

The Civilising Process and the Decline of the *Viola* in Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract

This paper shows that *violas* faded in popularity in Rio de Janeiro due to a civilising process that transformed the city and with it the lives and musical tastes of its inhabitants. The civilising process started with the transfer of the entire Portuguese royal court to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 changing the Brazilian capital politically, socially and culturally in the first half of the nineteenth century. Intending to Europeanise and modernise the city, the new establishment created administrative and cultural institutions, opened the country to international trade and implemented a new social order that fixed the parameters of behaviour and etiquette that significantly influenced the inhabitants of the city.

Keywords: Civilising process; 19th century Rio de Janeiro; News parameters of behaviour; Decline of the *viola*; *Viola*; *Violão*.

O processo civilizatório e o declínio da viola no Rio de Janeiro

Resumo

Esse artigo mostra que as violas perderam popularidade no Rio de Janeiro devido a um processo civilizatório que transformou a cidade e com isto a vida e o gosto musical de seus habitantes. O processo civilizatório começou com a transferência de toda a corte real portuguesa para o Rio de Janeiro em 1808, mudando politicamente, socialmente e culturalmente a capital brasileira na primeira metade do século XIX. Com a intenção de europeizar e modernizar a cidade, o novo establishment criou instituições administrativas e culturais, abriu o país para o comércio internacional e implementou uma nova ordem social que fixou os parâmetros de comportamento e etiqueta que significativamente influenciaram os habitantes da cidade.

Palavras-chave: Processo Civilizatório; Rio de Janeiro no século XIX; Novos parâmetros de comportamento; Declínio da *viola*; *Viola*; *Violão*.

From the *Viola* to the *Violão*

In 1948, the scholar Amadeu Amaral wrote about two pronounced musical traditions in Brazil which he called the 'poetry of the *viola*' and the 'poetry of the *violão*' (AMARAL, 1948). Both the *viola* and the *violão* were directly related to two socio-political zones: rural surroundings were associated with the *viola* while urban areas were associated with the *violão*. Regarding the poetry of the *viola*, he says:

The popular songs of the countryside are more original and natural. In general, it is not known where the verses come from, or how they were born...they have a pronounced archaic flavour. They are simple, normal, and honest in feelings. [They have] no vestige of literature or artificiality. It is the poetry of the rural workers. It is the poetry of the *viola*.

This rural poetic tradition of the *viola* was the antithesis of the *violão* culture in Brazil, as he contends:

The city's popular songs have been steeped in literature, and suffer especially from the influence of the theatre and the endless collections that booksellers foist on singers. They are the poetry of the troubadour-clowns, minstrels, and poet-musicians whose talent is open to the warmth of serenades, or neighbourhood parties in taverns of the city. This is the poetry of the *violão*.

Amaral's rural-urban dichotomy presents a fair picture of the musical and social trajectory of these instruments, however, he does not explain how each instrument came to be associated its respective context. Since the sixteenth century Portuguese violas had been the most popular chordophones in Brazil, including urban centres such as the capital Rio de Janeiro (TRAVASSOS, 2006; CASTRO, 2007, 2014). Nevertheless, historical accounts show that during the nineteenth century the use of the *viola* was declining in Rio whilst the *violão* became the most widespread chordophone in use.

One scholar who clearly framed the challenge of understanding these issues and indicated a new way to approach this question was Brazilian ethnomusicologist Elizabeth Travassos (2006). She recalled that the *viola* was so prominent that there was a "Viola Street" in eighteenth century Rio. It was in this narrow lane, today known as Teófilo Otoni Street that many *violeiros* or *viola*-makers ran their businesses where they made and sold *violas* and other instruments. She suggests that to understand why *violas* became associated nationally with folklore and rural life, even being assigned the pejorative epithets *caipira* or *sertaneja*, one has to understand, why people began to pay less attention to them in nineteenth century Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, we need to look to the first decades of the twentieth century in São Paulo where *violas* were naturalised as *caipiras*. In this article, I approach Travassos' question and explore the historical reasons for their decline in the first half of the nineteenth century in Rio, giving samples of how the fictional literature inscribed such trajectory.

Some authors studying the Luso-Brazilian chordophones give clues about the ruralization processes surrounding the use of the *viola* and the corresponding popularity of the *violão* in the city. Roberto Corrêa (1983), for instance, suggests that the six-course *violão* supplanted the five-course double-stringed *viola* because it had a simpler and more standardised tuning system, and thus was easier to tune than the old *viola*. Although this practical musical issue is important, it does not explain why the *viola* continued to be played in many parts of the country, while it ceased to be played in the capital. Another explanation is offered by Marcia Taborda (2011), who proposes that the decline of the *viola* in the city is related to the introduction of the *violão*, which occurred in the modernisation process of the city, which itself must be viewed in the context of the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in Rio de Janeiro in 1808. In the same vein, Martha Esteves (1999) argues that the imposition of a new political and social order in the city by the Portuguese empire undermined many popular traditions that used *viola* accompaniment, such as the Holy Ghost celebrations.

