

THE PEDRA DE XANGÔ PARK: ASSERTING AFRO-BRAZILIAN ARCHITECTURE AND GEOGRAPHY O PARQUE PEDRA DE XANGÔ: AFIRMAÇÃO DA ARQUITETURA E DA GEOGRAFIA NEGRAS

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present the counter-colonial narrative interwoven in the architecture of the Pedra de Xangô Park from a theoretical perspective. It is a result from fieldwork based on results of the Master Thesis “Pedra de Xangô: a sacred Afro-Brazilian place in the city of Salvador” and on preliminary data and impressions of the ongoing Ph.D. Dissertation research “Spiritual Governance: the Afro-Brazilian sacred present in the construction of the Pedra de Xangô Park memorial”. To discuss the subject, three paradigmatic experiences will be introduced, hopefully contributing to the understanding of the utmost expression of symbology, representation, and ancestral power concentrated in the Afrodiasporic territory. *Stuart Hall's* text, “Thinking the diaspora”, the testimonies from Sangodele Ibuowo and Oyeniyi Oyedemi, members of *Aláàfin*¹ Òyó²'s entourage, and from a candomblé adept will be analyzed. The research method used is a Afrodescendant method, so that the research transgresses the rules compulsorily prescribed by hegemonic knowledge/practices. The norms here are dictated by Xangô, the King, the Orixá of ethics, truth, and justice, to bring into view Afrodiasporic photography, being a product of black, political, and religious geography present in the territory of the cities.

Keywords: Counter-Colonial Architecture, Afrodiasporic Photography, Pedra de Xangô Park, Border Thinking.

1 Introduction

This paper presents the narrative interwoven in the architecture of the Pedra de Xangô³ Park, which not only remembers, but nurtures and preserves the history and legacy of the African diaspora. The contributions presented here are the results of the Master Thesis entitled “Pedra de Xangô: a sacred Afro-Brazilian place in the city of Salvador” (Silva, 2017). In addition to these data, there are preliminary impressions stemming from the Ph.D. Dissertation research “Spiritual Governance: the Afro-Brazilian sacred present in the construction of the Pedra de Xangô Park memorial”⁴. It indicates, in loco, the counter-colonial assertion and the importance of networking for the preservation of the history, as well as Afro-religious historical and cultural heritage. It is well known that the city of Oyó - Nigeria, a reference of Yoruba culture, has very strong ties with the state of Bahia, especially the city of Salvador (BA), in Northeast Brazil. On July 31, 2014, the high priest of Sàngò⁵ made its first visit to the land of the Stone of Xangô, abode of Afro-Brazilian deities. The purpose of his visit was to get to know the sacred territory and, perhaps, gather experiences, which could subsidize the request for recognition of Òyó as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (Silva, 2019). Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III⁶, during his stay, requested the public authorities to preserve the Pedra de Xangô which was attended by the Municipality of Salvador, approving the process of registering the sacred monument as a cultural heritage site (Silva, 2019).

The Afrodescendant research method, whose paradigms are developed from the scientist's experiences, intellectual background, and empirical knowledge, are employed, as it breaks with the Western scientific tradition and the Eurocentric epistemology still in force in the academic world. Distancing itself from scientific impartiality, the research moves towards theoretical and conceptual development, seeking to highlight spiritual governance in the implementation of the park's street furniture. It transgresses the rules compulsorily prescribed by hegemonic knowledge/practice: the rules here are dictated by Xangô, the King, the Orixá of ethics, truth, and justice. Therefore, the article presents itself as a window of resistance to a culture viscerally tied to hegemonic and elitist thought and architecture, which silences the voices and the protagonism of

¹*Aláàfin*: “O-ni-ààfin: he who is, who owns the palace. Title of the king of Òyó” (Santos and Santos, 2016, p. 45, our translation)

²Òyó: “capital of the vast empire expanded by Sàngó” (Santos and Santos, 2016, p.53, our translation).

