

“Civilizing” Rio de Janeiro

Four Centuries of Conquest through Architecture

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Architecture and planning in colonial Latin America have been much more than a cultural reflection of the ruling Iberian elite: they have served as fundamental tools in the physical and ideological conquest of the Americas, the principal means by which a “conquest culture” was created in the New World. The Spanish contribution in this regard is well known. One thinks immediately of Philip II’s “Laws of the Indies” grid plan and the forms of the *plaza mayor* as both the epitome of conquest through urban design and the emblem of that conquest. The case of Portuguese America also demonstrates an understanding of the role played by architecture and urbanization in the colonizing project. The Portuguese strategy in colonial Brazil was characterized by a close adherence to the architectural styles of the mother country, an empirical approach to urban planning problems, and an increasing interest in the formal grandeur and monumental aesthetics of metropolitan classicism and the “exclusive” social ideology accompanying it. These qualities are clearly illustrated in the colonial architecture of Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil from 1763 to 1960, which emerged supreme as the Luso-Brazilian city with the greatest aspirations to cultural grandeur and European “civilization.” The Portuguese effort to “civilize” the city during the colonial period would culminate in a unique situation: when Napoleon’s armies invaded Portugal in 1807, the Portuguese royal family abandoned Lisbon to establish its new imperial court in Rio. The colony had become the metropolis, the New World showcase of Portuguese civilization and all that went with it.

The architecture produced in Portugal and Portuguese America after 1500 was strongly conditioned by the nation’s maritime experience and the problems of colonial empire. Foremost among these was Portugal’s economic and demographic decline, after its brief “golden age” of exploration, into semicolonial status as an economic and political vassal of more powerful European nations: Spain, Italy, Great Britain, and France. The Late-Gothic Manueline style of the age of discovery, with its elaborate sculptural ornamentation, some of which is inspired by nautical forms, has often been thought of as the first truly national Portuguese style. In fact, foreign artists played an important role in its creation.¹ The post-Manueline return to the simpler geometric and classicizing forms of Portuguese “Plain” architecture, inspired in



FIG. 1 Filippo Terzi, facade of São Vicente de Fora, Lisbon, ca. 1590.

part by Italian Renaissance, especially Serlian, formulas, had less to do with aesthetic preferences than with the need to create an architecture that would be economically more feasible than the Manueline, as George Kubler has pointed out.² It is no coincidence that the emergence of this “Plain Style” between 1530 and 1560 occurred in the context of the increasing financial strains associated with the establishment and maintenance of an overseas empire. The simplified cubic masses, cellular structures, and unadorned, white-washed surfaces that Kubler identifies as the major elements of the style were thus in part the offspring of Portuguese colonialism. Colonial Brazil, the conquest of which placed a premium on military control and strict economy, would provide a realm for experimentation in even plainer, more austere



FIG. 2 João Frederico Ludovice, facade of the basilica at Mafra, near Lisbon, begun 1717.

forms, as the exteriors of Rio's first churches would show.

Architecture in Lisbon and colonial Rio during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries continued to reflect the mother country's formidable imperial problem: how to conquer and control an American empire and advertise Lusitanian imperial hegemony in the face of Portugal's own pseudocolonial dependency. Between 1580 and 1640, Portugal and its colonies had been annexed by Hapsburg Spain. This Spanish period in Lisbon architecture was typified by the church of São Vicente de Fora (*fig. 1*), the work of Philip II's Italian architect and military engineer Filippo Terzi, who brought from Madrid the heavy Spanish style of Juan de Herrera that was derived from Italian late Renaissance and Mannerist formulas. After the rise of the Bragança dynasty in 1640, seventeenth-century Italian models became more influential in and around Lisbon, as illustrated by João Frederico Ludovice's heavy Baroque design for the basilica at Mafra (*fig. 2*), which recalls Saint Peter's in Rome. Mafra, the masterpiece of the Portuguese Italianate Baroque, or Joanine Style of King João V (1706–1750), was erected with capital extracted from Brazilian mines.

While the metropolis gloried in the costly monumental Baroque of Mafra, economic stringency and the prevalence of military engineers working as architects in the colony meant that Plain architecture prevailed in Rio until well into the eighteenth century.³ It is in the design, materials, and siting of Rio's early churches and monasteries that the ideology of Portuguese "civilization" in Brazil may, perhaps, best be observed. Their whitewashed facades were designed in the

austere, flattened mode of the Plain Style, with rectilinear compositions of masonry pilasters that announce the simplified rectangular plan of the spaces within. The surfaces of the interiors, however, were articulated with elaborate decoration in *talha dourada* (gilt wood) and painted stucco ornament. The marked stylistic contrast between the rich interiors and the plain exteriors of these buildings reflected the profound social contrasts between those who were invited to participate in Portuguese colonial society and those who were left out. The siting of these first stone churches on the secure hilltops overlooking Guanabara Bay not only accentuated the buildings' monumentality and inaccessibility, but also emphasized the commanding position these institutions held in the "civilization" of the colony.