There are many reasons for change in a musical tradition. According to Rice (1987), change could be driven by individuals, communities and/or by the establishment and political authorities. Bruno Nettl (1983), for instance, draws attention to factors such as technological advance, improvement in communication (internal and external), general standardisation of new musical practices and instruments, or acceptance of diversity as important forces that could have influenced the discontinuity of a musical culture. Assuming an alteration in one aspect of a culture is likely to be perceived in other attributes of the same culture, the investigation of musical practices and discourses can shed light upon other aspects of the culture and vice-versa. The study of a "single complex" such as music, might be a point of reference of changes in the whole culture (MERRIAM, 1964, p. 296).

The changing political regime, the imposition of a new urban order, and material improvements may have been responsible for associated cultural changes in Rio, however, it is not very well understood how these radical changes were symbolically valued by the

population to the extent that they eventually transformed or discontinued their older musical traditions. Thus, it is necessary to investigate what the *viola* and the *violão*, respectively, represented to Carioca people in social, cultural, and aesthetic terms, such that they gave up playing the *viola* and incorporated the *violão* in their everyday life.

In Lima's opinion (2006), much has been said about the economic and political consequences of the move of the Portuguese Royal family to Rio but not much has been written about the correspondingly important symbolic perception of such radical change. Discussing the symbolic impact of the transfer of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil, Freyre (1963) pointed out that the luxury and opulence of a European court in Brazil had a negative effect on the local population as they found themselves ashamed of their own way of living leading them to reject their own culture.

Following Travassos (2006) I argue that we have to look at musical and social discourses in Rio de Janeiro and the relations between instruments and social groups, for musical instruments have simultaneously a social and musical trajectory, and the instruments' symbolic value is given by groups who determine when it should be used and avoided. However, one of the difficulties of studying *viola* and *violão* musical cultures in Rio de Janeiro is related to the historical sources. Much of the knowledge about musical life in the city comes from traces left by writers, travellers, artists, and memoirists who did not specifically intend to document music in Rio. Rather, their documents are mostly descriptions and pictures of the everyday life contexts in which music making happened. Another notable characteristic of the documents is that they inscribe musical and social knowledge in various media, including musical scores, pictures and written accounts, which demand from the investigator awareness of the techniques and parameters associated with each of these different modes of representation.

European travel-artists such as the Frenchman Jean Baptist Debret (1768-1848) or the German painter, Johan Moritz Rugendas (1802-1858), who both lived in Rio de Janeiro in the first half of the nineteenth century, produced some of the main visual and written accounts that became standard historical references of the period. These works need to be analysed critically in relation to musical representations. The historical sources that I will primarily examine here are novels written by Brazilians from different socio-economic backgrounds. Joaquim Manuel de Macedo (1820-1882), for instance, engages with musical and social discourses of the dominant white class in which he was part in the city. Manuel Antônio de Almeida (1831-1868), having a different social background created plots and characters showing the social and cultural life he was more familiar in Rio, from the point of view of the lower classes. Besides the authors mentioned, I will draw upon the work of Norbert Elias (1982, 1983) about the civilising process and the court life in post-medieval Europe as referential points to understand the accelerated civilising process imposed to Brazil after the transfer of the entire Portuguese court to the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1808.

1. The Encounter of Two Worlds: Rio Receives the Court

Whilst the encounter between Portuguese and the Indians in 1500 led to the start of Brazilian civilisation, a second encounter in 1808 would be almost as consequential as the first. This time, it was not a fleet with military explorers that arrived in Brazil, but the actual Portuguese sovereign, the prince regent Dom João, accompanied by his court, and the whole institutional apparatus of the empire that landed in Rio de Janeiro. Suddenly, Portugal became the colony and Brazil the metropolis (BETHELL, 1985). If Brazil was already the mainstay of the Portuguese economy, now it would become the political centre as well. In

this case, São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, as the chosen city, had an important role to play. What was once a humble, colonial city had now to be transformed into an imperial capital that, more than hosting the administrative body, would represent the whole empire as the symbol of political organisation and cultural distinction (ASSUNÇÃO, 2008; GRINBERG, SALLES, 2009).

