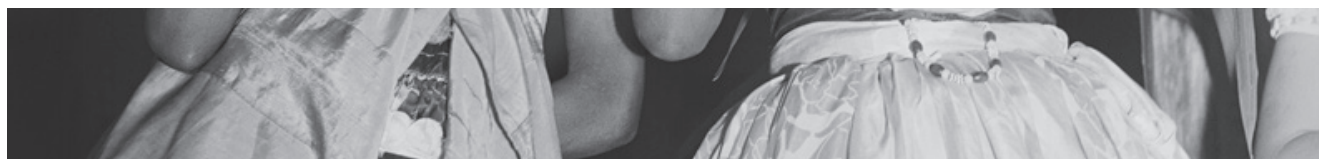


PIERRE VERGER, ROGER BASTIDE AND A CIGARRA

CANDOMBLÉ, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE POPULAR PRESS



HEATHER SHIREY



Royal Anthropological Institute

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On 5 August 1946, the French photographer Pierre Verger (1902–96) arrived in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, having travelled to the country's north-east on the recommendation of his compatriot, sociologist, ethnographer and anthropologist, Roger Bastide (1898–1974).¹ Prior to his arrival in Bahia, Verger had spent a decade and a half travelling throughout the world, photographing people and their lives in Europe, Asia and the Pacific Islands, as well throughout the African continent and in both North and South America. By the time of his arrival in Bahia, Verger had already established an international reputation as a photojournalist, working for widely distributed magazines such as *Paris Soir* and *Life*.² In keeping with other travel-artists of the era, Verger, during the early period of his photographic career, had been immersed in, and was shaped by, a colonial perspective. As a result of this, he produced images that would have appeared somewhat exotic to a European audience and which allowed his viewers to transcend their daily lives through the consumption of photographs.³

Although Verger continued to travel widely throughout much of his life, after 1946 he made his home in Salvador da Bahia and remained

settled there until his death fifty years later. The years immediately following his arrival in Bahia were transformational in terms of his photographic practice. Verger became deeply rooted in and committed to the study of African-Brazilian culture and religion and, as a result, he increasingly positioned himself as an ethnographic photographer who consciously produced images with the goal of contributing to an existing analysis of cultural phenomena and social relationships in African and the African Diaspora, specifically as related to religious practice in Bahia. This commitment, I argue, was made evident in his contributions to popular magazines that had a wide public appeal in Brazil, such as *O Cruzeiro* and *A Cigarra*.

Specifically, this essay examines Verger's early photographs of Candomblé, the African Brazilian religious tradition largely associated with the country's north-east. The photographs investigated here appeared in the June 1949 issue of *A Cigarra*, a popular magazine published in the south of Brazil. Verger's photographs were accompanied by text written by Bastide, who, while based the southern metropolis of São Paulo, was also known as a leading ethnographer of Bahian Candomblé during the mid-twentieth century. Their article, printed with the simple and descriptive title "Candomblé", contained twelve photographs that Verger produced during a visit he made to the Candomblé community led by Joãozinho da Gomea, soon after his initial arrival in Bahia. The photographs were accompanied by Bastide's personal account of his visit to the same community, which took place on a separate occasion. Although published in a popular mainstream magazine rather than a scholarly publication, the text and images sought to contribute to an ongoing dialogue focused on African cultural manifestations in Brazil. By way of the article and images in *A Cigarra*, Verger and

1 Araújo (2013) addresses the timeline for Verger's early years in Brazil (113–38). Verger travelled to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro from February 1940, meeting Bastide 13 April 1946. Bastide made specific recommendations for him in Bahia, as he had recently been there himself (Lühning, 12; Araújo, 116). Bastide returned for his second research trip to Bahia in 1949, at which time Verger had embarked on his first big trip to Africa (Lühning 2002:14). They exchanged letters while Verger was away, and worked together in Bahia in 1951 (Lühning 2002:15).

2 For a partial list of Verger's early publications, see www.pierreverger.org/en/pierre-fatumbi-verger-en/his-work/detailed-bibliography/photography-in-print.html.

3 Araújo situates Verger within a tradition of traveler artists 'with colonial and civilizing ambitions' (2013:115) and specifically identifies works that fit within the expectations of colonial photography (ibid.:116).

Bastide made efforts to present Candomblé in a non-sensationalizing manner to an audience that was prone to viewing the religion as marginal and potentially threatening to mainstream society.