The Portuguese effort to settle and "civilize" Rio beginning in 1565 was sponsored by an alliance of the aristocratic Sá family and Jesuit missionaries. Heavily dependent on the Jesuits in its fight to oust French traders and the native Tamoio Indians from Guanabara Bay, the crown rewarded the order not only with substantial land grants on which it later established its own sugar plantations, but also with a select hilltop site on which to build its college and church. In 1567 the Portuguese settlement was moved for defense reasons from a beach-front encampment to Castello Hill, Rio's "acropolis." There the Portuguese erected their first sacred fortresses in stone and lime (*fig. 3, no. 1*): the imposing church of the Jesuit College (1585–90) (*fig. 4*), and São Sebastião (*fig. 5*), which also served as Rio's first cathedral.⁴ The plain facade of São Sebastião (ca. 1600), while typical of Portuguese Renaissance composition, also communicates something of the austere monumentality and inaccessible massiveness of medieval fortress architecture. In early colonial Rio, a fortified architecture of solid stone and clean white finishes became the first important means to assert Portuguese dominion over the tropical environment and over the hut-dwelling, neolithic Tamoios and their French allies.

Although the Portuguese often used *taipa* and *pau-a-pique* construction methods (walls made of wooden stake frames with pressed mud and clay) and thatched roofing in Brazil's domestic architecture, as well as in many civil and religious buildings in the provinces, Rio's Europeanizers preferred a solid architecture of *alvenaria* (crushed rock composite), *tijolo cozido* (baked brick), or *cantaria* (masonry), with whitewashed finishes of *cal* (lime).⁵ Thus, they distinguished their religious and governmental buildings from more temporary and vernacular structures and proclaimed the permanence of their institutions to both their European imperial competitors and the "savage" populations of Brazil. In the hills around Guanabara Bay, masonry of excellent quality was quarried by slaves, and during the second half of the eighteenth century, stone cutting was a flourishing art in Rio. The Jesuits had initiated the importation of masonry from Portugal for the construction of their churches and colleges, a practice that would become com-

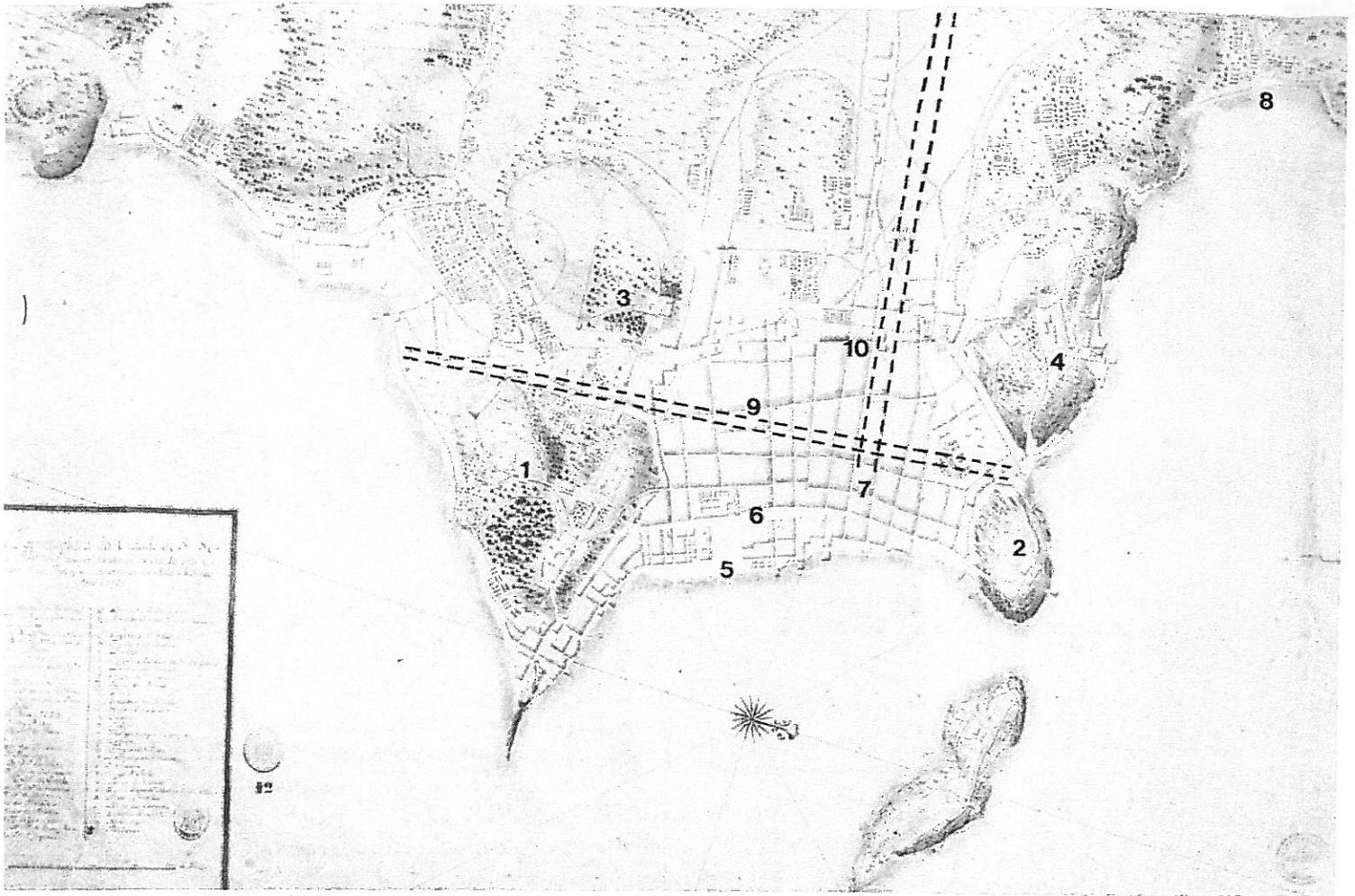


FIG. 3 André Vaz Figueira, *Plan of Rio de Janeiro in 1750*. Mapoteca do Itamaraty, Rio de Janeiro.