At the arrival of the Portuguese court in 1808, Rio had no more than “forty-six streets, four transverses, six alleys and nineteen campos” (SCHWARCZ, 2002, p. 235), comprising an area of about “one and a half miles long and three quarters of a mile wide” (SCHULTZ, 2001, p. 40). The city had become the Brazilian capital in 1763, when economic interests in the country moved the seat of the government from the former capital Salvador, in the Northeast to the Southeast, where the mining industry was growing. Despite the existence of some building such as the city military fortifications, administrative buildings, churches, convents, houses, gardens, shops, public fountains, a jail and an aqueduct, the infrastructure improvements were small- scale and restricted to a privileged part of the city. This reality reflected the neglect of the Portuguese metropolis with regard to public institutions and the urban structure of the colony’s capital (EDMUNDO, 1971). The city, for instance, had just a few paved lanes, elsewhere pastures grew on the streets and in areas where people needed to walk, obliging the population to circulate among goats, sheep, horses, swine, chickens and turkeys that fed themselves freely on the streets (EDMUNDO, 1971). Another chronic problem was the lack of a sewage system, which made the city smell constantly unpleasant. Human waste in Rio was put in pots either to be thrown out onto the streets, in hopes of it being washed away by the rain, or taken out to sea by slaves where, depending on the tide, the waste could still return to the beaches. These and other problems led the historian Luiz Edmundo to affirm that: “At the dawn of the [eighteenth] century, the city was much as it had been two hundred years before, even the Indians were unhealthy” (1971, p. 15).

On 8 March 1808, the Portuguese royal court disembarked from their vessels and according to two eye witnesses of the event, Father Luiz Gonçalves dos Santos (1767 - 1844) (SANTOS, 1943) and an anonymous bystander who wrote a letter to his brother in Portugal in 1810, the exiles were enthusiastically received by the population and were especially enchanted by the presence of the prince regent Dom João. The mythical figure of the king became real for the first time. The celebrations that followed included religious, courtly rituals and popular parties which would mark the start of a relationship between the court and the city that would last for at least the next thirteen years during which Dom João lived in Rio. The encounters of these two ‘universes,’ would have a peculiar characteristic in the Tropics. On one side there was a weakened European monarchy that had to flee from the metropolis to avoid its extinction, on the other, there was a mestizo society that for centuries had been kept in isolation but had created its own special way of living. The singular situation would make both, the court and the city, adapt to a new life in Rio de Janeiro. But first, the city had to be transformed.

2. Civilising Rio

Norbert Elias’s (1982) theorisation of the civilising process is useful for understanding the changes that took place in nineteenth century Rio de Janeiro. Tracing the concept of civilisation in Europe, Elias observed that changes in etiquette in the post-medieval era happened simultaneously with structural changes in the political organisation in West European nations. The changes in social behaviour and political governance were, according

to him, the actual civilising process in action. However, the consciousness of being a civilised nation, or a civilised people, became more evident with the decline of Feudalism and the rise of absolutism in Europe. In the Feudal system, political, economic, and military power was decentralised among various small groups that existed 'independently' of one another and who lived in a situation of social instability. In the absolutist system, the possibility of charging public taxes, for example, fostered social integration by increasing economic interdependence among individuals and creating connections between people across larger geographical areas around a centralised government (ELIAS, 1982). The idea of civilisation in this sense included ways of being or behaving according to a national identity and the concentration of political power in one place. It is important to stress, however, that Elias refuses to accept a mechanistic explanation which asserts that changes in political and economic forces led to changes in behaviour in society. For him, the changes in behaviour and the changes in political and economical realms are interrelated so that each influences the other.

This long process of civilisation set standards of behaviour that permitted the judgement of 'civilised' and 'barbaric' manners in a hierarchical relation that had the court and the monarch as the references of desirable behaviour. According to Elias (1982), the civilising process associated with the formation of European national states was also exported to European colonies across the world. The idea of civilisation was so internalized by European nations in the sixteenth century, he explains, that they started to believe that civilisation was the only acceptable standard of living, which would give them the right to civilise other peoples and nations.

Portugal was one of the European courts that had expanded its domain through the civilising process. In the nineteenth century the Portuguese court was trying to regain its importance as a dynasty with one of its colonies as the centre of the political and economic power of the empire. But if the new capital was already the economic mainstay, it had to become the political headquarters as well, and the city demanded a physical change of appearance, for the very buildings in which the monarchical institutions were based, and the palaces of the ruler and its court, had to inscribe social superiority: a crucial premise of the absolutist system and its concentration of power. As Elias (1983) notes, the absolutist system and the courtly life demanded 'civilised manners' from its population as well. The standard of civilised manners had an immediate effect on the bourgeoisie of Rio de Janeiro who tried their best to follow the courtly etiquette. The civilising process also affected the rest of society, first by the authorities' requests for certain kinds of behaviour in the presence of the king, made clear in an edict even before the arrival of the royal family, and later, by increasing control over public behaviour.

The civilising process in Rio de Janeiro had a specific character in the urbanisation and modernisation of the city. Whilst the aim of the new government was the centralisation of power by the monarchy, the accumulation of power could only be made economically viable by the opening of the country to other nations, including incentives for immigration and the installation of institutions that would eventually undermine the political authority of the court (BETHELL, 1985). Now, let us consider which institutions were transplanted from the former capital to Rio de Janeiro, and the impact they had upon the city.

