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O Rosário de D. Antônio: Irmandades negras, alianças e conflitos na história social do Recife, 1848-1872 by Marcelo MacCord (review)

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Books Reviewed

MacCord, Marcelo. *O Rosário de D. Antônio: Irmandades negras, alianças e conflitos na história social do Recife, 1848-1872*. Recife: Ed. Universitária da UFPE, 2005. Bibliography. 294 pp.

In this important study, Marcelo MacCord examines social relationships in the city of Recife during the twenty-four year reign of Antônio de Oliveira Guimarães, the black King of Congo and “universal sovereign” of the African nations of Pernambuco. The position of King of Congo was intimately linked to brotherhoods dedicated to the devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, and this example takes the reader into the history of the Brotherhood of the Rosary in the neighborhood of Santo Antônio in Recife, and more generally into organizations of Africans and their descendents in Recife and its surrounding areas, and their relationships and negotiations with the white authorities in the region.

The book is divided into three long chapters, each of which is subdivided into several sections. The first chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book by examining what daily life in Recife would have been like in the middle of the nineteenth century. The author examines both the historical context both in terms of the changing demographics that occurred as the result of the end of the slave trade and the shift of slavery to the south of Brazil, and changes in society, especially the Romanization of the Catholic Church during this period. He also examines the history of the rosary brotherhood and its structure. The second chapter turns to the study of the relationship between the rosary brotherhood and the provincial authorities, and the administrative structures and bureaucracies that developed in the colonial period and continued into the nineteenth century. One thing that made the Santo Antonio rosary brotherhood unique was the control that the King of Congo had over black professional groups, which were sometimes divided by ethnicity, in the city. The leaders of these professional groups were legitimized by government commissions, which exhorted the leaders to be loyal to the King of Congo. The final chapter of the book examines the relationship between the Congo Kings and the political and daily life of Recife. Here, MacCord examines more closely the reign of Antônio de Oliveira Guimarães, its challengers, and the relationship of those challenges to political upheaval in mid-nineteenth century Recife. He also looks at the relationship between this reign and the emergence of maracatus. The conclusion of the book looks more deeply

at the historiography of the maracatu, and opens doors to further historical research on the topic.

The author makes several important points in the study. He emphasizes the fact that rosary brotherhoods certainly should not be seen as a place of accommodation, and demonstrates the ways that the worn out resistance-accommodation model does not serve to help scholars understand the complex and nuanced relationships that obtained between different populations in colonial and imperial Brazil. In pursuing this end, MacCord does an excellent job of demonstrating how black brotherhoods were places of contestation—not only (and not always) between the white authorities and black brotherhood members, but also between blacks within the brotherhoods. The author also demonstrates that the nineteenth century, far from being a time when the significance of the brotherhoods and their Kings slowly lost their meaning, was a time when these traditions continued to be important to the blacks of Recife—even when they were not being recorded in the official books of the brotherhoods. Finally, he shows that the easy claim that coronations of the Kings of Congo transmuted seamlessly into maracatus in the nineteenth century falls apart when the evidence is examined. The author urges other scholars to continue the work of unpacking the many maracatu origin myths.

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on blacks in Brazil, and especially the important role of the black confraternities, by examining the complexities of interaction, contestation, and negotiations within the confraternities and between those organizations and the larger society. It is one of the only books on confraternities that examines the nineteenth century, a period of great transition in Brazil in general, in the Brazilian church, and in the social history of slavery. It also adds to the geographic breadth of the material that has for too long focused on Salvador, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro. Despite its important contributions, there are a couple of problems with the book. The conclusion would have been more helpful if it could have done a better job of wrapping up the author's main points in addition to opening up a new conversation about the maracatus. A clearer conclusion could have helped to tie the many strands of the story together and reemphasize the author's main points. I also wondered throughout the book about the question of Romanization. It is discussed in the first chapter, but then disappears from the story. I would be surprised if there were not also intense negotiations between the brotherhoods and the church, especially in Recife, during this period. If there were not, that also would be notable. Finally, I see that the author did yeoman's work searching the archives for evidence and did an admirable job of piecing together a compelling story, but there are points when I felt that the evidence was stretched very thinly over the author's claims. Nonetheless, the book makes an important contribution to the growing number of works on blacks in Brazil and the important history of confraternities in Brazil and in the Americas. The book will be of interest to graduate students and scholars

who are interested in the complex and messy history of blacks in Brazil and in the Americas.

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Brugioni, Elena, Joana Passos, Andreia Sarabando, and Marie-Manuelle Silva (ed). *Áfricas Contemporâneas / Contemporary Africas*. Ribeirão, Portugal: Edições Húmus, 2010. 205 pp.

Em seguimento à conferência internacional, “Contemporary Africa(s): Current Artistic Interventions after the ‘Post’” decorrida em Maio de 2009, no CEHUM (Centro de Estudos Humanísticos da Universidade do Minho), surge o volume de ensaios críticos e produções literárias sob o título *Áfricas Contemporâneas/ Contemporary Africas*, editado por Elena Brugioni, Joana Passos, Andreia Sarabando e Marie-Manuelle Silva. Iniciativa do GruPocLi (Grupo de Investigação em Estudos Pós-Coloniais e Literaturas de Intervenção do CEHUM), esta publicação inclui abordagens inter e trans-disciplinares que visam uma leitura mais abrangente das problemáticas vigentes em múltiplas realidades africanas.

Publicada pelas Edições Húmus, com o apoio da Fundação para a Ciência da Tecnologia, em Portugal, *Áfricas Contemporâneas* distingue-se por ser uma aposta multilingue que procura ir além da já comum compilação de artigos que se debruçam exclusivamente sobre culturas e literaturas africanas em português. Dividida em duas secções principais, a obra conjuga onze ensaios críticos sobre uma temática abrangente, mas de uma certa forma dispersa, seguida de uma selecção de poemas, contos e entrevistas com autores de várias nacionalidades. O volume termina com uma pequena secção biográfica sobre os escritores e os críticos seleccionados.

Para além de um ensaio sobre representações do feminino em Moçambique e de outro sobre a obra de Luandino Vieira, reúnem-se, na primeira parte desta obra, intitulada “Lendo a(s) África(s) Contemporânea(s),” reflexões críticas sobre o cinema sul-africano, a literatura pós-*apartheid*, a conceptualização de África na historiografia dinamarquesa, a adaptação de obras literárias para a banda desenhada na República Democrática do Congo, e a literatura de exílio na Guiné-Equatorial, às quais se somam um debate de dimensão teórica sobre nostalgias imperiais, outro sobre a interferência dos géneros orais nos escritos e um terceiro sobre o impacto das literaturas africanas em francês nas próprias instituições académicas. Acrescenta-se a esta óbvia dispersão temática, uma reflexão relativa à responsabilidade ética dos que embarcam em projectos de tradução. Nomes como Ana Mafalda Leite, Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, Roberto Vecchi e Livia Apa dispensam apresentação, com um longo historial de publicações de reconhecida importância na área da literatura pós-colonial no contexto dos estudos portugueses. É evidente, porém, alguma disparidade quanto à qualidade