Key: 1. Castello Hill, Jesuit College and São Sebastião (first cathedral); 2. São Bento Hill, Benedictine church and monastery; 3. Santo Antônio Hill, Franciscan friary; 4. Conceição Hill, Conceição Fort and Bishop's Palace; 5. Largo do Paço (formerly Largo do Carmo), Viceroy's Palace, Carmelite convent, and main fountain; 6. Rua Direita (principal commercial thoroughfare in colonial Rio); 7. Church of the Candelária (original chapel, 17th century; Roscio facade, 1775–1811); 8. Valongo (slave depot and market established by the viceroy Lavradio); 9. Dashed lines showing the approximate future location of the Avenida Central (1902–6), today Avenida Rio Branco; 10. Dashed lines showing the approximate future location of the Avenida Presidente Vargas (1943–45).

mon after 1750 with the use of Portuguese *litoz* marble for the portals and trimmings of Rio's most important buildings, civil and religious. Buildings were even shipped in their entirety from Portugal, with numbered pieces and detailed plans for construction.⁶ The Portuguese apparently saw the Brazilians as cultural toddlers who needed erector sets with simple instructions.

The rigid formulas of Renaissance rectilinearity, the insistence on European models and materials, and the clean, almost antiseptic whitewashed finishes that characterized the churches and monastic complexes of colonial Rio reflected an equally rigid social ideology based on the exclusion of the "infected races" and "undesirable" elements of the colonial populace. As Stuart B. Schwartz has shown, it was in the religious orders that the rivalry between Brazilians (*filhos da terra*) and Portuguese (*filhos da fora*) first openly emerged: the First Constitutions of the Order of St. Benedict in Brazil of 1596 and the laws added to the Benedictine code in 1600 and 1602 sought to prohibit mestiços (those of mixed race) from entering the order, reserving entrance for individuals of "noble" birth.⁷ Similar attitudes prevailed among the Car-

melites, who arrived in 1590, and the Franciscans, who arrived in 1592, as well as among the Jesuits. Even Brazilian-born whites habitually experienced discrimination in trying to gain admission to and promotions within the religious houses.⁸

The effort of the Portuguese to limit colonial access to European "high" society was fostered by their conquest of the city's hills and the creation on each of Lusitanian sacred precincts controlled by a religious order or a fortress: the Jesuits and the cathedral on Castello Hill; the Benedictines on São Bento; and the Franciscans on Santo Antônio. The Bishop's Palace and a military fortress commanded the fourth hill, the Morro da Conceicao (*fig. 3, nos. 1–4*). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Portuguese occupation of the hills and the gradual urbanization of the central area lying between them meant that the swampy, unprotected coastal fringes of the outlying *várzea* (lowlands) were left for the hovels of the African slaves and Indians.

The physical and social marginalization of the non-Portuguese populations that began with the Lusitanian conquest of the best hill sites was intensified during the eigh-

teenth century by the viceroys, for whom Portuguese mixing with the “inferior” races held out little hope for progress. Rio’s third viceroy, the French-trained marquis of Lavradio (ruled 1769–79), typified the Portuguese attitude. He complained that the colony was “boring, lacking in culture and comforts, and its people [were] slothful, careless, and prone to excessive vanity.” He was not alone in despising Brazil’s African and *mestiço* population.⁹ Typical of Lavradio’s European “improvements” was the warehousing of in-transit slaves in the swampy Valongo district, which was at that time outside the urban zone of Rio (*fig. 3, no. 8*). In Lavradio’s day, naked slaves were habitually dragged from the waterfront and paraded past the viceregal palace and down the Rua Direita, colonial Rio’s main commercial street (*fig. 3, nos. 5 and 6*). Removed now from public view to distant Valongo, the atrocities of the slave trade would be less likely to offend “civilized” European sensibilities. One of the major aspects of Portuguese reform was this belief in the power of facades and European appearances to modernize society. While the viceroys improved their facades, the “infected races” were housed in an infested swamp: Valongo became Rio’s first planned *favela* (shantytown).¹⁰

Lavradio’s warehousing of the slaves and the growing tensions between the *filhos da terra* and the *filhos da fora* came about in the context of the increased importation of

Africans into Brazil, a process that accompanied the metropole’s efforts to intensify the exploitation of colonial plantations and mines and impose greater control over the flow of Brazilian resources, particularly gold, into Lisbon. But Brazilian gold not expended on Mafra in the eighteenth century tended to end up in British coffers, at least in the view of the marquis of Pombal, Sebastião José Carvalho e Mello, the prime minister of King José I from 1750 to 1777. Pombal, who became virtual dictator of Portuguese affairs after the great Lisbon earthquake of 1755, saw the improvement of his country’s commercial position relative to Great Britain as a major priority of imperial modernization. Portugal’s long dependence on Great Britain had been intensified by the Methuen Treaty (1706), which reinforced the trade of Portuguese wine for British cloth that had been negotiated in Oliver Cromwell’s time. This arrangement had the effect of confirming Portugal’s traditional role as a supplier of agrarian-based products and consumer of imported manufactures, a role usually reserved for the colonies of European empires.¹¹ Pombal sought to modernize a “colonial” Portugal and decrease her commercial dependence on England through an ambitious program of imperial reform that depended on a more rational and efficient exploitation of Brazil.