After a week of commemorations to greet the arrival of the court in the city, the prince regent and his ministers started to relocate the imperial institutions from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro. The Supreme High Court, the Court of Appeal, the Royal Treasury, the Council of the Royal Exchequer, the Board of Trade, the Royal Guard Body, the Military Council of Justice, and the Royal Bank (later the Bank of Brazil) were all established in

Rio. A series of educational and cultural institutions were formed in the city, including: a school of medicine, a technical school of agriculture, a military academy including civil engineering and mineralogy, a military archive, the National Library, the National Museum, the Botanic Garden, the São João Royal theatre, and the Royal chapel. The importance of those institutions in Rio de Janeiro and in Brazil in general, would exceed the immediate effect they had in the city. More than modernising and opening up the capital culturally, these organisations constituted the basic public institutions that would support the administration of the independent country in the future.

Another remedy for the paucity of amenities in the city which had an immediate effect was the opening of the ports to foster commerce and immigration. In addition to the 24.000 Portuguese who migrated to Rio de Janeiro from 1808 to 1822, 4.234 foreign immigrants (not counting their family members and staff) were also registered, of whom 1.500 were Spanish, 1.000 French, 600 English, 100 German, and the remainder from other nationalities “mostly...doctors, musicians, pharmacists; tailors, shoemakers, bakers, etc” (BETHELL, 1985, p. 174). As an exchange for British military protection for the Portuguese while crossing the Atlantic, Dom João did not just privilege commerce between England and Brazil, but he also gave many tax advantages to Britain (LIMA, 2006). In a short space of time, the port of Rio was ‘inundated’ with British goods which angered the Portuguese traders who had enjoyed exclusivity in commerce to that point. The effect of this shift is evident in the decline in commerce noted in the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro* (extraordinary edition) 1811. In 1808 it recorded that of 90 commercial ships which had landed in Rio de Janeiro, 81 were from Portugal and 9 from other countries. Just two years later, in 1810, the number of Portuguese ships had declined while the ships from other countries had increased to 422, most of them British.

In addition to facilitating the importation and exportation of goods, the government stimulated the immigration of retailers and merchants to Brazil. By 1811, seventy-five shops had opened in Rio de Janeiro, selling a wide-range of British products such as: bottled beers, Cheshire cheese, Irish butter, hammocks, ponchos, furniture, crockery and cutlery, watches, telescopes, pianos, ice skates, bed warmers, corsets, coffins, woollen clothes, saddles, and many others. Many of those products had no utility for the Brazilians, being inappropriate for the tropical weather or culturally distant from the local reality. As they were relatively inexpensive, however, they penetrated the houses and everyday life of the population. Thick woollen blankets were used for gold mining while ice skates were adapted for door handles (WILCKEN, 2004). The political relationship between Portugal and England was so beneficial for British citizens that besides commercial advantages, they could not be judged by national tribunals, such as the Supreme High Court. Instead, they had the privilege of being served by their own court, set up exclusively for them in Brazil.

It was only after the signing of the peace treaty between Portugal and France in 1814, that British goods encountered competition in the Carioca market from fashionable French products that would become the reference of good taste among the well-to-do in Rio de Janeiro. A Portuguese archivist who lived in Rio de Janeiro during that period, wrote, in a letter to his sister in Portugal that French goods were taking over in Rio: “It is impossible to describe the phenomenal quantities of French goods and trinkets which are flooding the city...you no longer see English Merchandise...everyone is dressed up in French fashions... The port is packed with French ships – only in the last month, twenty-nine have entered, loaded with goods” (WILCKEN, 2004, p. 176). The French products included: fans, perfumes, jewellery, shoes, lace, plumes, wine, books, and many other products. Along with the goods came many French professionals such as: tailors, dressmakers, milliners,

hairstylists, booksellers, teachers, governesses, cooks, bakers, confectioners, locksmiths, carpenters and upholsterers (SILVA, 2011). A sample of the interest in French goods and style can be seen in commercial advertisements on the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro* from 5 February 1817: “Catelino, hairdresser for gentleman and ladies, and his milliner partner, both recently arrived from Paris, have opened their store...where one can find hats, and all necessary material for ladies embellishment, everything for the modern taste, various kinds of perfumes, essences, waters, and pomades from the best French manufactories...” (*Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*, FBN online).