³Throughout the text we will find the words *Aláàfin*, *Sàngò*, *Òyó*, *Kosso*, *Elégùn* written in Yorùbá and/or Portuguese. Considering that the article brings contributions from other authors, we have opted to use the Yorùbá spelling, keeping the Portuguese spelling when strictly necessary so as not to compromise the fidelity of the text.

⁴Theme of Maria Alice Silva's PhD project, developed at the Graduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism at UFBA – PPGAU, UFBA. Advisor Prof. Dr. Fábio Macedo Velame, Co-Advisor Prof. Dr. Henrique Cunha Júnior.

⁵*Sàngó and/or Xangô*: - mythical and dynastic hero - who participated in the creation of the world at Olorun's request by creating lightning and thunder. Son of Oranyan and Torosi (daughter of Elempê - King of Tapás).

⁶ Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III – King of the city of Òyó (15/10/1938 – 22/04/2022).

the subaltern class. Thus, it goes beyond the matrices of Gramsci's cultural hegemonic thought by putting in evidence Afro-Diasporic history, culture, and architecture to counter a system of coloniality(ies) that does not give vent and space to black history.

1.1 Paradigmatic Experiences

To discuss the affirmation of the Afrodiasporic network architecture in the Pedra de Xangô Park, we bring to reflection three paradigmatic experiences that contributed to the elaboration of this paper: the first example is Stuart Hall's text, Thinking the Diaspora; the second example are the testimonies from Sangodele Ibuowo, the *elégùn*⁷ of Sàngó and Chief Oyeniya Oyedemi, Mògbà Sàngó, members of the entourage of the Aláàfin Òyó - Nigeria - who visited the Pedra de Xangô; the third example are the impressions of a *candomblé* adept from Salvador who accompanied the king's stay in the city, the honorable professor Arany Santana, current secretary of culture for the state of Bahia. It should be noted that the universe of Afro-Brazilian religions comprises an infinity of nations (Jeje, Angola, Ijexá and others). We chose to highlight the visit of Aláàfin, as it is a recent example of contemporaneity and because the ebb and flow of Afro-diasporic photography, black, political, and religious geography and border thinking is well outlined within it. Before we go into the subject itself, we will discuss who the Orixá Xangô is.

1.2 But who is Xangô? Introducing the King

Xangô is an Orixá⁸ - mythical and dynastic hero - who participated in the creation of the world at Olorun's⁹ request by creating lightning and thunder. Son of Oranyan and Torosi (daughter of Elempê - king of the Tapás), during his childhood and adolescence, Xangô lived in the country of his biological mother. As an adult, he settled in the city of Kosso, but was not immediately accepted by the inhabitants, given his violent and imperious attitude. He then imposed himself by force and, accompanied by his people, headed for the city of Òyó, where he founded a district with his name: Kosso. (Verger, 2002). As the fourth Aláàfin - (king) of the city of Òyó, Xangô conquered many cities, expanding his empire. The worship of this deity expanded to such an extent that at one time it was regarded as the national religion in Nigeria and a dynastic and mythical entity - a divinized king. The cult of Xangô was established and disseminated by "his devotees spread all over West and Central Africa and, transatlantically, across Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in Brazil — Bahia, where he is considered *ojísé*, protector or minister representing Olórun (Supreme God)" (Silva, 2019, p. 47, our translation).

The attacks of the Fulani¹⁰, coming from the North, forced the people of Òyó to permanently abandon the capital of the ancient city of Sabé and move to the South, thus founding a new city, a new Òyó, where its territorial, political, and cultural headquarters are located (Santos; Santos, 2016). Xangô played an important and strategic role in bringing his people together in defense of tradition. The archetypes of justice, courage, strength and royalty are attributed to the orixá and it was the initiative and charisma of many enslaved Africans, priests of Xangô in Brazil, that contributed to the formation of *candomblé* and the preservation of the ancestral legacy (Silva, 2019).