On the eve of the disastrous Lisbon earthquake, Portuguese commercial wealth was controlled by a small inter-



FIG. 4 Jesuit church on Castello Hill, Rio de Janeiro, ca. 1585–90, destroyed 1922.



FIG. 5 Facade of the Church of São Sebastião, Castello Hill, Rio de Janeiro, ca. 1600, destroyed 1922.

national elite that was increasingly dependent on Brazil for its economic power. The interests of the "national" mercantile bourgeoisie in Lisbon and Oporto seemed hopelessly intertwined with those of creditors, middlemen, and itinerant traders from the wealthier and technically superior nation-states to the north. The Portuguese crown, whose waning central authority had been greatly weakened by the extravagant spending of João V, the pious patron of Mafra, struggled to maintain control over a vast empire that was of ever increasing interest to more competitive imperial powers. By mid-century, and especially after Lisbon had been devastated by the earthquake, it had become clear to Great Britain and France as well as to Portugal's modernizers that the country's wealth and future lay in Brazil. Some saw clearly that the road to this wealthy future passed directly through Rio. As Kenneth Maxwell put it, "so acute was the reliance on Brazil that D. Luis da Cunha foresaw the transfer of the court to Rio de Janeiro [where] the King would take the title 'Emperor of the West' and appoint a viceroy to rule in Lisbon."¹²

The perception of Brazil's growing importance for Portuguese prosperity, coupled with Portugal's weakening historical position vis-à-vis northern European powers, gave rise in the mid-eighteenth century to an imperial modernization mentality that contrasted Portugal's own semicolonial condition to the enlightened rationalism of European court society. The reconstruction of Lisbon after the earthquake was an opportunity for Pombal to prove that Portuguese society was not backward but modern. This point he sought to make through architecture and civic design: through the Portuguese adaptation, in the design of the river-front Praça do Comércio and the grid-plan of the new Lisbon, of the French *place royale* and the engineering tradition of Vauban's *urbanisme militaire*.¹³ The rationalism of military engineering and the need for economic stringency were the disciplining forces evident in both the colony and Lisbon after the earthquake.

As Lisbon struggled painstakingly to rebuild itself, in part with capital extracted from Brazil, royal engineers trained in the Lisbon Academia Militar and foreign mercenaries in the service of Brazil's Portuguese viceroys sought to apply the same engineering and classicizing formulas to the "improvement" of viceregal Rio. Lavradio's warehousing of the slaves was only one example of this project of Europeanization. Improvements to Rio's waterfront and port infrastructure, in particular, were seen as vital to increasing Lisbon's imperial control over the colony and, in particular, over the flow of mineral resources out of Rio, the only port of legal access to the mines, and into Lisbon. But Rio's eighteenth-century improvements were more than infrastructural. The architectural Europeanization of Brazil, and especially of its capital city, was seen as an important means to advertise Portuguese imperial hegemony to European competitors and to the Brazilians. If the colony looked modern

and under control, then somehow it was. The austere "Pombaline" military engineering style—itsself a hybrid product of Portugal's own colonial dependence on European styles of the past, and a sort of updated Plain Style adapted to the post-earthquake needs for economy and the imperial demand for classicizing monumentality—provided both an aesthetic and an ideological solution for Rio's modernization.

The viceroys were not alone in trying to Europeanize Rio in conformity with the Pombaline system of enlightened rationalism and military-mercantile reform. During the eighteenth century, lay confraternities such as the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament also sought to improve their parish churches and civilize their parishioners in conformity with the "system practised in all the most polished courts of Europe."¹⁴ One key monument illustrates particularly well the Portuguese elite's attempt to Europeanize Rio in conformity with this "system." The new facade of the seventeenth-century church of the Candelária (*fig. 6*), begun in 1775 by the Portuguese military engineer João Francisco Roscio, exemplifies the sophisticated Luso-European taste of late colonial Portuguese society in Brazil. The style of the facade is remarkable for synthesizing the flattened mode of Plain architecture and the decorative grace of the Portuguese Baroque and Rococo with the compositional severity of the military engineer trained in Pombaline Lisbon. The Candelária is the premier example in Rio of the Pombaline style of imperial Portuguese military engineering that emerged in Lisbon and Rio after the earthquake. At the heart of the style are the disciplining instruction of the Lisbon Academia Militar, where Roscio was trained, and a new interest in European neoclassicizing monumentality.

While the military engineer's rational discipline based on rectilinearity, symmetry, proportion, and the standard application of the classical Orders was the essence of the "polished" European "system" in architecture, the Candelária facade clearly shows that the Pombaline style was also marked by a lingering devotion to traditional Portuguese decoration. But here the elaborate carvings of the Baroque and Rococo have been reduced to the gently swinging lines of the curvilinear window hoods and the masonry panels that surmount and echo them. These curving lines are now strongly subordinated to the rigidly rectilinear system of paired pilasters (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian) that are superimposed in the standard classical fashion. The facade reveals a more articulate—if still somewhat abstracted—rendering of the Orders than was usual in previous Rio architecture, especially in the stylized capitals that recall the standardized details of the Lisbon Pombaline.