The marginalization of Candomblé and its emergence in national identity

Candomblé emerged in the context of a slave-based society in nineteenth-century Brazil. Well into the twentieth century, the dominant culture continued to fear and demonize it. As a result, Candomblé communities were threatened by police raids, arrests and the confiscation of sacred objects (Ickes 2013:107; Selka 2008). Many historians and anthropologists, among them Kim Butler, Rachel Harding, J. Lorand Matory and Patricia de Santana Pinho and have argued convincingly that Candomblé's very existence was an act of resistance to the racialized and gendered power structures of the dominant culture (Butler 1998; Harding 2003; Matory 2005; Santana Pinho 2010). Negative perceptions of the religion were increasingly challenged by scholars and a core group of Candomblé leaders, beginning the 1930s. This resulted in the transformation of Candomblé from a marginalized position in the early twentieth century to a recognized religion, often associated with the country's north-east and perceived to be closely connected to African traditions. Scholars, both Brazilian and foreign, as well as leaders of the elite Candomblé communities served as active agents in this process.⁴ This struggle for recognition as a religion was ongoing at the time that Verger and Bastide published in *A Cigarra*, and their work sought to contribute to these efforts.

4 Many historians and anthropologists have focused on the role of intellectuals and practitioners of Candomblé in this process, among them the following: Alberto 2011; Capone 2010; Ickes 2013; Parés 2004; Romo 2010; Santana Pinho 2010; Selka 2008.

In addition, by the time that Verger and Bastide began their work, Candomblé communities had already begun to promote connections between 'Africanness', 'purity' and 'tradition'. By the 1930s, Brazilian and foreign intellectuals developed close relationships with leaders of the emerging elite Candomblé communities. Scholarly publications, such as books and articles by Ruth Landes (1947) and Edison Carneiro (1948), for example, reinforced the elite status of communities such as Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá and their leaders by emphasizing direct lineage to West African traditions. Concurrently, influential thinkers such as Gilberto Freyre (1956) argued that Brazil's national identity was shaped by hybridity, and that the mixing of European, African, and Native traditions was at its core. Through their work in popular magazines such as *A Cigarra*, Verger and Bastide introduced these ideas to a new audience on the national level. In an effort to provide broader acceptance of Candomblé, which, although it existed in the south, was still largely thought of as a regional phenomena associated with the north-eastern state of Bahia.

Verger and Bastide's collaboration

Bastide arrived in Brazil in 1938, several years ahead of Verger, and he served as chair of the sociology department at the University of São Paulo. His contract stipulated that he was only permitted to conduct fieldwork during vacation periods, and thus he spent a very limited amount of time – approximately five months spread out over seven years – actively engaged in Candomblé communities in Salvador (Capone 2007:341). Both Bastide and Verger, as Stefania Capone has discussed, were intensely involved with intellectual debates involving foreign and Brazilian scholars, as well as Candomblé practitioners, regarding the religion's origins

and ongoing connections to African traditions (ibid.:338). Interestingly, although they maintained frequent contact and communicated extensively about connections between Africa and Brazil, the two men did not cross paths in Salvador in conjunction with the creation of their 1949 article on Candomblé.

Verger's status as a European photojournalist and his connection to the intellectual elite allowed him access to spaces that might be otherwise limited to a visitor to Bahia, or to Bahians who were not of African descent. In addition, Verger travelled quite frequently for most of his active life as a photographer. Once settled in Bahia, he moved between West Africa and Brazil's north-east, ultimately taking on the title of 'the messenger' in reference to his role as an intermediary between the two cultures. Verger played an important role in recording his observations of rituals and ceremonies in Brazil and West Africa, thus seeming to confirm more academic arguments about the connections between the religious practices in the two regions. His role as the 'messenger' between Africa and the diaspora also served to deepen his relationship, and thus his access, to Candomblé communities (Capone 2010:216–17).

As his photographic practice developed, Verger sought to capture the cultural practices in a systematic manner, presenting these images strategically in order to complement anthropological analysis. He published his photographs comparing ritual practice in Brazil and West Africa in his first book, *Dieux d'Afrique: Culte des Orishas et Vodouns à l'ancienne Côte des Exclaves en Afrique et à Bahia, la Baie des tous les Saints au Brésil*, in 1954. His photographs, which revealed shared practices, postures, and material culture, played an especially powerful role in the construction of Bahia's African identity and what Patrícia de Santana Pinho refers to

as the myth of 'Mama Africa', a construct that imagines Bahia to be the recipient of 'authentic' cultural gifts from Africa, which in this mythical construct serves as a primal source (see Santana Pinho 2010).