The adoption of new customs by the bourgeoisie of Rio de Janeiro associated with the entrance of European products and people in the first decades of nineteenth century meant losing ‘old’ habits that had a considerable oriental influence (FREYRE, 1976). While, on one hand, the Brazilian population had amalgamated separately from Europeans, on the other hand, the exclusivity of commerce with Portugal had promoted contact with Portuguese colonies in the East; Macau in China and Goa in India. Some Brazilian habits had also been influenced by people’s interaction with these oriental countries, including public transportation in which enslaved carried people around cities; the hair and dress styles for women who wore gold and silver embroidered dresses or silk clothing, Brazilian habits of sitting on mats and eating using the fingers, the architecture of the houses, the use of fireworks on festive days, and many other ‘old’ customs that had to compete with the new ones (FREYRE, 1976).

In addition to the influx of people and products that had brought new cultural models and influenced manners in Rio de Janeiro, on 5 April 1808 an institution was created that could directly regulate the urban structure of the city and the behaviour of its inhabitants: the *Intendência Geral da Polícia* (ARAÚJO, 1898). Whilst the police institution was supposed to be responsible for the whole country, its primary remit was to civilise Rio de Janeiro and make it a political and cultural standard for the rest of the country to follow. They were to rebuild the city to eliminate any colonial traces, and make it look like a European capital. Another important agenda was to control people’s behaviour, not just as a regular police force, but to interfere directly with popular traditions that could no longer be tolerated in the new capital. From 1808 to 1821, the head of the *Intendência Geral da Polícia* was a magistrate who studied at Coimbra University (Portugal) who had close connections with the court, the Carioca Paulo Fernandes Viana. Some of the projects that were eventually accomplished by Viana included “build[ing] sidewalks, landfills, [streets pavements], street lighting, new public fountains, an efficient sewer system, and additional roads and bridges that connected the city’s centre to nearby neighborhoods” (SCHULTZ, 2001, p.105). One of the explicit aims of the police was to ‘Europeanise’ the city, which meant eliminating any ‘old’ colonial traces that could reveal its underdevelopment; such as the appearance of the houses (NEVES, 2011). The prince regent required that Moorish and ‘colonial’ lattices on the façades of the houses be replaced by modern glass ones (PEIXOTO, 2000; MALERBA, 2000).

Besides an increase in immigration and the development of commerce, the privileged geographical location and the tranquil waters of Guanabara bay made Rio de Janeiro an international crossroads where European and American ships stopped to make repairs and replenish their provisions. During this period, many naturalists, explorers, and artists arrived in the city for adventure or scientific interest. Some of them produced accounts that later became important historical references of nature, culture, society in Rio de Janeiro. Two of them were the German drawer Johan Moritz Rugendas, who lived in the country for three years, and the French painter Jean Baptiste Debret, who lived in Rio for

fifteen years. Both issued books with texts and images representing Carioca society in the period. Their iconographical representations of music-making and especially chordophones was analysed somewhere else (CASTRO, 2015). Here I examine their impressions of the transformations that were taking place in the city. Rugendas wrote:

Comparing the current aspect of Rio de Janeiro to what it was in the past, one soon realises that at no other point of time has American colonisation wrought such great transformations... [Rio is] an imperial city, its populous is animated by the activity of world trade, [it is] imposing for the splendour that lent it the ceremonies of Catholic worship and its buildings, revealing in its court all the brilliance of the courts of Europe. (RUGENDAS, 1976, p. 128, 135).

In another German expedition from 1817 to 1820, Martius and Spix (1824), naturalists from Bavaria, noted their impressions of the Brazilian capital:

If any person - considering that this is a new continent discovered only three centuries ago - should fancy that Nature is here still entirely crude, mighty, and unconquered, he would believe, at least here in the capital of Brazil, that he was in some other part of the globe; so much has the influence of the civilisation of ancient and enlightened Europe effaced the character of an American wilderness in this point of the colony and given it the stamp of higher cultivation. The language, manners, architecture, and the influx of the production of the industry of all parts of the globe, give a European exterior to Rio de Janeiro. (MARTIUS; SPIX, 1824, p. 133, 134).

Accounts of urbanisation, Europeanisation, and civilisation of the city would be repeated by most travellers and chroniclers who lived in Rio in the nineteenth century. It was Dom João's intention and even obsession with the city to show the power and prominence of the Portuguese monarchy through its capital Rio de Janeiro. Even when he was living in the country, Dom João did not order an end to the civilising process in Rio. In the art realm, one of his measures was to hire prominent European musicians to perform in the recently built royal chapel and the São João theatre. Most of these were Italian opera singers who charged vast sums of money to perform in Brazil. The theatre would become an important social reference for the new position of Rio de Janeiro not only for its musical renditions but for theatrical work as well. Thus, the theatres turned into places to learn civilised and refined manners in which the constant presence of the monarch, or pictures in the royal cabin in the absence of the monarch, influenced the public either by inviting proper behaviour during performances, or by showing the civilising content of the plays (MALERBA, 2000).