What is new about the Candelária facade within its colonial setting, beyond its provocative and harmonious visual synthesis, is its heightened monumentality, its stricter adherence to classical canons, and the greater metropolitan character that results. Instead of using the imported white *lìoz* marble of the Lisbon churches, however, Roscio has



FIG. 6 João Francisco Roscio, facade of the Church of Nossa Senhora da Candelária, Rio de Janeiro, 1775–1811.



FIG. 7 Candelária facade, showing the impact of the midday sun.

trimmed his planiform facade with locally quarried masonry to create a masterpiece of the Rio Pombaline, one that recalls, at the same time, the characteristically Portuguese reliance on the coloristic contrast between whitewashed finishes and dark masonry trims to give buildings their decorative effect. By adapting a standard European formula in the tradition of Ludovice's Mafra, Sant'Agnese in Rome, or Saint Paul's in London (that of the monumental screen facade with twin towers framing an impressive dome), and by rendering the theme with greater attention to classical details and proportions but without the loss of Portuguese decorative character, Roscio created a work that reflects the uniquely Portuguese Europeanization of Rio's architecture. Because of the play of the strong Rio sun on the protruding cornice lines (fig. 7), the Candelária facade even appears to have straight lintels like those on the neoclassical front of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. But the Candelária is a facade that, like the rest of the Portuguese empire in the eighteenth century, looked from a distance to be more modern than it really was. It is thus a fitting visual metaphor for Portugal's aspirations in Brazil.

The role in the civilizational conquest of Brazil to be played by such monumental and rectilinear Pombaline facades was suggested by Luis Antônio de Souza, who wrote in 1768:

One of the things that the most cultivated nations are accustomed to take care of in the present time is the symmetry and harmony of buildings which are newly arising in cities and towns, so that from their appearance will result not only public comfort, but also the pleasure with which populations are

*made most appealing and competent, immediately knowing from the good order, with which they are disposed, the lawfulness and culture of their inhabitants.*¹⁵

Symmetry and harmony in building facades produced citizens who were not only appealing and cultured, but also law-abiding and competent. Pombaline elites endowed architecture with the power to cultivate Rio's citizens—to make them conform with European ways and transform the colonial town into a cultured metropolis worthy of comparison with the “most polished courts of Europe.” Such facades thus served not only as advertisements to the colonials of Portuguese progress and “civilization,” but also as projections of the kind of modernity the imperial elite sought for themselves. Implicit in this understanding of the power of facades, however, was the Portuguese desire to reform the presumably uncultured population of Rio without permitting its members entry into society or access to power. For behind the sophistication and polish of the urban *retábulo* that is the Candelária facade lay the exclusive ideology of the patrons, the lay brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament: membership in the order, which in the late eighteenth century was composed mainly of military elites in the viceroy's service, was open only to Portuguese.

The completion of the Candelária's glistening white dome between 1860 and 1878 (fig. 8) illustrates clearly the way in which the Luso-Brazilian elite embraced the exclusive taste and ideology of the academic classical tradition in nineteenth-century Rio. In their preoccupation with emulating the form and monumentality of the grandest domes of