Although he had little formal education earlier in his life, Verger's interest in the historical connections in the Atlantic world eventually led him to pursue a doctorate in African Studies at the Sorbonne (1968) resulting in his publication on the slave trade, *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le Golfe de Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos du XVIIe au XIXe siècle*. By the 1980s Verger had largely abandoned his role as an active photographer, and instead focused on research and the organization of books and exhibitions that juxtaposed images from West Africa and Bahia, progressing his arguments on the interconnecting cultures. For books such as his 1981 publication *Orixás*, Verger selected photographs that shared iconography, camera angles and tonal contrast in order to emphasize visual similarities, using these juxtapositions as evidence of retentions and survivals, and, by extension, the 'purity' of Candomblé Nagô (Araújo 2013:118), a tradition thought to be closely related to Yoruba practices. It is through this work that Verger gained a reputation as a scholar/photographer; further, it is primarily through his published books that he is envisioned as a contributor to scholarly debates about Candomblé's origins and position in modern society (Capone 2007:368).

However, even prior to these contributions to the scholarly literature on Candomblé and Bahia's connections to Africa, which mark the later part of his career, Verger sought to enter into the ongoing debate about African culture in Brazil's north-east by way of his contributions to the popular press, such as the Candomblé photographs published in the 1949 *A Cigarra*

article.⁵ By emphasizing the distinct social space of Candomblé and the differences between its clothing, material culture and ritual practices and that of the dominant culture, Verger's photographs served to validate the argument put forth by scholars and leaders of the elite Candomblé communities that the religion was related directly to African belief systems, existing apart from mainstream Brazilian society. At the same time, Verger's photographs in *A Cigarra* did not focus on aspects of the religion that were sensationalized in mainstream culture – blood sacrifice and ecstatic states of trance – and therefore served to normalize Candomblé for the magazine's mainstream readership.

Verger, Bastide, and *A Cigarra*

The photographs of a Candomblé ceremony that appeared in the June 1949 issue of *A Cigarra* provide an excellent case study through which to explore the relationship between Verger's photographs and the written anthropological scholarship that his contemporaries published, both in Brazil and abroad. This 1949 article demonstrates Verger's early entrance into a discussion, alongside Bastide and other foreign and Brazilian scholars as well as Candomblé leadership, in order to provide legitimacy to a religion that was still marginalized in mainstream culture. Importantly, Verger's foray into the anthropological discussions about Candomblé's African origins and its position in relation to national identity occurred in a magazine that sought to reach a middle-class audience at

the national level, and which therefore had a readership that was not personally invested in such a debate. An analysis of the images and text within the larger context of *A Cigarra* shows that, while the tone of the article and the manner of capturing the visual imagery of Candomblé sought to legitimize the religion in a non-sensational manner, the placement of the article in the magazine may have resulted in a continued undermining of the efforts to introduce Candomblé to the mainstream.

In no small part due to his position as a white foreigner and a perpetual outsider to the culture he sought to capture, Verger's photographs most often depicted public life. Verger was largely a photographer of the street, and the majority of his published works capture spaces out and about in the city of Salvador – markets, squares, beaches and docks, for example. In the April 1949 issue of *A Cigarra*, for instance, Verger published a series of photographs showing men and women of Bahia playing music, and dancing samba in the city's public spaces (Figure 1). While closely cropped and intimate, these photographs shot in the street capture a detailed view of scenes already clearly visible to the public, rather than those which were concealed or otherwise made inaccessible through their existence in restricted spaces.

In the same vein, his photographs of Candomblé, a frequent subject for Verger, most often captured ceremonies that were open to the public rather than behind-the-scenes private rituals. That being said, even shots of ceremonies that were open to the public would have comprised a seemingly exclusive and rarely seen glimpse into an exotic world when viewed in popular magazines such as *A Cigarra*, distributed to middle-class readers nationwide. This was particularly true for readers in the south of

⁵ While other scholars such as Melville Herskovits, sought evidence of 'survivals', elements of African spiritual and cultural practice that had persisted and were passed down through the generations within the repressive context of the slavery and the racist environment of the post-abolition period, Verger focused on connections built not in the past, but in the present.