Stuart Hall (1999), when addressing the lives of Caribbean people in Great Britain, reveals to us that black identity has suffered and still suffers from identity crossings, including even gender identity and sexual orientation. For the author, the experiences of colonialism and eurocentrism are still alive, pulsating in our society, and can destroy subjectivities. Therefore, to think about the diaspora is to rebel against this cultural hegemony, but to offer cultural political options that promote difference.

⁷ *Elégùn*: *Elégùn*: an initiated person who channels the orixá.

⁸ "Orixá - a divinized ancestor who, during his lifetime, established bonds that granted him control over certain forces of nature, such as thunder, wind, fresh or salt water, or else, assured him of the possibility of performing certain activities such as hunting, metalworking, or even acquiring knowledge of the properties of plants and their use. The power, *àse*, of the ancestral orixá would have, after his death, the faculty of momentarily incarnating itself in one of his descendants during a phenomenon of possession provoked by him" (Verger, 2002, p.18, our translation).

⁹ Olórun: the Supreme God.

¹⁰ *Fulani*: ethnic group found in West Africa, Central Africa and Sudanese North Africa.

The author asks: How can Caribbean people imagine their relationship to territory, their origin, and the nature of their belonging in light of diasporic experiences? Hall (1999) stresses the umbilical force of this network and adds:

The black settlements in Britain are not totally separated from their roots in the Caribbean. Mary Chamberlain's *Narratives of Exile and Return*, with its life histories of Barbadian migrants to the UK, emphasizes how strong the links remain. As is common to most transnational communities, the extended family—as network and site of memory—is the critical conduit between the two locations. (Hall, 1999, p. 2).

The umbilical force that Hall (1999) tells us about was also observed on July 31, 2014, at the Pedra de Xangô in Salvador, during the visit of Aláàfin (king) of Òyó — Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III (Silva, 2019).

Sangodele Ibuowo, the Elégùn de Sàngó, member of the entourage of Aláàfin Òyó, reported his diasporic experience as a priest:

In Oyo there is a place where Oowe River and Ogun River meet together, in this location Sango performed a miracle by breaking down a big rock and turning it into "edun ara". So, I was impressed to see a rock in Bahia similar to the one in Oyo. I was even shocked. So, this made me to feel at home, as well the food, the way of dressing, the Orisa worshipping, but specially the day of Sango's offering in Brazil, the rain started to fall down exactly like in Oyo. (Ibuowo, S., 2019).

Oyeniya Oyedemi, Mogba Koso Aláàfin Òyó, the guardian of the main sacred temple of Shango in Kosso - Òyó - when interviewed, shared something similar:

My name is Oyeniya Oyedemi, Mogba Koso Alaafin Oyo and I would like to talk about Sango during the journey that Alaafin took me to Brazil. The food, I ate in Brazil, is equal to Oyo, the dressing is also similar, but I saw something in Brazil identical to an "Edun Ara" in a stone. In Oyo we have something similar, called "Ile Isan", no one can get the *Edun Ara*¹¹ out of this place. The culture of Brazil is the same as in Oyo, all together we are happy."(Oyedemi, O., 2019).

In official historiography, coloniality has always reserved the place of the subaltern, the inferior, the human being of less value to Africans in diaspora. The transcribed testimony presented below reinforces Sangodele Ibuowo's and Oyeniya Oyedemi's statements and allows us to observe the importance of the notion of belonging from a diasporic perspective. Arany Santana, a candomblé adept, in an interview granted to Silva (2019) reports her impression of the visit of Aláàfin de Òyó to the city of Salvador-Bahia:

A city, a country that treats Afro-Brazilian issues with indifference has to gather efforts to repair its omission. Throughout our lives, we have only had news of white, blue-eyed, straight-haired kings. Today we have the immense joy of the presence of an African king made of flesh and bone. It is the response we give to society that we are of noble lineage. Orixás, nkisi and voduns made us endure. It is with great joy that I am here. The Alaafin understood the diaspora; they made their way back and from here they will take the model so that the government of Nigeria will be sensitized, list and register the cultural heritage of Oyó. (Silva, 2019, p. 133, our translation).

