

The road to Porongos: *haitianismo* and *artiguismo* in the massacre that ended the *farroupilha*, 1835-1845

O caminho para Porongos: *haitianismo* e *artiguismo* no massacre que acabou com a *farroupilha*, 1835-1845

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Abstract: The Porongos defeat over the secessionist rebels on November 14, 1844, militarily and politically solidified the *barão de Caxias*' coming victory, which would end the longest rebellion in Brazilian history, the *farroupilha*, 1835-1845. Most of the encounters to come were small, mopping-up and surveillance actions, except for one, at Arroio Grande, just two weeks after Porongos. Suspiciously, the targets of both these assaults were the *libertos*, slaves the rebels had seized from their provincial loyalist neighbors, and whom they armed and ostensibly freed. Before Porongos, Caxias and the *farrapo* general Canabarro had arrived at the same conclusion: in order to have peace, conciliation, and a return to Imperial order, the rebels needed proof that their cause was lost. The best and most convenient solution led Caxias and Canabarro to use Black losses to show the war was no longer winnable, and to defang them as a future menace. When Canabarro assembled what was the last great rebel army on the Cerro do Porongos, *liberto* soldiers comprised its very core. On that November morning, approximately 35% of Canabarro's troops were either killed, wounded, or captured. Nearly all those who died or were taken prisoner came from the ranks of the *liberto* infantry. If the many mysteries swirling around Porongos were stripped away, what would emerge and converge at Porongos were two historical shadows still coursing through the borderlands, *haitianismo* and *artiguismo*. These were neither doctrines nor unique to the borderlands, yet together they advised both rebel and Imperial policy, and were implicit in the immediacies of decision-making which determined the *libertos*' fate.

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Resumo: A derrota em Porongos dos rebeldes secessionistas em 14 de novembro de 1844, militarmente e politicamente solidificou a vitória do barão *de* Caxias, que acabaria com a mais longa rebelião da história brasileira, a Farroupilha, 1835-1845. A maioria dos embates seguintes foi de ações de vigilância, com exceção de um, em Arroio Grande, apenas duas semanas depois de Porongos. Desconfiados, os alvos desses dois assaltos eram os libertos, escravos que os rebeldes haviam apreendido de seus vizinhos legalistas, e que eles armaram e ostensivamente libertaram. Antes de Porongos, Caxias e o general farrapo Canabarro chegaram à mesma conclusão: para ter paz, conciliação e um retorno à ordem imperial, os rebeldes precisavam de provas de que sua causa estava perdida. A melhor e mais conveniente solução levou Caxias e Canabarro a usar o esmagamento dos libertos para mostrar que a guerra estava vencida e desabilitá-los como uma ameaça futura. Quando Canabarro montou o que foi o último grande exército rebelde no Cerro de Porongos, os soldados libertos consistiram seu núcleo. Naquela manhã de novembro, aproximadamente 35% das tropas de Canabarro foram mortas, feridas ou capturadas. Quase todos aqueles que morreram ou foram feitos prisioneiros vieram das fileiras da infantaria liberta. Se os muitos mistérios que giravam em torno de Porongos fossem desconstruídos, o que emergiria e convergiria em Porongos seriam duas sombras históricas que ainda atravessavam fronteiras, *hatianismo* e *artiguismo*. Não eram nem doutrinas, nem exclusivas das terras fronteiriças, mas juntas aconselharam tanto a política rebelde quanto a imperial, e estavam implícitas no contexto da tomada de decisões que determinavam o destino dos libertos.

Palavras-chave: *hatianismo*, *artiguismo*, libertos, farroupilha, Porongos.

Introductory note

In the preparation of this paper I have approached the story of “the fighting *libertos*” within an interpretive framework, relying upon the revisionist school of

thought associated with the North American Brazilianists of the 1970s and those historians of slavery who later returned dignity and agency to the slave. I was trained and influenced by two Brazilianists, Warren Dean and Anthony Leeds, who were not only concerned with economic and military elites, but with broader ecological determinants. In revisiting Porongos, I have gathered new insights from current scholarship on slavery in the Americas, in particular Alan Taylor and Julius Scott. The explosion of innovative works on the southern borderlands from (Gunter Axt, Miqueias Mugge, Daniela Carvalho, Adriana Souza, Cesar Guazzelli, and others), some of whom use quantitative history in their empirical research into what was before unexplored archival resources, have added not only depth, but also texture, when it relates to slave lives and conditions. Yet, one should never lose sight of the masterly political works of Alfredo Varela.