Figure 1 'Roda de Samba', with photographs by Pierre Verger, *A Cigarra*, April 1949.

Brazil, where Candomblé was just emerging as a significant element of regional identity.

A Cigarra was first published by Diários Associados in São Paulo, then in Rio de Janeiro, between 1914 and 1975. Diários Associados also owned and published the much more well-known magazine *O Cruzeiro*, for which Verger also worked (see Barbosa 2007). *A Cigarra* was intended to appeal to educated middle-class women and men, and it was primarily marketed in the south of Brazil (Matos 2008). In 1949 *A Cigarra* was published on a monthly basis. The

magazine's covers during this period featured close-up images of beautiful white women who conformed to mainstream standards of beauty. The June 1949 cover (Figure 2) consisted of tightly cropped photograph of Ercy Godoy, a recent place winner in the 'Miss Federal District' beauty contest. Advertisements in *A Cigarra* during this time period targeted middle-class households, promoting beauty products, imported foods and luxury goods (Figure 3). The faces that appeared in advertisements during this period were exclusively white, an indication



Figure 2 Cover of A Cigarra, June 1949, featuring Ercy Godoy.

that the magazine primarily sought to cater to southern and urban readers of European descent (Figure 4).

Each issue of A Cigarra published in 1949 included a number of elements that followed a regular pattern. The magazine regularly contained reports on issues that affected the lives of cosmopolitan readers in the south, often including a discussion of politics, corruption and crime. Each issue featured at least one article focusing on theatre or cinema, often



Figure 3 Advertisement for beauty cream from A Cigarra, 1949.

including lifestyle profiles of the rich and famous (Figure 5). Readers of A Cigarra were interested in fiction as well, and during the period in question, each issue contained a number of short stories, some serialized. There were cartoons, letters and fashion features, also featuring white models. A 'feminine section' of the magazine provided readers with advice on fashion, fitness, dieting and relationships (Figure 6).

A CIGARRA - Magazine



Senhora MODERNA
USA NA SUA TOILETTE ÍNTIMA

Metrolina
ANTISSÉPTICO
ADSTRINGENTE
BACTERICIDA

grava, com todas as suas linhas, sua memória. Antes a fim, continuei a lembrar-me dos arbustos de flores amarelas e vermelhas existentes diante das janelas, bem como da varanda de madeira do primeiro andar, na qual, como bandeiras de várias cores, tremulava a roupa estendida; continuei a lembrar-me das folhas das janelas pintadas de amarelo sobre um fundo azul, no meio das quais se via um pequeno recorte em forma de coração, e do alto da empresa, onde havia um rio de cegonha. Às vezes, quando sentia o coração inquieto, vinha-me à mente a lembrança daquela casa. Na mansão fantástica e semi-inconsciente pela qual pensamos no impossível, esperava eu então em passar ali um dia. Perguntei a mim mesma: não é agora a melhor oportunidade de realizar este velho desejo, já quase esquecido? Não é precisamente o que convém, para nervos esgotados, aquela casa multicolor situada na montanha, aquela estalagem sem todas as molestias e comodidades do nosso mundo, sem telefone, sem rádio, sem visitas e formalidades? Só a lembrança da casa, já me parecia estar aspirando o perfume forte e agradável do ar das montanhas, e ouvindo o som das sinetas das vacas campestres. Só no recordar-me dela, já havia uma primeira reanimação e recobro de saúde. Foi uma daquelas ideias que parecem assaltá-las sem motivo algum, mas que na verdade são emanções de desejos que há muito vivem retidos e às ocultas, aguardando apenas a sua realização. Meu marido, que ignorava quantas vezes eu pensara naquela casa, que eu vira, havia anos, a princípio sorriu ligeiramente e depois me disse que indagasse se já existia algum quarto vago. De lá responderam-me que todos os três quartos para hóspedes estavam desocupados e que eu poderia escolher qualquer um deles. Tanto melhor, pensei comigo, nenhum vizinho, nenhuma conversa, e parti no primeiro trem noturno a sair. Na manhã seguinte, um carrinho puxado por um cavalo, em trote lento, conduziu-me, com muita moleza, para o alto da montanha.

Adiei tudo tão excelente, que melhor não poderia desejar. O quarto com seus móveis simples, de pinho claro, tinha o mais agradável aspecto; da varanda que, devido à ausência de outros hóspedes, estava exclusivamente à minha disposição, descortinava-se uma paisagem imensa. Um simples olhar à cozinha, que estava perfeitamente limpa e arrumada, mostrou-me a mim, experiente dona de casa, que ali iria ser bem tratada.