A sacred Afro-Brazilian natural site, home to the Tupinambás, Quilombolas, Bantus, Nagôs Jejes, and others, the Pedra de Xangô is a cultural, environmental, and geological heritage of the city of Salvador which shelters multiple geographies, and which maintains inseparable networks. Cibele Barbosa (2021), Pierre Verger (2002), Joaze Bernardino-Costa and Ramón Grosfoguel (2016), Luiz Antonio Simas and Luiz Rufino (2018), Maria Alice Silva (2019), Santos and Santos (2016), Stuart Hall (2003), Fábio Velame (2022), Júlio Braga (1992) and Goli Guerreiro (2010) are some of the authors who help us reflect on the role of coloniality and the importance of the African diaspora on the other side of the Atlantic. We continue the crossing,

¹¹*Edun Ara*: thunder stones.

with counter-narratives that mirror the power of black history translated into a stone, which deals with ancestry, Afro-diasporic history, movement, network, territory, and *terreiro*¹².

1.3 Afrodiasporic Photography and the Need of Border Thinking

Photography is a document of record and of collection that lays in the picture memory, history, and identity. Therefore, the images that compose this article are Afrodiasporic photographs, since they portray this perspective of reviving the connection of the Pedra de Xangô Park with the root, the territory, Africa, and specifically with the city of Xangô - Òyó.¹³ Furthermore, Afrodiasporic photography affirms the conservation of a black, political and religious geography, to the detriment of a geography that has always had Western hegemonic history as its scope - as the history of the victors - translated into the colonial heritage of domination and expression of universal identity.

Cibele Barbosa (2021), in the article entitled "Afro-Atlantic images: transnational uses and circuits of photographs of Black people in colonialist times", highlights how the gaze was directed at black bodies, as well as at black culture. For the author, the images that circulated always held power relations that emphasized colonialist power and rationality left marks that were diluted in the Atlantic. Such a perspective affected, and annihilated, the hetero-representation and self-representation of African and Afro-descendant populations. "These canons, which spread on a global scale, led their bodies to be gazed at and judged, thickening the contours of racism and the commerce of gazes in the Atlantic" (Barbosa, 2021, p. 557, our translation).

Aníbal Quijano (2009), when discussing Eurocentric coloniality/modernity, portrays, that he has elaborated, illustrate a logic of humanity in which the global population is delineated dichotomously, labeling groups as inferior and superior, rational and irrational, primitive and civilized, as well as traditional and modern. The black population has been deprived of cultural, political, and religious representation. The history presented, for the most part, if not always, emphasizes the white universalist hegemony marked by the significance and contemplation of a historical, cultural, and religious heritage linked to Western canons.

The Afrodiasporic photographs, that lead us to resignify black history and culture, condense the border theory, which is very well described by Joaze Bernardino-Costa and Ramón Grosfoguel (2016). Theory is not a fundamentalist or essentialist thinking of those on the margins or borders of modernity. By being on the border, this thinking is in dialogue with modernity, but from subaltern perspectives. The author asserts that border thinking is nothing more than a thinking that develops an epistemic response of the subalterns to the Eurocentric discourse and praxis of modernity. This spiritual force that modulates the Afrodiasporic culture is essential to identify central aspects that act through the force of ancestry and the permanent construction of memory and of the Afrodiasporic culture itself. The African diaspora functions as a poetic grammar of the crossroads. The invocation of ancestry as a principal sign of presence, knowledge and communications (Simas; Rufino, 2018) can create processes of change outside the contexts of hegemonic domination including material, cultural and symbolic issues.