Part I: Borderlands on Fire: the role of the *libertos*

The *farroupilha*, 1835-1845, was a far more serious challenge to the Empire's integrity than any of the other revolts during the Regency period for its geographic scale, the vigor of its cavalry, and the rebels' highly personal relationships with unstable neighbors hostile to past Brazilian advances.¹ However depleted or seemingly intractable, and despite their loss of critical ground, *farrapos* exhibited a remarkable staying power, devised from their militia past, exposing Caxias to men whose professed beliefs were alarmingly close to those of

¹ The intentional weaponizing of slaves by those in the white power structure was not unknown in Brazil. Latafundias from colonial days on down armed slaves to protect and enlarge their properties; and the use of *henriques*, Black troops under government auspices, helped expel or diminish foreign invaders. In the later Luso-Brazilian Cisplatine adventures against the newly independent Spanish-Americans, Rio approved the army's incorporation of *henriques* into segregated black battalions. But the private and occasional arming by the state was vastly different from slaves involved in rebellious enterprises, exposing the white establishment to more threatening outcomes. In the first half of the 19th century, in episodes of rebellion against Rio, opposition forces, though in limited and restricted ways, brought and accepted slaves into their ranks: Pernambuco, 1817, and in Bahia's *sabinada*, 1837-38 (See KRAAY, 2006 for a concise discussion). In other rebellions during the tumultuous Regency Period, slaves often initiated revolt, forming themselves into armed groups with others from the dispossessed, as in Para's *cabanagem*, 1834-40. Led by white *estancieiro* elites, the *farroupilha* drew strength from its borderland position, taking advantage when it could from its republican neighbors and from its own fierce and highly mobile Black forces, shaking loose the frontier.

the new republican states in the La Plata. Just as worrisome, the *farrapos* had followed in their footsteps, adding slaves into their armies. Back in late 1836, while establishing their own republican government, the rebels had created permanent *liberto* fighting units, mostly out of slaves seized from *riograndense* loyalists, which caused unease for Caxias as they had his many unsuccessful predecessors (BENTO, 1993, II, p.53-54). A quick study in plains warfare, though, Caxias was able to turn Imperial fortunes around upon his dual appointment as governor and commander over the rebellious province in 1842 (MENDES, 2015). Under his management, the war was becoming one-sided; yet, he was progressively more troubled by *liberto* importance the more Canabarro relied upon them.

No one knew how far the *farrapos* would go beyond the known *liberto* brigade, nor if these former slaves would shed their collective subservience, making themselves even more dangerous. Their very existence represented an ongoing threat to white dominance, governance, and Brazil's Platine ambitions (ARARIPE, 1986, p. 87). Though these *libertos* comprised less than a thousand men and seemed inconsequential in comparison to the Haitian experience, in the context of the two over-lapping civil contests on Brazil's border, the *farroupilha* and the *guerra grande*, 1836-52, they bred concerns in Rio, and helped trigger Caxias' decisions (LEITMAN, 1977, p. 507; GUAZZELLI, 2005, p. 21). As the war was winding down, these mobile *libertos*, with their own cadre of lower level officers, had suffered innumerable affronts as second class *farrapos*, and were increasingly being seen as internal enemies with unsettling knowledge and experience in borderland politics and warfare. Few military men on either side of the conflict extolled them. Had Imperial and rebel leadership been bravely candid, they would have admitted the truth instead of burying the *libertos*' prowess and importance on the *Cerro*. If the *libertos* were to be truly freed following the *farroupilha*, or if they collectively broke away from the rebel army, the possibilities of their catalyzing unknown change were too great to leave unresolved (SCOTT, 2018; TAYLOR, 2013).

As a military man who had fought both with and against slaves, Caxias appreciated the real and potential influence of the *farrapo libertos*, who had

become an explicit focal point of Rio's planning, at least since the early 1840s (LEITMAN, 1977, 2018). But to Caxias, the *libertos* were still, and would always be, slaves. He upheld Brazil's architecture of slavery, coldly calculating *libertos* as a numerically important component of his opponent's armies. This special class of rebels was, in 1844, literally and physically positioned at the very crossroads of highly volatile states, which had advanced attitudes and laws on slavery, and histories of actively enlisting slaves. The rupture between *riograndense*-Oriental relationships over the latter's abolitionist tendencies and laws had collided in 1842 when Uruguay officially ended slavery, helping to ease regional and national interests between the *farrapos* and the Empire. Ending secession without removing the *libertos* was impossible.