However, the efforts to civilise Rio de Janeiro were significantly hampered by the enormous presence of African enslaved in the city. The Africans comprised almost half of the population in 1808, and their numbers increased constantly during the nineteenth century, only stabilising and declining after the trafficking prohibition of 1850 and the abolition of slavery due to the introduction of the Lei Áurea (Golden Law) on 13 May 1888. Before that, they had a strong presence on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, doing the most varied and menial tasks, such as carrying water and waste, transporting people across the streets in chairs and hammocks, selling food, shaving and cutting hair, and doing virtually anything they were instructed to by their masters. Yet, there was an inherent contradiction in the perceived status when set against the promulgation of civilised manners, since owning slaves was a symbol of social prestige in Rio. Even people from the middle classes had one or two slaves who were put to work on the streets to make money for their masters when they were not doing domestic work.

3. A Glimpse of *Violas'* Representations in Fictional Literature

Considering literature as a kind of written representation produced by reasonably well informed authors, therefore, I divide the books analysed in this section into two groups characterised by different viewpoints: one personified by Joaquim Manuel de Macedo, represents the point of view of the well-to-do in Rio de Janeiro, as represented by the novels *A Moreninha* e *O moço loiro*, and the other approach, depicts the view of the lower classes, as exemplified by Manuel Antônio de Almeida and his *Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant* (1852-1853). However, it is important to highlight that *Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant* were primarily published periodically from June 1852 to July 1853, in Sunday editions of the Journal *Gazeta Mercantil* called, the *Pacotilha*, the section of the journal directed to social and political critique, characterised by a tone of irony and satire. In these publications, Manuel Antônio de Almeida used the *nom de plume*, “the Brazilian” rather than revealing his true identity. Almeida’s anonymity may explain the uniqueness of his romance, both in regard to the freedom of plot choice, giving the lower classes’ point of view, and the informal dialogue and sarcasm characteristic of the narrative. On the other hand, one of the most successful writer of his time in Rio, the Carioca, Joaquim Manuel de Macedo (1820-1882) gives the social perspective of the elites in the city. Born into a wealthy family, Macedo became a medical doctor in Rio de Janeiro but never worked as a physician, preferring to teach (in the Pedro II School) and to write. Credited as an accurate chronicler of his time, on reading his books it becomes clear that Macedo focuses almost exclusively upon the everyday life of the upper classes in Rio.

3.1 *A Moreninha* (*‘The Brunet’*)

The novel *A Moreninha* portrays customs of the aristocratic and bourgeois Carioca society in the middle of the nineteenth century. Joaquim Manuel de Macedo (1844) mentions that some characters were acquainted with repertoires such as the *Modinhas de Laforge* and the opera, the *Barber of Seville* (MACEDO, 2000, p. 178). The popular *lundu* genre was also referred to in this social context, and its difference from other genres highlighted. In one passage, the son of a businessman, a character called Augusto, says: “The only consolation I had was seeing her run to the piano, and hearing her sing the following and other verses played in national taste...” (MACEDO, 2000, p. 86). Augusto himself calls these verses, *lundu*, identifying them as distinct from other genres. At this time the piano was coming to occupy a significant place in the social stratum. In another passage Augusto relates different types of chordophones to social class identities. He notes: “My lady, ears that hear chords and sounds of such a sonorous harp, plucked by the agile hand of a beautiful maiden, hurt to hear the unspeakable untuned sound of the *viola* played by a rude *salóia*” (MACEDO, 2000, p. 53). *Salóia* was a term used to refer to a rustic person or a peasant, who was unsophisticated, uncultured, sly or a rogue. The contrast between the *viola* and a sonorous harp played respectively by a *salóia* and a beautiful maiden, shows explicit prejudice between musical instruments and social groups. The position of the *viola* is very clear in this dialogue, it is associated with the rustic, rural, and old, indicating the place of the *viola* in the musical and social environment in Rio de Janeiro. It is interesting to observe that while Augusto praises the *lundu* originating from the black population, when played on the piano, he criticises *viola* music.

3.2 O Moço Loiro (*The Blond Man*)

In this novel by Joaquim Manuel de Macedo, published in 1845, there are few musical scenes. However, the little that they reveal can be useful for understanding local practices surrounding chordophones as musical accompaniments to song in Rio de Janeiro, as exemplified in the following excerpt (1994, p. 130):

[...]There, at the mercy of the silence of the night and by the moonlight, a harmonious voice that could intone a chant should cause a pleasant effect; and proud of the merit of his daughter, he did not hesitate to advise her to sing. Felix volunteered to accompany her: a *violão* appeared and Honorina sang.

The reference to the *violão* in this novel is consistent with the growing influence of the instrument during this period. In the novel *A Moreninha* (The Brunet) of 1844, referred to previously, Macedo associated the *viola* with the *saloias* exemplifying the rural and old. In *The Blonde Man* published a year later in 1845, the same author, who was aware of the new musical practices amongst the wealthy in Rio, created a scene in which a *violão* and not a *viola* was used for accompaniment. Both examples show the coherence of Macedo's accounts and reinforce that musical instruments such as the *viola* and the *violão* had gained different social statuses in Rio de Janeiro by the middle of the nineteenth century.