2 The Temple of Xangô in Kosso

Kosso is a suburb of the city of Òyó. In this place there is a temple dedicated to Xangô, where all the Aláàfins, king of the Nagôs¹⁴, are enshrined, with a seat in the capital of the vast empire, strategically conquered by Xangô (Gomes, 2017). Being the city's main sacred space, it is here that Xangô deposited his power, his Axé, before giving up earthly life and disappearing

¹² The term "terreiro", which comes from the Latin "terrarium", in Afro-Brazilian cults, is the place where ceremonial cults take place and offerings are made to the orixás. (Wikipedia, our translation)

¹³ Òyó is the mythical city of the orixá Xangô. It was once considered the largest empire in West Africa. Today, Oyo is the main reference of Yoruba culture in the world. The cultural legacy of the people of Oyo and the traditions of Xangô were established in Bahia, starting in the 19th century, giving origin to the Candomblés of the Ketu and Nagô traditions, also called Yorubá.

¹⁴ Nagôs: "name given by the Fons to the Yoruba-speaking peoples, still in Africa. In Brazil, the term indicates Yoruba heritage, and is used to define a nation (v.) of candomblé" (Lody, 2010, p. 129, our translation).

like lightning, like thunder (Santos; Santos, 2016). “An *odu*¹⁵ tells that Xangô was standing by an *àyán*¹⁶ and, enraged, destroyed the *àyán*, his palace, his lands, his subjects and then the news began to spread that he had hanged himself — *oba so*¹⁷”. (Santos; Santos, 2016, p. 53, our translation). Xangô's subordinates refuted the version with the phrase “Oba kosso”, which means that the king did not hang himself, but disappeared like thunder, throwing lightning stones at his palace (Santos; Santos, 2016). The crowning ceremony of Aláàfin (king) took place in the premises of the temple dedicated to Xangô in Kosso. After the act of enthronement, the Aláàfin can no longer enter the district until his death, as it is prohibited. However, as heir to the crown, he must perform rituals for his direct ancestor, Xangô. (Gomes, 2017).

*Gbongan*¹⁸ *Kosso*¹⁹ is the architectural site of Xangô (figure 1), whose main construction element is earth. The temple of Xangô in Kosso integrates the cultural and religious system essential for the continuity and preservation of tradition in the African diaspora.



Fig.1: Temple of Xangô, Kosso. Source: Velame, 2020.

¹⁵ Odu: sidereal intelligences that participated in the creation of the universe, the destiny.

¹⁶ *Àyán*: tree species.

¹⁷ *oba so*: hanged.

¹⁸ *Gbongan*: temple of Xangô and/or Sàngó.

¹⁹ *Kosso*: suburban district of the city of Òyó.

On the other side of the Atlantic, at the crossroads of the diaspora, Xangô is worshipped in his Park and also in *terreiro* communities, a "complex socio-religious organization, which has no parallel in any of the traditional African societies involved in the slave trade to Brazil". (Braga, 1992, p. 15, our translation).

3 The Pedra de Xangô Park Managing Afrodiasporic Architecture, Rites and Networks

The memorial at the Pedra de Xangô Park is the result of a partnership between public authorities, academia, and the civil society (*terreiro* communities). The authorship of the architectural project is by FFA Arquitetura e Urbanismo LTDA, under the coordination of the Mário Leal Ferreira Foundation of the City Hall of Salvador, Bahia. Muniz Sodré (1988, pp. 17-19, our translation) tells us about a political geography "that delimits sovereignties or zones of power, always configuring the world according to this representation and this reality called the State." However, he also presents us with "the geography that comes from the so-called subaltern classes", Inheritors of their own black, traditional symbologies that develop on the ground of the *terreiro*, on the streets, squares, and crossroads.

Fabio Velame (2022, p. 437, our translation) defines the itinerant architecture, in network, as that discontinuous territory, connected by itinerant bodies (*povo-de-santo*) that perform in a given time "an Afro-Brazilian ritual, always mobile, dynamic, nomadic". The Pedra de Xangô Park (figure 2) is this territory-*terreiro*, this poetic grammar sung at the crossroads of the diaspora, itinerant architecture - creole, black, political and religious geography. It is the "center of convergence of diverse public, semi-public and private rituals of a range of *terreiro* communities in the city that communicates and networks". (Silva, 2019, p. 143, our translation).