Accordingly, Caxias gave them due priority, subtle enough, by eliminating them as prizes for *caudillos* across the border, which prevented them from impeding peace between the rebels and the Empire. Caxias recognized the *farrapo* reliance on slavery, which would more easily allow them to release their obligations to the *libertos* in exchange for reconciliation and rewards. A revered national hero of unassailable credibility, Caxias has escaped culpability, but his practice of handing out monetary favors to quiet rebellious fervor certainly made it easier for David Canabarro and others to accede to this morally perilous approach sanctioned by men of power to conceal their behavior (SOUZA, 2008, SILVA, 2010). Without the *libertos*, *farrroupilha* successes would have been much fewer; but, without the institution of slavery, Rio Grande do Sul would have a much diminished future. Within this ordered world, the *libertos* no longer belonged fully to the *farrapos*, but were enemy-seized property, temporarily master-less. For his part, Canabarro used them as a potent bargaining chip, his last critical asset to deploy maximum pressure to push Caxias into a favorable peace. Canabarro enticed the Uruguayan caudillo Fructuoso Rivera, whose *artiguista* linkages to revolution and slave soldiers showed no signs of receding, with Black units in exchange for fresh horses, which had been done before when they offered Rivera the *libertos* as loaned mercenaries. Rivera's prior temporary acquisitions of *farrapo libertos* were well known to Caxias and within ministerial circles. Everyone knew that, Rivera being

Rivera, his appetite had not changed. The urgency and uncertainty of politics and war in the borderlands propelled Caxias and Canabarro towards each other. No matter which of them or their close confidants had first generated the Porongos scheme to massacre the *libertos*, an agreement was reached and carried out.

One could argue, then, that in the *farroupilha*, the *farrapos* were protecting themselves from the residue of *artiguismo* and *haitianismo* by rebelling to ensure slavery on their terms in the borderlands against Uruguayan pretensions, and to fill the vacuum of recent Imperial retreat from the Cisplatine. The *farroupilha* had several other root cause, but safeguarding property in a world of great change and forces beyond their immediate control was a manifestation of their extreme localism, the political autonomy they claimed as a right. Slaves were a foundational element to *riograndense* expansionist settlement and a key to its export driven economy (BENTO, 1976; PALERMO, 2009). In the *farrapo* case, the calculated use of Black soldiers had the intention to provide security from what the *riograndenses* saw as radical aspects of *artiguismo* in Uruguayan sentiment and laws, but, when desperate, the *farrapos* could leverage loaning their *libertos* for limited time periods and under strict controls to Uruguayans in return for war material, horses, and future diplomatic recognition.

Part II: A Long and Violent Decade

In the greater *riograndense campanha* of the 1840s, the destruction and removal of a common internal enemy was a way to contain and inflict damage on the twin scourges of *haitianismo* and *artiguismo* (YOUSSEF, 2009; FREGA, 2009). At the time of the *farroupilha*, Rio Grande do Sul already had a long history of slave revolts, insurrections, and resistance, which had their own distinct origins and dynamics (MAESTRI, 1993). The situation in Rio Grande do Sul was in no way comparable to Haiti's great military rising: the *farrapos* exploited *liberto* military expertise, turning against them their own comrades, and their very own aspirations for independence in order to ensure white supremacy and a continuation of their economic way of life; whereas, in Haiti, white autonomists had lost control over the revolution to greater racial and social forces. What occurred in Haiti, the most

spectacular act of slave insurrection ever seen, 1789-1803, haunted the Brazilian white slaveholders, who knew what had befallen the French white planters and three mighty colonial armies in an era far removed in time and distance from the *farrroupilha*. When it came to slave insurrection, lapses in time seemed to shrink. The *libertos*, for their part, had acquired the strengths found in their accumulated years of fighting to help protect their promised freedom and, hopefully, with independence won, to add rights for many others currently in bondage. In them, an imposing specter emerged, resonating down to today, of a force, separate and distinct, to be equally admired and feared (GARIBALDI, 1859; ARARIPE, 1986). If the *libertos* failed to achieve their freedom, it was not because they lacked will or courage, but because they were compromised.