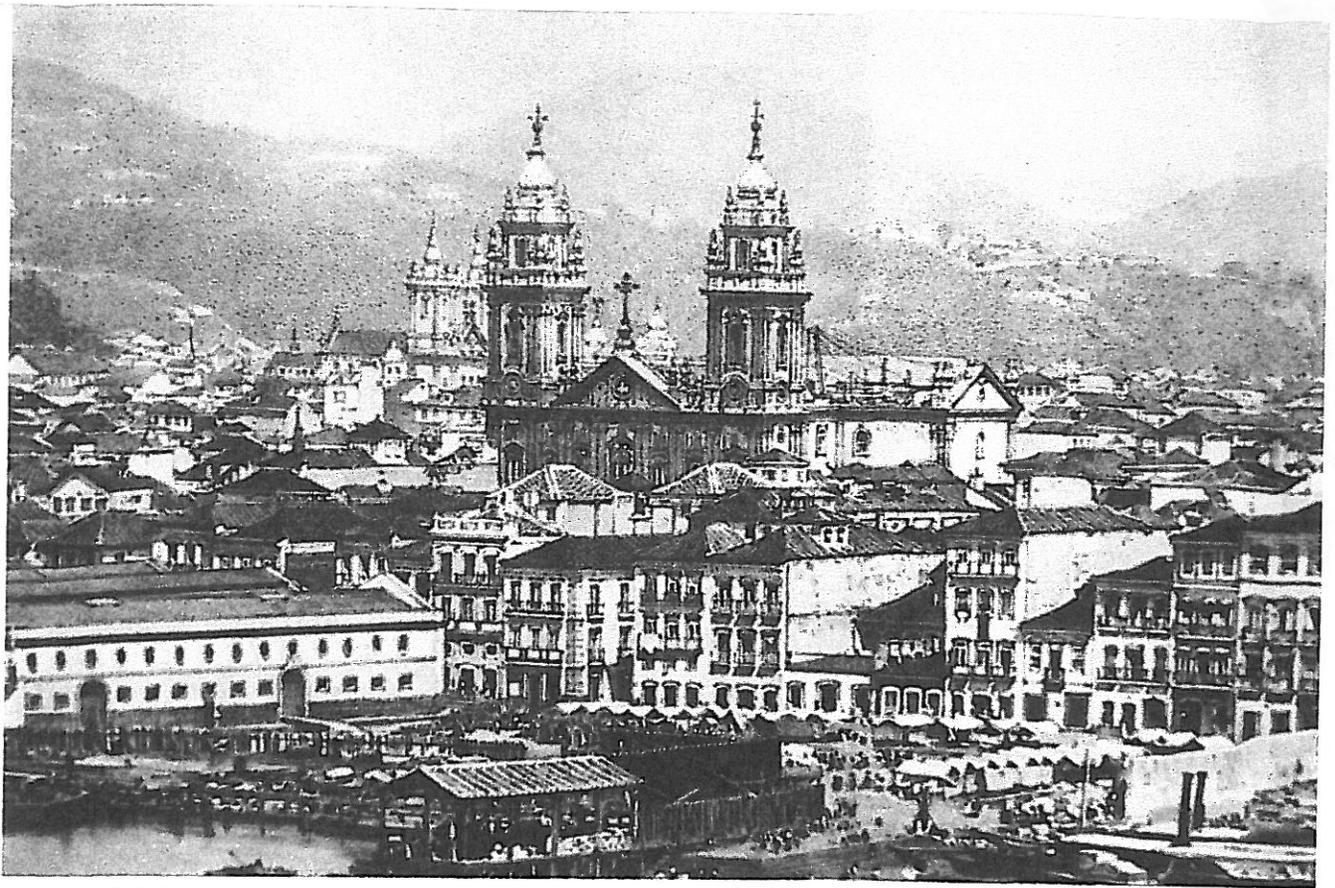


FIG. 8 Central Rio de Janeiro and the Candelária church before construction of the dome, as seen from the port, ca. 1855 (lithograph by Jacotet, reproduced in Charles Ribbeyrolles, *Brasil pittoresco*, 1859, pl. 4).

Europe, the designers, a team of Brazilian engineers working with foreign consultants, exemplified the aesthetic norms of Rio's Escola de Belas Artes and the technical expertise of the Escola Politécnica, Rio's version of the Paris Ecole Polytechnique.¹⁶ The dome's parabolic form, double-shelled structure, and imported materials (Portuguese *mármore lioz* for the outer shell and hollow brick from France for the inner shell) were all intended to impress foreigners with the elegance and metropolitan character of the monument. Casting the church as "the most grandiose temple of the capital," "the principal monument of the imperial court," and "the foremost temple of South America, perhaps even of the two Americas," the patrons compared it to the great churches of Europe built in the metropolitan classical tradition: Saint Peter's in Rome, Saint Paul's in London, and the Invalides, Sainte-Geneviève, and Saint-Augustin in Paris.¹⁷

The Candelária's patrons presented the church as "proof of the brotherhood's association with the civilizing ideas of the apostles of progress."¹⁸ Even the interiors, painted in the academic classical style rather than in colonial *talha* or *azulejo*, reflected the new priorities.¹⁹ Brazil's national contribution was being defined in terms of the ability of its architects and artists (and its elite) to participate in a metropolitan system of progress and cultural meaning. The church was to be seen as above all "a national monument," and in its construction its patrons "spared no sacrifices to make the majestic temple a glory to the brotherhood, a school of the arts for Brazil, and for the foreigner a palpable example that artistic progress in this country is not an empty word."²⁰ On

July 9, 1870, the placement of the last of the Candelária's dome statues, an allegory of Hope in the academic classical style, was duly observed not by the bishop but by the Brazilian emperor Dom Pedro II himself. That he is represented in the choir painting alongside the founders of the church proclaims his position as the "Official Protector of the Brotherhood," the new patron saint of this monument to imperial progress. Thus was brought to completion this most grandiose "white man's house" among Carioca churches.²¹

Even before the completion of the dome (*fig. 9*), the "civilized" message was successfully received by at least one foreign tourist, Charles Ribbeyrolles, who in observing the church from the port, noted: "Of all [Rio's] quasi-monuments the one that strikes me as the most notable for its architectural forms and majestic towers is the Candelária . . . it is a pity that it is walled up on a narrow street that robs it of all light."²² That civilization, culture, and good taste, and with them urban development priorities, were increasingly defined by the perspectives and needs of foreigners, by metropolitans like Ribbeyrolles, is itself an important gauge of the success of the civilizational conquest of Rio. What the authorities sought was a museum showcase of gleaming white jewels, an urbanistic exhibition of European elite culture and values. But as Ribbeyrolles suggests, these jewels were not yet easily accessible to those who mattered most. The gallery had become too cluttered with insignificant artifacts. More exhibition space and better lighting were needed. What remained was to open up Rio physically, to provide better outside access, circulation, and vistas so that the monuments

could be more readily seen, their messages more clearly appreciated by the metropolitan audience for whom they were intended. In striving to provide Rio's urban fabric with more spacious settings for its major monuments and more efficient circulation into and out of the city, the city's planners realized that some of the less important artifacts in the exhibition would have to be eliminated. This was the exclusive ideology that informed the massive Haussmann-inspired demolitions and the creation of Parisian-style boulevards in the early twentieth century (fig. 10).