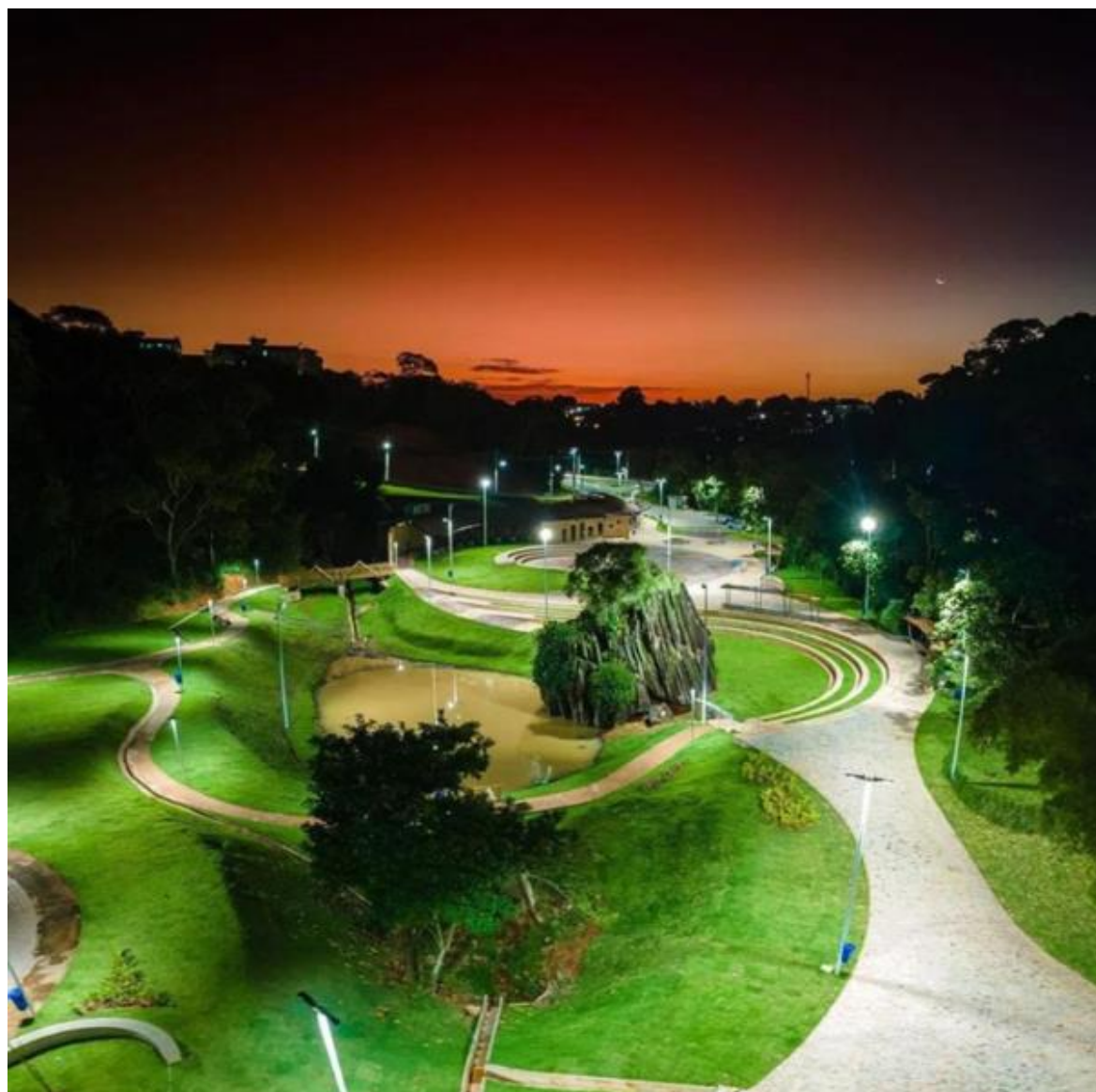


Fig. 2: Pedra de Xangô Park. Source: Santos, I., 2022.