When Rio and Caxias faced organized *afro*-Brazilian military power on the fault lines of older empires and new revolutions going on in Brazil's southern reaches, they needed to strike fast while the *libertos* were still believed to be subject to the orders of their white officers and Canabarro, in particular. In the *riograndense* corner of the slave world, the Haitian revolution's legacy was the risk to established white society from militarized and politicized slaves. *Riograndenses* witnessed row after row of weaponized, disciplined, Black rebel soldiers, many proudly mounted with their lances in hand. For certain, there was real distress among loyalist slave owners who had properties confiscated, as well as with many in the white ranching establishment in rebellion, who were also fearful of the extent and precedent set by their own leaders. *Haitianismo* incorporated these shared elite fears of battle-ready Blacks, who were introduced for several years to the rhetoric of republicanism and revolution; and had their own aspirations to be free. While no support or participation came from Haiti, the Black republican revolution in the Caribbean was not a narrative endpoint. The *farrapos* clearly set themselves apart from what they saw as frightening race disorder taking place in the Northeast: the Black Muslim rebellion in Bahia, the *cabanagem*, and the *balaiada* (AL-ALAM, 2007, p. 39; SOARES and GOMES, 2001; LEITMAN, 2018). Haiti was more than an afterthought (MAESTRI, 1993; GEGGUS, 2006).

The day to day uncertainties associated with slave resistance and revolt merged with the volatile social components of *artiguismo* in the borderlands, which was very much alive in the Banda Oriental, too, of the 1830s and 1840s, where the disciples of the nationalist Uruguayan hero José Gervasio Artigas were at war with one another, and heavily invested in the search for slave recruits. *Artiguismo*, the plans, actions, and social thoughts of Artigas, were born in part as a counter-weight to the *Luso-Brazilian* invasions of 1810-1820. A critical element was Artigas' bold strokes when it came to slaves and the rural poor. In order to repel the invaders, Artigas actively pursued slaves from all areas of the sparsely populated Plate Basin by offering them a more inclusive future (BLANCHARD, 2008). Later, his brand was taken up by his followers, who would include Fructuoso Rivera, in the Cisplatine War, 1825-28. On the very eve of the *farroupilha*, there were provincial operations against well-established *quilombos* close to Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul's *charqueada* center with its rich target of 5,000 mostly able-bodied male slaves, perhaps one of the most concentrated slave populations in all of Brazil, just when emissaries of Rivera were said to have entered Brazil to provoke slave risings (AL-ALAM, 2007, p.57-58).

Though Uruguayan abolition came in fits and starts, Artigas was behind its beginnings and early growth (BORUCKI, 2009). This trajectory occurred too slowly for most; nevertheless, across the border it raised alarm. While *artiguista* dreams of creating confederated states intrigued some influential *riograndense* chieftains who were searching for autonomous solutions to their constrained political and economic situations, slave-dependent *riograndense* ranchers firmly rejected any levelling ideas. The best evidence of their adherence to slavery, as they saw it, were the requirements of frontier ranching, itself, which used slave labor in herding, agriculture, and domestic tasks. It was rumored that Bento Gonçalves da Silva, himself, the *farroupilha* revolutionary leader, president, and commander-in-chief, when a guerilla fighter in the late *Luso-Brazilian* campaigns, had flirtations with the *artiguistas*. He also had ranching and business dealings around Cerro Largo, married an Oriental woman, and later, in the years just before 1835, publically displayed his friendships with known Oriental revolutionaries (GUAZZELLI, 2015,

p.157). Upon his death, his estates were home to over 50 slaves (LEITMAN, 1977). He was not alone; *ex-farrapo estanceiro* nobility were no different (BAKOS, 1985; PALMERO, 2009, p. 127). Their emphasis on slavery distinguished *riograndenses* from the Spanish-Americans and justified, as well as would modify, their approach to slave recruitment.

Artiguismo and *haitianismo*, in the context of the *farroupilha*, were viewed differently by the protagonists, but also overlapped, at times, especially when it came to the *libertos*, whose value as soldiers made them, in addition, important negotiating tools alongside horse herds and confiscated cattle. *Artiguismo* and *haitianismo* were not new dangers but historical temptations woven into the many plots and intrigues of the fluid post-Independence La Plata. The joining of the two here was Rio's greatest concern, but Rio, and the rebels, too, also opposed *artiguismo's* bolder, more democratic positions on slavery and society. Rio dreaded the *farrapo* and Uruguayan use of slave recruits for transnational revolutionary enterprises, which had, as a primary objective, the detachment of Rio Grande and its possible confederation to Platine riverine states (TJARKS, 1964; VARELA, 1933). Yet the *farrapos*, without strong external relationships of the diplomatic and financial kind, nonetheless saw advantages to temporary transfers of Black troops to certain Uruguayans in order to garner political support and essential war supplies, usually horses. While an independent state was their objective, some were willing to confederate into broader alliances favored by *artiguistas* to secure a sustainable autonomy. These pacts, plots, and negotiations were open to external manipulations and calculations by the many different caudillos and parties, which had a cascading effect on the *farroupilha's* principal actors, where a move or action in one region had consequences in others. Wading into the troubled waters of the La Plata was risky, but for those out of power in the early 1840s, principally the *farrapos* and *riveristas*, starved for material support, there was less to lose, leading to the shifting and sometimes stillborn alliances for which the region was known.