3.3 *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias* (*Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant*)

The plot, in this Manuel Antônio de Almeida (1999) book, is a sequence of adventures of the Brazilian Leonardo from infancy until adulthood. Son of Portuguese parents who met on a ship from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, Leonardo was abandoned first by his mother Maria and then by his father Leonardo Pataca. The plot, however, is humorous rather than tragic. Brought up and spoiled by his godfather, Leonardo explores the city of Rio de Janeiro allowing the reader a glimpse of the cultural richness of the city in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Almeida (1999) commences the story by describing Leonardo's baptism party:

The guests of the master of the house [the godfather], all of whom were likewise from the old country [Portugal], sang *ao desafio*, as was their custom. The godmother's guests, all of whom were natives [Brazilians], danced the *fado*. The godfather brought his fiddle with him, which, as everyone knows, is the preferred instrument of the people of his trade [barbers]. At the outset, [Leonardo's father], wanting to impart an aristocratic air to the celebration, proposed that they dance the courtly minuet. The idea won general acceptance... The godfather played the minuet on his fiddle, and the godson, lying in Maria's [his mother's] lap, accompanied each and every pass of the bow with a squall and a kick. That caused the godfather to lose the beat over and over again and have to start in anew each time.

After they had finished the minuet, the formality gradually waned, and the party "came to a boil" as they used to say. Some young men arrived with *violas* and *machetes*, Leonardo, urged on by the ladies, launched into a lyric portion of the program. He seated himself on a stool in an empty part of the room and took up the *viola*... accompanying his own toneless warbling of an old-word *modinha* with a monotonous strumming on the instrument's strings. (ALMEIDA, 1999, p. 9-11).

The musical genres mentioned by Almeida such as the *desafio*, the *fado*, the *minuet* and the *modinha*, were associated with different social groups regardless of their nationality, and in this account were used in an attempt to transform the baptism party

into a hyjnoble event. The Portuguese sang the *desafio*, Brazilians danced the *fado*, then both groups danced the minuet, an aristocratic dance from France usually performed in the court. Further, the ‘bailiff’, Leonardo, a low ranking member in the hierarchy of the judiciary, sang a *desafio*, a *modinha*, and danced the *fado*. This baptism party provides a small but significant sample of how a varied repertoire could circulate at a popular party in the beginning of the nineteenth century in Rio, and furthermore, it can be seen as a metaphor of Carioca society.

The baby Leonardo represents the new establishment. The guests who were Brazilian and Portuguese, denote the two countries involved in the foundation of the new state with the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in Rio. The *desafio* and the *fado* dance stood for the cultural heritage from both sides of the Atlantic. The idea of performing the courtly minuet in the party, however, shows the inhabitants’ attempts to adjust their lives to what they believed to be more civilised practices. Despite their tentative efforts to imitate civilised manners, it seemed that the baby Leonardo, personifying the new order, would not accept this change as he squealed and kicked after each passing of the bow on the fiddle strings, and therefore there was no possibility for him to become familiar with the ‘new custom.’

As Almeida reported, after they had finished the minuet, the formality gradually waned, and the party “came to a boil”. After their sufferable attempts to play and dance in the ‘new courtly style’, they quit, and went back to what they were used to. That was when “some young men arrived with *violas* and *machetes* [...] and the party did not end until late.”

In another passage of the novel, Almeida (1999) describes the *capadócio*, a typical popular character in Rio de Janeiro who had many artistic abilities and no conventional job, which made him subject to being followed by the police. His name was Teotônio: “When—at night, with his cloak over his shoulder and *viola* slung across his back, [Teotônio] headed for the action – [he was] one of the ‘roisterers’ [‘cappadocians’] of the time” and was at serious risk of being arrested by the police (ALMEIDA, 1999, p. 23; ALMEIDA, 2000, p. 92). Almeida informs us that this type of popular artist, always with his *viola* in tow, animated every kind of social function in the city including baptism parties and wedding banquets “...He played the *viola* and sang *modinhas* extremely well; he danced the *fado* with great perfection; he could speak black language and sing admirably well in it... (ALMEIDA, 1999, p. 148; ALMEIDA, 2000, p. 306). References to *capadócios* such as Teotônio who plays the *viola*, sings *modinhas*, dances the *fado* and sings and speaks ‘language of the black’ are frequent in the literature of the time. The *capadócio* can be considered a predecessor of the *malandro* who appears in the next century and was oppressed for carrying a *violão* on the streets in the twentieth century. Similarly, the *capadócio* could be arrested for carrying the *viola* in the nineteenth century. This shows an ambiguity around the instrument, since in other environments the *viola* was naturally accepted. In any case, through Teotônio’s skills, one acquires a portrait of musical events in the time of the king, suggesting the popularity of *violas*, *modinhas*, and *fados* in Rio.

