

*Algarra nas ruas: Comemorações da Independência na Bahia (1889–1923)*. By Wlamyra Ribeiro de Albuquerque. Coleção Várias Histórias, vol. 4. Campinas, Brazil: UNICAMP, 1999. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. 144 pp. Paper.

July 2 commemorates the independence of Bahia, a regional/national event that has been reinterpreted by different elite and popular groups throughout the years. In 1823, two years after the Portuguese occupied the city of Salvador, the military expelled the Portuguese and claimed to have freed Brazil of the final vestiges of colonial control. Bahian patriotic history distinguishes July 2—as opposed to Brazil’s national independence day of September 7—as a day when armed insurrection, and not an agreement between Rio de Janeiro’s political elites and the royal Portuguese Bragança family, finally ended colonial rule. Wlamyra Ribeiro de Albuquerque examines, with a comparative eye, the different meanings that Salvador’s intellectuals, policy makers, and popular classes assigned to July 2 during the First Republic (in contrast to the period of the Empire). Her work illustrates the participation of different social and racial groups in the construction of Bahian identities, expanding current scholarship on regionalism and the relations between civil society, the public sphere, citizenship, and popular mobilization.

Albuquerque constructs an intellectual and social history of July 2 using sources such as newspapers and magazines, correspondence between Bahian intellectuals, and municipal and police records. Her carefully researched findings reveal the ongoing (and at times conflictual) negotiation between white elites and the racially mixed middle and lower classes, transforming July 2 into a civic festival that communicated multiple ideologies of race, religion, nation, and modernity. Albuquerque’s anthropological approach and theorization of the political culture and cultural politics surrounding July 2 can be placed alongside recent historiography that examines the politicization of popular culture through public celebrations, such as Martha Abreu’s work on religious festivities in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro and João José Reis’s study of funeral rites in nineteenth-century Salvador. Albuquerque disagrees with anthropologist Roberto da Matta’s definition of civic commemorations as expressions of formality, social order, and hierarchy—carnival being, in this schema, the only festivity where popular classes invert the social order and dominate the public sphere. According to Albuquerque, the July 2 celebrations provide a counterexample to da Matta’s model. Civic spirit, high alcohol consumption, and Afro-Brazilian religious fervor often resulted in popular arousal and appropriation of the event, where order and disorder, formality and informality, and subservience and subversion coalesced.

The recently founded Brazilian republic struggled with the legacies of slavery, and in

Bahia this became particularly manifest through elites' concerns about the region's salient African heritage. Urban reforms modeled after Rio de Janeiro aimed at civilizing and de-Africanizing Salvador, erasing the marks of its colonial and slave past, such as (as often mentioned in travel accounts) the streets crowded with a vivacious Afro-Brazilian ambulatory commerce and African dance, music, and religious practices. Not surprisingly, republican elites attempted to de-Africanize July 2 commemorations, as well as to omit the contribution of Afro-Brazilians to the history of Bahia—such as the role of militarized slaves in the battles that drove out the Portuguese in 1823. The latter, however, persisted in the collective memory of slaves and free blacks during the Empire, shaping the festivities of July 2 and in particular the street celebration that took place on May 13, 1888, when the Golden Law decreed the final end of slavery. Ex-slaves, descendants of slaves, and abolitionists paraded the streets of Salvador with Bahia's *caboclos* (two giant Indian figures, male and female, symbolizing the native people of Brazil, or Brazilians of indigenous and Portuguese descent, but not African), who had been the traditional protagonists of the July 2 commemorations. Albuquerque argues that in appropriating the symbols and rituals of July 2, blacks and mulattoes of Salvador experienced “freedom” as a civic, regional/national event—since abolition, in their eyes, was not only emancipation from slavery but the formal recognition of ex-slaves' rights as citizens of the nation.

Albuquerque's first book will interest scholars of postemancipation societies, Bahian culture and regional identity, and everyday forms of nation-state formation. The author includes important insights into the making of July 2 during postindependence Bahia; extending the periodization of her study to include Brazil's imperial age (1822–89) would provide a distinct genealogy of elite and popular narrations of this patriotic event within shifting political cultures and structures. The particularities of July 2 festivities, as they were celebrated throughout the year in different urban neighborhoods and in connection to Afro-Brazilian religious practices, calls for further investigation. Writers of the modern era, such as Walter Benjamin and Rio de Janeiro's own *flâneur*, João do Rio, have located spectacle in street culture, where legacies of the past and the pretensions and discontents of modernity become the objects of social critique for historians as well.

PATRICIA ACERBI, University of Maryland, College Park

Published in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* – HAHR  
November 2005, 85(4), pp. 720-721