Um GUIA GRATIS para SUCESSOS CULINÁRIOS!

• É o novo livro "Receitas OS MAGOS DA CULINÁRIA" onde encontrará 65 receitas variadas, saborosas e para todos os paladares.

— ZÉ DE MILHO —

MAIZENA DURYEA
MARCAS REGISTRADAS

Verifique o acompanhamento ideal e o nome MAIZENA

A "MAIZENA DURYEA" 50 - 1 S Caixa Postal, 6-8 - São Paulo. Para enviar-me, GRATIS, o livro "OS MAGOS DA CULINÁRIA" preencha:

Nome _____

Cidade _____ Estado _____

Figure 4 Advertisements from A Cigarra, 1949.

In addition, every issue of A Cigarra published in 1949 also featured at least one article that was meant to transport the presumably middle-class and cosmopolitan reader outside his or her daily experience. These included articles on distant locations such as the Great Wall of China (May 1949) or temples in Java (June 1949) and Egypt (July 1949), as well as photographs and text on equally 'exotic' (in the eyes of urban middle-class readers) elements of culture in Brazil. For example, features focused on religious pantheists

O romance da MODA no cinema



Nas fotos: Viveca Lindfors, Loretta Young, Dorothy Malone, Barbara Lawrence, Jane Wyman (20th Century Fox e Warner Bros.)

O figurino cinematográfico abriu um novo capítulo na história da elegância feminina

Os vestidos das "estrelas" submetem-se a vários processos, antes de serem exibidos na tela.



Figure 5 An example of an article on fashion and the cinema from A Cigarra, 1949.

in Recife (March 1949), folk art in Pernambuco (March 1949), samba in Bahia (May 1949) and life in Rio de Janeiro's favelas (May 1949).

Candomblé in A Cigarra: text and image

For the typical middle-class person of European descent living in Rio or São Paulo in the 1940s, Candomblé was distant and exotic. In the recent past, Candomblé had been criminalized and feared, and although it was already present in Brazil's southern regions, it was far less visible

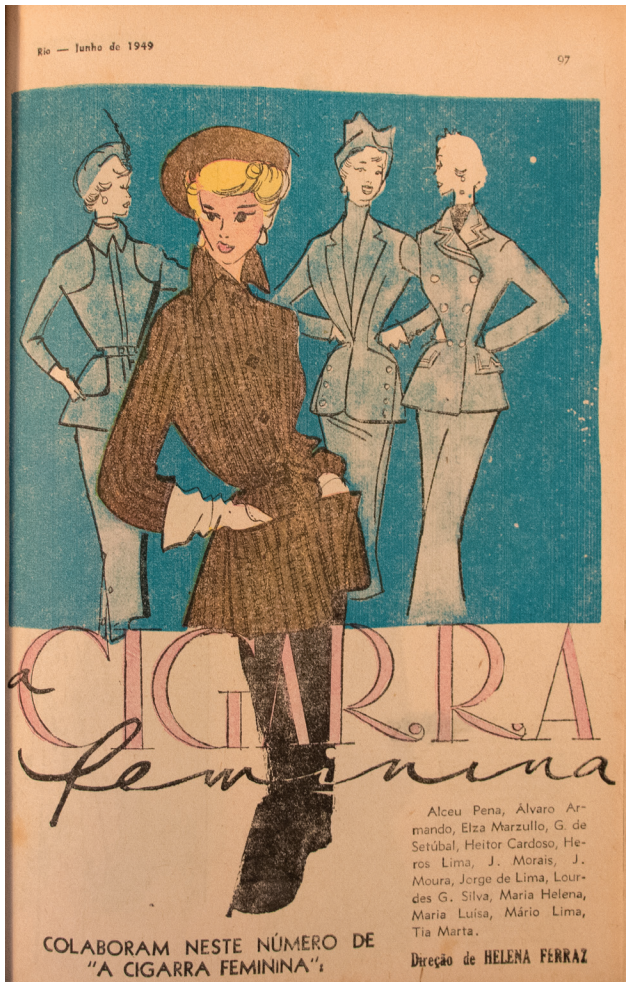


Figure 6 'A Cigarra Feminina', the 'feminine' section of A Cigarra, 1949.

than in Bahia. Verger's images in *A Cigarra* therefore made the repressed and denigrated religion visible to a broad public. He opened the door to a world that was largely invisible to mainstream Brazilians, particularly beyond Brazil's north-east.