4. Conclusion

This paper has shown how a civilising process transformed the city of Rio de Janeiro and the life of its inhabitants in the first half of the nineteenth century. Civilising practices began when the entire Portuguese court moved from Lisbon to Rio

de Janeiro in 1807/1808, after fleeing from Napoleon Bonaparte's threats during the peninsular war in Europe. Rio de Janeiro underwent a process of modernisation and Europeanisation that imposed changes in the urban structure and in the lives of its inhabitants (Cariocas) as it was transformed from a small capital of a colonised country into the capital of a vast Portuguese empire, that included domains in four continents. The developments occurred with the introduction of foreign political, cultural, and social institutions, and by opening the country to immigration and trade that facilitated the entrance and circulation of new products and ideas around the city.

The Carioca, had to adapt to a new reality which led them to embrace newly introduced customs and to reject old ones. In this context the *viola*, which had been the most popular plucked chordophone in the country since the sixteenth century, declined in Rio de Janeiro, whilst the *violão*, initially called *viola francesa* (French guitar), one of the newly introduced European artefacts, became the preferable plucked chordophone for popular song accompaniment in the second half of the nineteenth century. Adoption of new cultural products or musical practices, however, should not be understood as a straightforward or passive acceptance by the Carioca population. Rather, the civilising process constituted an intricate dynamic that, despite social and racial disparities (with an overwhelming presence of enslaved Africans and a minority of whites) amalgamated peoples and traditions from different social, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Notes

1 My translation from Portuguese (AMARAL, 1948, p. 70).

2 My translation from Portuguese (AMARAL, 1948, p. 69, 70).

3 Portuguese viola or only viola, in this paper, is considered a generic term to designate a myriad of plucked chordophones found in Brasil before the arrival of the violão in nineteenth century. It has in general a "round sound-hole, tall box without accentuated incurved sides, median neck, fretboard on the level of the top soundboard, drawn rosette, strings attached under a narrow bridge glued on the top board, and the pegbox slightly inflected backwards" (OLIVEIRA, 2000, p. 201).

4 My translation from the Portuguese: Rua das Violas.

5 Caipira and Sertanejo refer to the culture of rural workers in the Center-Southeast Brazil that was considered 'underdeveloped' and 'archaic' in opposition to the 'fashionable' and 'modern' culture of the inhabitants of big urban centers such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (VILELA, 2010).

6 According to Nettl "musical change is normally to be seen within a context of culture change, it may also occur outside this general scope. Music may be an antidote, an expression of anticulture" (NETTL, 1983, p. 182).

7 Residents of Rio de Janeiro.

8 My translation from Portuguese.

9 Anonymous document entitled: *Relação das festas que se fizeram no Rio de Janeiro*. My translation: List of the celebrations made in Rio de Janeiro. National Library of Portugal, [www.http:// purl.pt/13936](http://purl.pt/13936).

10 Bethell (1985, p. 171).

11 The list of institutions created or transplanted in Rio de Janeiro is mentioned by historians including Fausto (1999), Schwarcz (2006), Neves (2011), Bethell (1985), Lima (2006), Gomes (2007), and Wilcken (2004).

12 Newspaper *Gazeta Extraordinária do Rio de Janeiro* 1811 in Gomes (2007).

13 My translation from Portuguese.

14 My translation from Portuguese.

15 More examples of Oriental habits in Brazil can be found in Freyre (1976, p. 449-505).

16 For broader analysis of how the civilizing process affected the architecture in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, see Gustavo Rocha Peixoto (2000).

17 My translation from Portuguese.

18 See John Luccock (1820) and Debret (1834).

19 Named after the Brazilian emperor Pedro II, this school was among the most respectable educational institutions in the country.

20 Peirre Laforge was the first musical editor in Rio de Janeiro. His collections of *modinhas* became

popular in the city in the nineteenth century.

21 Opera by the Italian composer Gioacchino Rossini from the first half of the nineteenth century.

22 Desafio means literally challenge. A style of singing in which two singers 'challenge' one another's skills of improvising about a given subject.

23 Fado was one of the primary dances developed in Brazil by the mestizo population influenced by African and Creole cultures. It was also a song genre which became popular in the second half of nineteenth century Portugal. (TINHORÃO, 2008)

24 Machete is a Portuguese four-course single strings plucked chordophone smaller than the viola.

25 Meaning that Teotônio could speak some of the African dialects spoken in Rio.

26 The words capadócio and malandro have various connotations in Brazilian Portuguese. In English these would be close to but not exactly translated as trickster, rogue, rascal, or scoundrel.

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