The public health and beautification campaigns of 1902–6, sponsored by Rio's Paris-trained engineer and prefect Francisco de Pereira Passos, were also carried out in the name of civilization. "Rio civilizes itself" was the rallying call.²³ The focus was on creating monumental spaces for the circulation of traffic and for the exhibition of architectural gems like the Candelária and the Teatro Municipal, Rio's new temple to the secular god of *haute culture* and the Carioca answer to Charles Garnier's Paris Opera House.²⁴ In the "Haussmanization" of Rio, imitation of Parisian buildings and spaces was conceived as the best means to attract foreign capital. By providing a familiar image to international elites, Rio's reformers hoped to convince them that Brazil was a serious and deserving participant in the European economic order. This universalist ideology was vividly expressed by Rodrigues Alves, the president of the republic, who wrote of Rio: "Its restoration, in the eyes of the world, will be the start of a new life, the beginning of work in the far-reaching areas of a country which has land for all cultures, climates for all peoples, investment potential for all sorts of capital."²⁵ Architecture became a means to buying into the European capitalist system and advertising Brazilian progress.

FIG. 9 Gustavo Waenheldt and others, dome of the Candelária, 1870.

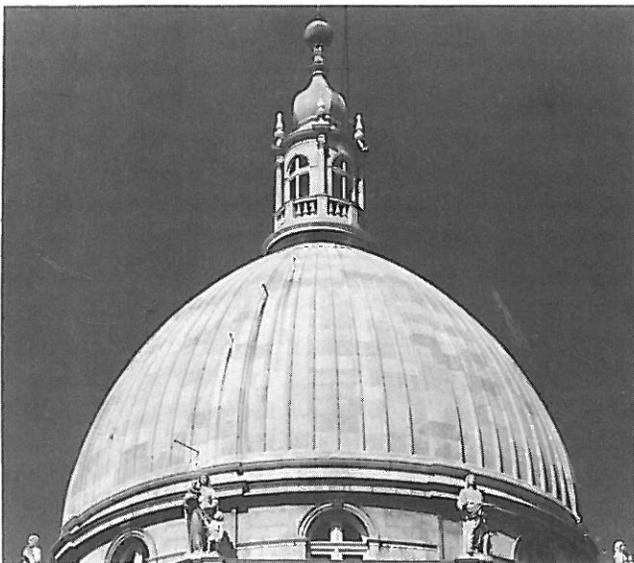


FIG. 10 View of the Avenida Presidente Vargas from the dome of the Candelária.

This campaign went hand in hand with the obliteration of much of Rio's so-called primitive or colonial urban fabric and a vicious drive against the "backward" (especially African) elements of Brazilian culture.²⁶ In the creation of the two major examples of Parisian-style boulevards, the intersecting Avenidas Central and Presidente Vargas, Rio gained a Parisian *grande croisée* and a monumental urban setting for the Candelária, which sits on the intersection. But in the demolitions that made way for these symbols of progress and civilization, much of Rio's colonial urban fabric was wiped out: 1,225 buildings, including several major colonial churches, were gone forever. What Rio and the Brazilians lost in this victory of Europeanization is a story that cannot be recounted here. But it is a story no less important than the one just told if it can call attention to those who have been bypassed on the painful road to Rio's civilization. As anyone familiar with the city's vibrant Afro-Brazilian and *mestiço* society can tell you, for the vast majority of Cariocas in the hillside *favelas* or on the streets of modern Rio, the city's Europeanization may have been at best just a huge white facade.

Notes

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1. The two major innovators of the style were the Frenchman Jacques Boitac and the Spaniard Juan de Castilho. Famous examples of the Manueline in Lisbon are the Tower of Belem by Francisco de Arruda (1515–20) and the Jerónimos Monastery, designed

by Boitac and Castilho between 1502 and 1519. See Robert C. Smith, *The Art of Portugal, 1500–1800* (New York: Meredith Press, 1968), figs. 3–7.

2. George Kubler, *Portuguese Plain Architecture: Between Spices and Diamonds, 1521–1706* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1972); and Helmut Wohl, "Recent Studies in Portuguese Post-Medieval Architecture," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 34 (1975): 67–73.

3. The curvilinear Baroque designs and oval plans of Borrominesque character that were prevalent in the architecture of Aleijadinho in Minas Gerais were the exception in Rio. Two notable eighteenth-century examples of centrally planned churches with more plastically conceived designs in the Italian Baroque tradition were Nossa Senhora da Glória do Outeiro and São Pedro dos Clérigos. The latter was destroyed in 1942 to make way for the Avenida Presidente Vargas.

4. Both churches were destroyed with the rest of Castello Hill as part of an urban modernization project carried out in conjunction with the celebration of Brazil's centennial in 1922.

5. On building materials used by the Portuguese in colonial Brazil, see Germain Bazin, *Arquitetura religiosa barroca no Brasil*, 2 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: Record, n.d.), 1: 54–64.

6. A good example is the church of the Conceição da Praia in the old colonial capital, Salvador, Bahia. See Robert C. Smith, "Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia and the Joanine Style in Brazil," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 14 (1956): 16–23.