Bastide's article is informative, accessible and based on his first-hand observations. In romantic tones, Bastide emphasized Bahia's roots in Africa:

*In the sonorous holds of the slaveships came not only the Children of the Night, but also their gods, the orixás of the forests, the rivers, and the sky of Africa ... the blacks have continued, by way of their traditional songs and dances, to adore the gods from across the sea.*⁶

(p. 3, author's translation)

After the opening paragraph, Bastide moved away from expansive and romantic generalizations to detailed descriptions of a particular ceremony that he had witnessed at the *terreiro* of Joãozinho da Gomea, a well-established Candomblé community. In distinct contrast with the neutral, third-person voice that would be expected in scholarly literature of the period, Bastide wrote with a casual tone, using the first person, acknowledging his presence at the ceremony he described.

Bastide's text was accompanied by twelve of Verger's black-and-white photographs. Nine of these are crowded compositions capturing practitioners of Candomblé actively engaged in ritual practice. Of these nine focusing on people, seven share the general characteristics set by the opening photograph. This full-page image (Figure 7), placed immediately before the article's opening text, shows people actively engaged in the sacred dances of the *orixás*. The figure in the foreground appears to be in trance, and is dressed in the articles of clothing and sacred objects associated with Omolu. Another figure on the right side of the image also appears to be in trance, while two additional women, their heads covered, are likely the initiates who accompany

⁶ Original text in Portuguese reads: 'Nos flancos sonoros dos navios negreiros vieram não só os filhos da Noite mas também os seus deuses, os orixás dos bosques, dos rios e do céu africano ... Os negros continuariam, através dos cantos e das danças tradicionais, a adorar os deuses de alemmar.'



Figure 7 Pierre Verger, image published in *A Cigarra*, June 1949. © Fundação Pierre Verger.

and assist those who receive the *orixás*. The caption on the lower left of this image reads 'The dance beings at the sound of the magical ta-ta.'

This opening photograph is typical of those in the article, in that the figures are shown from the side or back, their faces somewhat obscured. The images showing dancing are strongly vertical

and tightly cropped (Figure 8). The physical movement of the body and the elaborate clothing of the initiates is emphasized at the expense of focusing on recognizable facial features and expressions. Most of the images are shot at eye level or slightly below, and the photographer



Figure 8 Pierre Verger, image published in *A Cigarra*, June 1949. © Fundação Pierre Verger.

appears to be quite near the centre of the action (Figure 9).

Most of the images depict a Candomblé ceremony as an active event. In one photograph, captioned 'Figuras Hieráticas do "Terreiro"' ('priestly figures in the Candomblé community'), the two figures are shown frontally and the

camera is angled up, capturing their faces quite clearly (Figure 10). Whereas several of the other photographs capture very active moments of trance, this image reflects a moment of calm and controlled movement.

The final three photographs in the article move away from the representation of active



Figure 9 Pierre Verger, image published in *A Cigarra*, June 1949. © Fundação Pierre Verger.

religious practice to reveal the material culture of Candomblé. The first of the images focuses on hands holding and playing an *agogô*, a metal rhythm instrument used in religious ceremonies (Figure 11). The image that follows shows the head and hooves of a cow that has been offered as a sacrifice (Figure 12). The offering is laid out

with other dishes and containers that contain empowered substances with the simple caption: 'At last – the immolation.' The concluding full-page photograph shows a simple wooden cross in the community's outside space (Figure 13). The cross is mounted in a concrete pedestal, draped with a simple piece of white cloth, and flanked by



Figure 10 Pierre Verger, image published in *A Cigarra*, June 1949. © Fundação Pierre Verger.

two vessels of the sort that are used on altars to contain empowered substances.

When Verger and Bastide first met in São Paulo in 1946, Bastide urged Verger to travel to Bahia and provided him with key introductions.⁷

⁷ Araújo, 116.

But by the time Bastide himself returned to Bahia for the next phase of his own research in 1949, Verger had left on an extended trip to Africa. The two corresponded during this period, but only met again in Bahia in 1951. The images and text, therefore, were produced separately. While Bastide wrote about a festival for Oxalá,



Figure 11 Pierre Verger, image published in *A Cigarra*, June 1949. © Fundação Pierre Verger.