Riograndense rancher militiamen were well acquainted with Artigas, the “*Jefe de los Orientales y Portector de los Pueblos Libres.*” As subjects of Portugal, they fought against him, and later again, confronted several of his adherents under

the flag of an independent Brazil during the occupation and then defense of the Cisplatine. Artigas' rural homeland was in chaos in the early part of the nineteenth century, an open invitation to *Luso-Brazilian* invasion (STREET, 1959). His radical ideas on constructing new nations inspired young Orientals to resist, and interested *riograndenses* to fulfill what they believed to be their own special destiny (SILVA, 1985, p.280-290). By placing moral and political authority in “*soberania particular de los pueblos*,” Artigas expounded geopolitical theories on how determined peoples could constitute themselves first into provinces, then into larger entities, loose forms of confederation, and then possibly into a great federation (FREGA, 2009). All these map changing possibilities swirling around in the Spanish-American self-determination struggles captivated *riograndense* attention as Americans; but, as *Luso-Brazilian* militiamen and guerilla fighters, and, more importantly, as expansionist slaveholding *estanceiros*, they fought against the very same men. Competition over land and cattle separated *riograndenses* from the Orientals everywhere where there was contact, even in the poorer grassland zones of the *Missões*, where Artigas, and later Rivera, had remarkable attachments.

The strange, little known episodic adventures of the *artiguista*-inspired *riograndense*, called *O Quebra*, encapsulated pre-*farroupilha artiguismo* and *haitianismo*. In these years of turmoil and war, 1810-20, *riograndenses* benefited greatly from the acquisition of land and appropriation of herds. Artigas' armies were the enemy, eager to poach *riograndense* slaves and runaways to help fill ranks. *O Quebra* came from an old *estanceiro* family and rose to the rank of major in the famous *dragões*, the legendary guardians of the Rio Pardo frontier, before being infected by *artiguismo*. For over the first three decades of the nineteenth century, *O Quebra* unsuccessfully pursued slave recruits, even riding alongside Artigas in the Banda Oriental and fighting against absolutist monarchies. On more than one occasion, the courts, through family influence, labeled him weak of mind, a “*louco varrido*,” to save him from prison. In 1820, in the little interior town of Cachoeira, he with his *liberto* adjunct at his side raided the local jail, freed the prisoners, which included slaves, proclaiming equality for everyone in his new

Republica do Rio Grande. Once again, relatives protected him from the laws' clutches despite his repellant *artiguista* ideas on abolition and equality. During the Cisplatine War, the Argentines gave *O Quebra* command of a regiment, *Libertadores do Rio Grande*, whose very name authorized him to raise the province's slaves. Later, several politically savvy *estanceiros* adopted his *americanismo*, a continent-wide movement, with *artiguista* overtones, against tyrannical regimes, which was later taken up by *farrapos* as a call to action. These arrangements, fantasies at times, were hard to repress. A full century passed when historians, celebrating *farroupilha's* centenary, considered *O Quebra* the precursor of *riograndense* abolition (*PUBLICAÇÕES de AN XXIX*, p. 510-512).

Although *artiguismo* did not bring Bento Gonçalves to take Pôrto Alegre nor the *farrapos* to formally declare their independence in 1836, it was used to arouse *estanceiro* discontent but not frighten off those who were patriotic. Bento Gonçalves had bet upon himself to shape how the movement was going to run. His first pronouncements were conciliatory and relatively non-threatening attempts to open up a dialogue, a way to renegotiate a stronger place within the Empire (SILVA, 1985, p. 22-23). He initiated revolution, yet withheld declarations of separation and independence. Bento Gonçalves and the hard-bitten circle around him were looking for relief, respect, and recognition shorn of any of the *artiguista* socio-economic goals for those at the bottom. His appeal was always first to *estanceiro* regionalism, which would inflame during the *farroupilha* and then take on mythical dimensions in today's Rio Grande do Sul. Rio, Bento Gonçalves argued, had turned Rio Grande do Sul into a military bulwark and a tax-producing entity to support ineffectual and corrupt national interests; and, in return, *estanceiros*, who believed more local authority was coming their way, received less. Having once provided the *estanceiros* with military prestige and land titles in the form of *sesmarias*, Rio indirectly blamed the *estanceiros* with the loss of the Cisplatine. Rio seemed less concerned with borders and the protection of the ranchers' Oriental properties (IBID, p.280-290).