7. Stuart B. Schwarz, "The Formation of a Colonial Identity in Brazil," in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 41–44.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, 25.

10. Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, trans. by Samuel Putman of *Casa Grande e Senzala* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 170–71, n. 4. The peripheralization of Africans to Valongo was supposed to solve Rio's slave problem, but instead created a new one: the specter of a festering African city within the ever expanding city limits. Whites began to fear that Rio would be besieged by Valongo's inhabitants, who were not always passive or submissive. See H. J. do Carmo Netto, *O Intendente Aragão* (Rio de Janeiro, 1913), 27. As the colonizers gradually conquered and improved the *varzea* for commercial development, Rio's poor were increasingly forced out of the low-lying districts and into the infamous hillside *favelas* that ring the city today. This pattern became especially evident after the freeing of the slaves in 1888 and was intensified by industrialization and by the beautification projects of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

11. Kenneth Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750–1808* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

12. *Ibid.*, 6.

13. The Praça do Comércio and the *baixa* plan are illustrated in J.-A. França, *Une Ville des lumières: La Lisbonne de Pombal* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1965), pls. XI, XXII.

14. The words are those of Cunha Menezes, the governor of Goiás, quoted in Roberta Marx Delson, "Planners and Reformers: Urban Architects of Late Eighteenth-Century Brazil," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 10, no. 1 (1976): 48, n. 23.

15. Words of the governor of São Paulo, Luiz Antônio de Souza, quoted in Delson, "Planners and Reformers," 45–46, n. 15.

16. French Beaux-Arts academicism was introduced in Rio in 1816 by the French Artistic Mission led by the painter Lebreton and the Empire-Style architect Grandjean de Montigny. Disturbed by the backwardness of their new imperial capital, the Portuguese royal family invited the Mission to supervise the Europeanization of Rio's culture and image. Grandjean founded the imperial academy of fine arts in 1826 and

trained a new generation of Brazilian architects. The polytechnic school grew out of the old military academy on the Largo do São Francisco. The essential data and chronology of the Candelária dome, which reflects the impact of both traditions, are given in A. de Paula Freitas, "Memória histórica sobre a fundação e construção da igreja da Candelária," appendix to *Relatório apresentado a Irmandade do Santíssimo Sacramento da Freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Candelária*, July 31, 1898 (Rio de Janeiro, 1898). Among the engineers and designers involved in the project were Xavier de Veiga, Ferro Cardoso, André Rebouças, Villa Nova de Machado, and the German civil engineer Gustavo Waehneltd.

17. The evolution of the dome's design is clarified by the yearly building reports published in Rio by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament during the second half of the nineteenth century. See *Relatório*, 1863, 22; 1870, 48; 1879, 38–39; 1881, 45; 1870, 39; 1877, 4; 1863, 22–23; 1870, 42, 49; and 1873, 24 (translations mine).

18. *Ibid.*, 1883, 53.

19. The Candelária ceiling paintings are by the Brazilian artist João Zeferino da Costa. See Arnaldo Machado, *Aspectos da marinha na obra do João Zeferino da Costa* (Rio de Janeiro: privately printed, 1984).

20. *Relatório*, 1883, 53.

21. The term "Carioca," an Indian word meaning "white man's house," refers today to a resident of Rio (when used as a noun) and to the style of Rio (when used as an adjective). The Candelária's eight dome statues, designed by the German Waehneltd and carved in Portuguese *liaz* marble by José Cesário de Sales, were installed in 1870. They represent the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and personifications of Religion, Charity, Faith, and Hope. The Candelária was completed largely by means of forty state-administered lotteries that the emperor granted the brotherhood in 1870.

22. Charles Ribbeyrolles, *Brasil pittoresco: História, descrições, viagens, instituições, colonização* (Rio de Janeiro, 1859), 158 (translations mine).

23. The slogan "O Rio civiliza-se" was coined by the journalist Figueredo Pimentel. See Jeffrey Needell, "Making the Carioca Belle Epoque Concrete: The Urban Reforms of Rio de Janeiro under Pereira Passos," *Journal of Urban History* 4 (1984): 383–422, esp. 420, n. 40; *idem*, "Rio de Janeiro at the Turn of the Century: Modernization and the Parisian Ideal," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 25 (1983): 83–103; and Theresa Meade, "'Civilizing Rio de Janeiro': The Public Health Campaign and the Riot of 1904," *Journal of Social History* 20 (1986): 301–22.

24. The Teatro Municipal is illustrated in Giovanna Rosso del Brenna, "Rio: Uma capital nos trópicos e seu modelo europeu," *Revista do serviço do patrimônio histórico e artístico nacional* 19 (1984): 149.

25. Alves quoted in Rosso del Brenna, "Rio: Uma capital nos trópicos," 152 (translation mine).

26. One of the principal objects of Brazilian Europhile shame and condemnation was the carnival and its African cultural associations; see Needell, "Making the Carioca Belle Epoque Concrete," 403–10. The desire of Brazil's modernizing elite to replace an older, uniquely Brazilian culture based on the amalgamation of imported and folk cultures with a new "universal" European culture is discussed in E. B. Burns, "The Destruction of a Folk Past: Euclides da Cunha and Cataclysmic Cultural Clash," *Review of Latin American Studies* 3, no. 1 (1990): 17–36.

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