It is also an inseparable network, a union of beings and things that form a quadrature: the earth, the sky, the mortal and the divine (Velame, 2022), interconnected, in total synergy. "Every spring, every plant, every green space around the Pedra de Xangô is a spearhead, it is the *terreiro* itself and is so considered because it has an intimate connection with the being and the cosmos" (Silva, 2019, p. 143, our translation).

Architecture without walls, doors, windows, roofs, without outside and inside, but the place of sheltering stories of runaway natives, home of legends, struggles and resistance of black quilombolas, caboclo huts and dwelling of Orixás, Voduns and Nkisi, the house of Xangô, - revered by the Alááfin Òyó -, the center of a Municipal Environmental Protection Area (APA), the starting element of an Urban Park, a monument listed by the City Hall of Cajazeiras weaves the network of Candomblé *terreiros* in Cajazeiras (Velame, 2019, p. 11, our translation).

Exu, like Xangô, allows for an expanded vision and a rupture with historical linearity, through his chaotic creativity (Simas; Rufino, 2018). Black decolonial epistemologies are part of the reappropriation of this Afrodiasporic heritage historically sedimented by the sign of cultural resistance against the force of violence of the colonizer's practices of subalternisation, always meaning to extirpate the cultural self-determination. Colonialism, the remnants of slavery, the imposition of Western culture, ethnocidal and genocidal politics were not able to erase the Afro-Brazilian ancestral legacy in the Pedra de Xangô Park. The ancestral knowledge and practices and their ontological constitution through the African diaspora remained associated with spiritualized subjectivity and intersubjectivity during this long process dictated by invisibility and cultural erasure. Cultural heritage of the city of Salvador, the Pedra de Xangô Park is the living, pulsating portrait of the affirmation of this Afro-diasporic architecture. The photographs of the various cultural manifestations held in the sacred Afro-Brazilian natural site convey the exact dimension of the potential strength of the People of Axé who have always experienced and lived the city in asymmetrical conditions.



Fig. 3: Orô of the Pedra de Xangô, Salvador-Bahia. Source: Silveira, M., 2019.

The march, the *orô*²⁰ (Fig. 3), the *xirê*²¹, the *ossé*²² (Figura 4), the bonfire of Xangô, the marriage blessing, the *amalá*²³, the capoeira circle, the rituals of umbanda, the caboclos and encantados' *ingorross*²⁴, the *toré*²⁵, the Thunder Stone Festival, the samba of the matriarchs at the Pedra de Xangô, the caruru of the *ibejis*²⁶ are the “architectures in networks, itinerant, in trance” (Velame, 2022, our translation) that build resistance and the existence of the African in diaspora.



Fig. 4: Ossé of the Pedra de Xangô, Salvador-Bahia. Source: Silveira, M., 2019.

Photography, as a tool to portray architecture and the historical, cultural, and religious heritage allows also a permanent digital connection with the African territory and reaffirms the black fight against the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being.

It is the third diaspora present through the "displacements of signs, texts, sounds, images — caused by the black diaspora communication circuit" (Guerreiro, 2010, p. 8, our translation). Recent posts on the Instagram profile of the late (king) of Òyó

²⁰ *Orô*: sacrificial ritual (offerings).

²¹ *Xirê*: "It is a word of Yoruba origin that means wheel or dance. In Candomblé rituals, where the *xirê* is performed, the *orixás* dance together and counterclockwise". (Vaz and Ramos, 2021, p.20, our translation).

²² *Ossé*: "ritual of offering food to the *orixá*. It is done weekly along with the cleaning of the *peji* (a covered room or altar where the *orixá*'s settlements are and where the offerings are placed." (Lody, 2010, pp. 131-132, our translation).