In shifting blame, Rio went too far, impugning the *estanceiros'* patriotism and honor. Economically, the ranchers also viewed themselves victimized by the

capital of the *charqueadores*, to whom they were land rich, cash poor creditors. It was the coming of a startling new era. No longer content with their monopolization of production and commerce, a few *charqueadores* started buying *campanha* cattle lands, sliding into positions where the old rural families held top rank (BELL, 1998; MONSMA, 2012). Though these land ventures were still in their infancy, they provoked the *estanceiros* to adopt certain *artiguista* concepts in making their fight a *riograndense* one. The promises of the liberal reforms of the 1830s never materialized. Instead, the *estanceiros* saw themselves underappreciated, ignored, and in debt. Rio, too, in the midst of nation-building, financial troubles, and the reductions in its land forces, offered the rebels the perfect opportunity to seize the province. The 1835 rising was not so much a grand political gambit, but a wager to tame Rio's representatives and allies by showing that the Empire needed to make accommodations to *estanceiro* needs and respect their will. The provincial government, backed by a small number of regular troops and the recent creation of municipal forces, was no match for Bento Gonçalves and his men of the plains (MENDES, 2015).

Bento Gonçalves' clout increased as Rio decreased its standing army in the early 1830s and created a new institution, the National Guard, to contain local unrest. Unknowingly, Rio provided him with the military means to overrun the province and oust Imperial rule. In the post-Cisplatine years, as commander of the Jaguarão and now popular head of the recently formed National Guard, Bento Gonçalves was cultivating Juan Antonio Lavalleja, the *artiguista*-inspired hero of the Uruguayan War for Independence, 1825-1828, as much as the Uruguayan cultivated him. To explain his *artiguista* ties, Bento Gonçalves was summoned to Rio in 1834, which ended, instead, with his walking away with titles, rewards, and the knowledge that Rio would not forcefully respond to his future adventurism. During the *farroupilha*, Bento Gonçalves would continue to strike cross border alliances with another student of *artigista* military and political strategy, Fructuoso Rivera. There were other security agreements, as well, after 1841 (VARELA, 1933). The Uruguayan pacts served these caudillos, who needed a leg up in their own contests against those sitting in national and provincial capitals. Later, as the

farroupilha was entering its death throes, Bento Gonçalves, who saw his powers slipping away to the rising Canabarro, tried to lure Caxias and the Empire into a fanciful federation of sorts, a confederation that Artigas would have admired, and once again elevate himself in the eyes of his fellow *farrapos* (VARELA, 1929, II, p. 346-348; CAXIAS, 1950, p. 140).

After Bento Gonçalves' relatively quick takeover of the province, in September of 1835, a series of military reverses led to the loss of the lagoon zone, including Pôrto Alegre, the capital. These setbacks, reinforced by an overwhelming Imperial maritime presence, split the lagoon zone militarily from the interior grasslands. The war became static, each side playing to its defensive advantages. The ensuing, nearly decade-long war was better known for its lulls than large scale actions; but the dizzy pace of events in the spring of 1836 saw cheers turn to cries of surrender, and then, almost as quickly, scuttle back to cheers. Just as Antônio de Souza Neto's Seival victory in September of 1836 erupted into an unexpected, unplanned-for but highly popular call for independence, the Fanfa disaster, only a month later, suddenly brought the entire enterprise into question. Deciding not to fold after the Fanfa defeat, which had decapitated a good part of *farrapo* leadership, the rebels went on to establish a republican-styled government at Piratini in November (CÂMARA, 1964, 1970).