Verger's twelve images, also shot at the *terreiro* of Joãozinho da Gomea, but in 1946, focus on manifestations of Omolu and Xangô.

By describing his first-hand experiences in the *terreiro*, Bastide made readers feel as if they could also be transported safely to such a place, to a community that was defined through text and image as Africa in Brazil. Verger's photographs are intimate and full of information, and the emphasis is on the elaborate clothing and ritual accessories as well as dance postures. The social relationships of the religion are given great

emphasis alongside the material culture. The images stand in distinct contrast to the world depicted through the magazine's ads, which feature an upper-middle-class domestic sphere quite distant from the world of Candomblé.

Although today we recognize a tendency towards essentialism in the work of Bastide and Verger, the two were also instrumental in working with Candomblé leaders to craft a positive image for a broad audience, recasting what had been feared and dismissed as cult practice and allowing for it be treated as a religion in broader society. This newly crafted image involved the development of the notion of 'African purity' of the Nagô (shorthand in Bahia to refer to Yoruba) tradition and the codification of many practices, what Roberto Motta (1998) has referred to as the 'churchifying' of Candomblé.

Certainly Bastide and Verger presented a world that would have seemed exotic to the typical reader of *A Cigarra*, yet it was offered up with a marked lack of sensationalism and an avoidance of the details, such as the overt presence of blood in the initiation process, that would have been more shocking to viewers. As Fernando de Tacca has demonstrated (2006), this relative lack of sensationalism in Bastide's text and Verger's images was markedly different from the tone and photographs of two articles published in *Paris Match* and *O Cruzeiro* just over a year later. The *Paris Match* spread, produced by French filmographer Henri George Clouzot, revealed behind-the-scenes images of an initiation and used text and image to emphasize all that was exotic about Candomblé. The article in *O Cruzeiro* by José Medeiros and Arlindo Silva responded by including even more sensationalist images, emphasizing blood sacrifice. Interestingly, private letters between *O Cruzeiro*'s editor and the photographer José Medeiros indicate that the

