio-symbolic plane, one respected by colonial elites, who did the same thing in colonial festivals as Captain Almeida and Dona Bezerra did in the pardos’ festival.

In sum, then, Recife’s lavish 1745 festival was an important moment for Pernambuco’s urban pardo population, one that may have marked the culmination of their self-(re)fashioning efforts. The material culture of early modern festivals was central to the ways the pardo irmãos

*celebrou o feliz nascimento do
Serenissimo Principe da Beira,
Nosso Senhor* (Lisbon: Miguel
Rodrigues, 1763), 27. See Voigt,
Spectacular Wealth, 128–29;
Fromont, “Dancing for the King of
Congo.”

articulated these claims. Yet, as proposed here, their festival has broader implications for studying how subaltern subjects engaged with the material culture of early modern festive culture to style potent public statements about their subjectivities, economic and artistic agency, group identity, and sense of belonging to the larger community.

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AUTHOR BIO

Miguel A. Valerio earned his doctorate from The Ohio State University with a dissertation on the festive practices of black confraternities in the early modern Iberian Atlantic. He is currently assistant professor of Spanish at Washington University in St. Louis. His research has appeared in *Afro-Hispanic Review*, *Confraternitas*, *Slavery & Abolition*, *Colonial Latin American Review*, and the edited volume *Afro-Catholic Festivals in the Americas* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), edited by Cécile Fromont. He is currently completing his first book, *Sovereign Joy: Afro-Mexican Kings and Queens, 1539-1640*, which studies the performance of festive black kings and queens in Mexico City's first century of Spanish colonization.

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