Rapidly emerging as a war-making state, the new government had the frills of mottos and a flag, an army, tax collection stations, even a press, and the substance of power with its titled officers and unelected ministers, many of whom were born outside the province. Even if some of the ministers had been *riograndenses* by birth and had well-organized support staffs, they still lacked cohesive support from the *estanceiro*-soldiers. The treasury minister José de Almeida was the exception. Originally from Minas, Almeida, the only prominent *charqueador* to side with the rebels, had money, powerful Oriental friends, and many slaves. But, when taken together, this state collection of entities did not alter the disproportionate strength of the *estanceiro*-soldiers and their families. They were the body of men whose orders others followed. The revolution turned out an abundance of these ferocious fighters, colonels and majors from the grasslands,

who recruited their followers in time honored militia ways (BENTO, 1992). The Republic of Piratini, as Rio scornfully called it, cut off from Atlantic trade routes and, therefore, deprived of critical war supplies and funds from port revenues, adjusted to exploit what was at hand, and count on the political-diplomatic implications of *artiguismo* (LEITMAN, 2018). Angry over what they saw as a double-cross of the truce terms at Fanfa, those *farrapos* who, earlier on, had vision, turned toward vengeance and their appetites. In weighing up the odds, the ministers, Almeida too, decided not to take on the colonels, but profit from their actions.

Increasingly evident was the need for the concentrated firepower from infantry and artillery if the rebels were to recapture the lagoon zone from entrenched Imperial forces. High on the ministers' list at Piratini, then, was the creation of a professional army to go up against the forces of the Empire, which were beginning to trickle in from the northern provinces. The two *cariocans*, both graduates of Rio's military academy, José Mariano de Matos, the republic's first Minister of War and the Navy, and General João Manoel Lima e Silva, were charged with this task. They knew they needed additional troops to catapult the new nation into existence. But without the available basics of war-making - the arms, shot, heavy guns, uniforms, and, at best, erratic pay - the drawbacks were immediately apparent. An officer class, based on discipline and merit to enforce organizational uniformity, was unattainable where armies were built upon personality, kinship, and patronage. For all the decrees and plans spilling out of Piratini, the *farrapos* remained at heart a loose structure of regional horse armies, which could, on occasion, when the *campanha* seemed threatened, gather themselves into larger synchronized, but generally unsustainable actions. Nor was there the desire to switch over from short militia stints to longer ones, and absolutely no wish to become foot soldiers in a culture that prized horses, nor cart around the few cannon that the *farrapos* managed to secure. Drills and discipline were irksome to being pointless. The colonels were intuitive about plains warfare, counting on personal courage rather than intricate planning or following a hierarchal command structure, with less regard for assaults on entrenched fixed

positions. This was best evidenced in the three failed sieges on Pôrto Alegre, a terrible waste of time, with men fooling themselves into thinking they could breach its fortifications or starve out *imperiães*. The capital, open to navigable resupply, stood fast. Both the minister and general considered slaves reasonable and necessary to secure victory, in much the same way as Brazilian Independence forces in 1822 had accepted slave recruits (KRAAY, 2006.)

The plan out of Piratini called for a total of four brigades, three of which were heavily weighted toward the cavalry corps of the National Guard. Heading each brigade were prominent regional colonels. The designated 3rd brigade stood out from the others, the only segregated one. Selection into the ranks was generally crude. Matos formed, trained, and organized it with slaves whom Lima e Silva had seized in his retreat from Pelotas in 1836, 400 or so, a good start when added to those hastily lifted from loyalist *estancias* in the Banda Oriental, where they took part in the first major action at Seival. Lima e Silva and Matos struggled to couple gaucho tactical mobility with their newest infantry recruits. Closer control would come from non-commissioned *libertos* or freemen. Matos placed the freemen and confiscated slaves into horse drawn artillery, a battalion of infantry, and those with horse skills into a corps of “*lanceiros negros*.” A cautious policy toward slave recruitment unfolded; unscheduled yet tempered infusions from *farrapo* seizures would follow, and disputes often arose on the best way to use them, whether in the army, the state, or in private work assignments. The war’s many and varied dislocations allowed slaves to slip their master’s grip, and since *estanceiros* could not be counted on to voluntarily enlist their own slaves, confiscation was always the primary driver to fill *liberto* positions, and coercion was the method. However, overall notions and practices on confiscation in the early years of the war were somewhat measured, subject to the prestige and latent power of targeted loyalist *estanceiros*, whom everyone knew would one day return home to their properties.