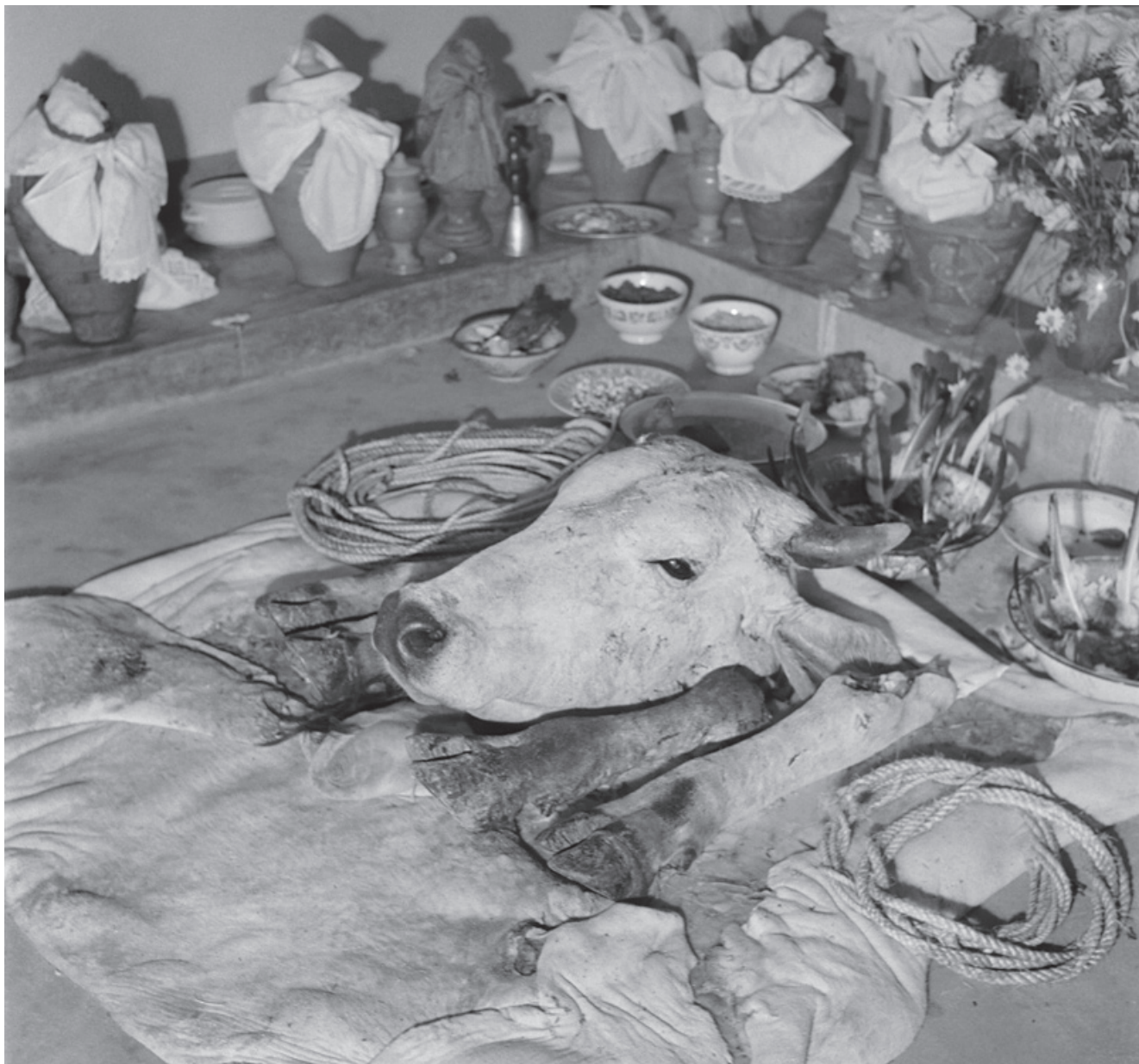


Figure 12 Pierre Verger, image published in *A Cigarra*, June 1949. © Fundação Pierre Verger.

magazine was consciously seeking images that would seem shocking and revealing in relation to Verger's.

Looking back at the 1949 issue, one can readily see that Verger carefully selected images that would reveal only what the public could see. It is worth noting that Verger had enduring and

respectful relationships with the Candomblé leadership, whereas Medeiros was ostracized in Bahian Candomblé circles as a result of his published images (ibid.). However, looking at the position of the Candomblé article in the magazine in the context of a year of publications



Figure 13 Pierre Verger, image published in *A Cigarra*, June 1949. © Fundação Pierre Verger.

of this journal, one sees that the editors may already have shaped how consistent readers of the journal would view Candomblé.

The three issues leading up to June 1949, as well as the issue that followed, all opened with a lead news report that focused on a sensational, marginal or even illegal activity. The March 1949

issue, for example, opened with an article about gambling and card games, and included reports of clandestine activities and a photograph of roulette wheels that had been confiscated in police raids (Terra 1949a). The leading news article in the April 1949 issue addressed the

black market in meat sales in which ordinary people paid higher prices for low-quality meat (Terra 1949b). Upon opening the May 1949 issue, the reader would find an article about a new governmental policies and their abuse by unethical landlords (Terra 1949c). As a result, the reader of *A Cigarra* was, over several issues, set up to expect a lead news report that addressed criminal or at least marginal activity. In the June 1949 issue of *A Cigarra*, the Candomblé article was in this position. It is worth noting that the pattern continued in the July issue, which opened with an article about cock fighting, emphasizing its cruelty (Guimarães 1949).

As previously mentioned, *A Cigarra* also ran regular feature articles that addressed cultural manifestations from beyond the middle-class mainstream of southern Brazil. These articles provided informative text accompanied by photographs that would transport the reader from his or her everyday experience. Verger and Bastide's 'Candomblé' was in keeping with the mood and tone of *A Cigarra*'s cultural features. These articles, however, were usually rather short and appeared towards the middle of each issue, not in the lead position. Seen in this larger context of the magazine and its established pattern, then, the 'Candomblé' article would appear to be in the position reserved for stories about politics, crime and corruption in urban life. This placement would have been meaningful to readers at a time when Candomblé continued to be marginalized, and its scholars and practitioners sought protection from criminalization.

This examination of the article 'Candomblé' within not just a single issue, but the broader context of *A Cigarra* during the first half of 1949, reveals that the photographs and article intended to celebrate and normalize a marginalized religious practice may have done just the opposite. Contrary to Verger and Bastide's intentions, the

article, given its position in the magazine, had the potential to further sensationalize Candomblé in the eyes of mainstream readers. In the context of Candomblé's ongoing struggles for legitimacy in the 1940s, this editorial decision, whether accidental or purposeful, was significant.

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