²³ *Amalá*: It is a Yoruba word and means "a kind of food made with yam flour". Oxford: "*Yam flour turned with hot water for food*". *Amalá* is a yam stew that is eaten in Nigeria, among the Yoruba, with a sauce or a thick soup of okra, which in Brazil we call *caruru*, and the Yoruba *obé ilá*, that is, okra *caruru*, translating *obé* as *caruru*. In Brazil, as in Nigeria, pieces of meat are also added to the *caruru*. In the *candomblés* of Bahia, the name *amalá* became associated with the cult of Xangô (Lima, 2010, p. 100, our translation).

²⁴ *Ingorrossi*: chants, *caboclo* prayers.

²⁵ *toré*: ritual dance performed by various indigenous peoples.

²⁶ *Caruru dos Ibejis*: food made with chopped okra, *dendê* oil, onions and shrimp for the "twin Yoruba gods, protectors of the family and children (Lody, 2010, p. 126, our translation).

- Alaafin Oba Adeyemi III (2022), from May 17, are evidence of these diasporic shifts. In addition to posting images referring to the Aláààfin's visit to the Pedra de Xangô, the caption of the post reads: "Alaafin in Brazil with an entourage of 25 Sango devotees 2014 Late Oba Adeyemi III, the Alaafin of Oyo, was invited by Brazilian Government to visit Salvador - Bahia for an International Seminar about Culture. Alaafin of Oyo requested the Bahia Government to preserve the Sango Stone in Brazil, which has been done as an Icon of Culture. The virtual world has connected diverse cultures, crossed territorial borders and Atlantic cities' repertoires, because it allows the sharing of information and thus raises to the power of the third African diaspora²⁷.

4 Final Considerations

The Pedra de Xangô Park is a black people's land, a quilombola's land, an indigenous territory, it is "a contemporary quilombo, a terreiro, a place of history and memory of the black people in the diaspora" (Silva, 2017, p. 272, our translation). The world cosmoperceptions of the adepts of Afro-Brazilian religions were determinant in the elaboration of the project concept. The technicians responsible for the architectural design delved deep to understand the socio-legal and cultural reality of the community. It was necessary to understand and heed the orders of the spirituality, to listen to the inaudible, to let oneself be guided by supernatural forces, because the conduction of the work was not in the hands of those who had technical knowledge on the earthly plane, and/or political power, but in the hands of the invisible guides of the Divine, of the Sacred, of Spiritual Governance, of Xangô, the orixá of ethics and justice.

The support equipment of the Pedra de Xangô Park, inaugurated on May 4, 2022, is the concretization of black narratives that deal with the importance of ancestry, *quilombamento*²⁸, Afro-diasporic history, movement, networks, territory, and *terreiro*. It counters Eurocentric universalist thinking, practices, and architectures that often overlook the black, political, and religious geography present in the territory of cities. In this paper, we do not only endorse the power of counter-colonial architecture and Afro-diasporic photography as a legacy of black history. Here, we express the dynamizing power and agency of Xangô, in order to maintain the semantics of the African diaspora in the city of Salvador.

We must also add the urgency of a border thought that, as Ramón Grosfoguel has well emphasized (2009), deals with a thought that develops an epistemic response from the subalterns to the theoretical and practical repetitions of Eurocentric modernity. Border thinking poses itself as an African crossroads to break with a single history. But, besides that, it also involves the materialization of memory, architecture, territory, and the Black City that needs to be demarcated by new discourses and narratives, stemming from the Afrodiasporic²⁹ and ancestral culture. One example is the Pedra de Xangô Park, a counter-colonial statement of black as well as political and religious architecture and geography in the city of Salvador-Bahia.

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²⁷ Diáspora africana: African Diaspora or Black Diaspora is the phenomenon or experience lived by African descendants anywhere outside of Africa and the rich cultural heritage they have built (Silva, 2019, our translation).

²⁸ Quilombo: "A quilombo (Portuguese pronunciation: [ki' lõbu]; from the Kimbundu word kilombo, lit. 'war camp') is a Brazilian hinterland settlement founded by people of African origin [...]. Wikipedia.

²⁹ Cultura afrodiaspórica: black culture in the diaspora.

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