The two *cariocan* professional officers were fire-brand republicans, even before the *farroupilha*, proselytizing inside their regiments; and, not unlike other new frontier arrivals, formed local, commercial, and kinship relationships. They tended to view the conflict in its entirety and tried, but failed, to better integrate

and coordinate the fragmented and regionalized nature of the free-wheeling gauchos. Matos and Lima e Silva were the most committed to expanding rebel forces with ex-slaves, and thought they would have a better chance to mold the *libertos* into full-time regulars outside the generous furlough system, although, from time to time, colonels would draw on them for special assignments, often personal and ranch related, such as helping to conduct drives or to break horses. Throughout the *farroupilha*, the *libertos* were roughly a third of the elastic rebel forces, and, as a percentage, mirrored the province's pre-war slave population of approximately a third, remaining so until Porongos. Yet, as important as they were in *farrapo* success, as year-round fighters they were treated unequally in every way, and arming them with the best weaponry available was never in the cards. Norms and fears associated with slavery, the worry that *estanceiros* held in relinquishing any measure of control to the social excesses of *artiguismo*, and an army weighted toward slaves made the rebels unable to radically alter their militia past; and adding the *libertos* to existing National Guard units was a non-starter, an indignity unacceptable to white respectable propertied officers, who wanted to fight from horseback, and expected their infantry to absorb the shocks of the opposition's cavalry (BENTO, 1992). Much of the revolution's longevity rested upon the Black brigade, conceived as servants of the state, whose freedom was bound to victory, justifying the trust Matos and Lima e Silva had placed on them. But the two could not follow their argument to the conclusions they envisioned. Lima e Silva died early in the war, and Matos' efforts to expand *liberto* forces and extend to them additional rights were crushed by the silence of the colonels and other delegates at the failed *farrapo* constitutional convention, 1842-43. After the war, one prominent *farrapo* colonel put it best, estimating a reservoir of perhaps five or six times more slaves, upwards of 6,000, had been available to throw into the fray. But the rebels totally rejected emancipation or going beyond the traditional avenues of individual manumission (PORTINHO, 1990, p. 37). To have done so would have required the *estanceiro*-soldiers to accept broader democratic *artiguista*-like ideas or put into practice the words from *O Povo*'s masthead: "*Liberdade. Igualdade. Humanidade.*"

Only at the very end of the *farroupilha* did the *liberto* percentage within the army increase, not as a result of policy or need, but from the degradation of the traditional gaucho cavalry elements assembled from within their own extended families, ranch hands, and dependents. Over time, death, desertion, disease, and amnesty had left Canabarro with an army in decay. Now at its very center stood the *libertos*, perhaps fifty percent of his soldiers that he was gathering on the *Cerro* at Porongos. As rebel will was being lost, the *libertos* were being gifted with additional means and potential to break their own subservience and change the diplomatic landscape in the borderlands, whether independently or in league with Uruguayans (LEITMAN, 2018). More relevant still, they saw on their own that fighting gave them mobility, though limited, along with the chance to inflict retribution on those who had once possessed them. Non-commissioned *liberto* officers, orderlies, and others made decisions and took on leadership roles, giving themselves degrees of agency. The temporary nature of their freedom had been made clear by law, tradition, and military realities, although there were times when a few were awarded *alforrias* (CARVALHO, 2011). While freedom tied to victory was critical, it was not a gift they just accepted, but part of an oppositional process to liberate themselves and challenge long held racial stereotypes. One incident near the war's end detailed the larger indictment to come and the predicaments *libertos* faced. A *liberto* officer, believing his person and orders disrespected by the white son of a loyalist prisoner, cut the young boy to pieces. According to one eye witness, this brutality horrified his white comrades to summarily end the *liberto's* life. Without charges or a trial, they signaled the *liberto's* conditional status and underscored what was to befall the black infantry brigade at Porongos. Porongos was more than the war's final *golpe*, it was designed to eliminate *liberto* power, mobility, and initiative (LEITMAN, 2018; FETTER, 1892).

Shocking as Porongos was, it indicated the high level of fear and the need to keep the *libertos* in line as the war was winding down. Instability in *liberto* ranks was a critical concern for Caxias, and Canabarro, too. To Caxias, the *libertos* were an existential threat to the foundations of Brazilian civilization, more than just the enemy. He and his family were long held figures of intense national interest, part of

Brazil's ruling elite that owed much of what and who they were to slavery. Though Caxias received strict secret instructions from Rio for the terms and conditions for pacification, he had almost unfettered say on the methods, and would even bend them to fit the situation and needs, not just of the enemy, but of his loyalist commanders, as well (WIEDERSPHAN, 1980). Tristão de Araripe, who represented the strong, conservative, monarchical ideas of the age, unkindly referred to rebel *libertos* as the “*legião Africana*,” and saw them as an intimidating menace, compelling Rio to “...*procurou por todos os meios dissipar esta força...*” (ARARIPE, 1986, p. 87). Unlike the slaves who empowered themselves in the Northeastern revolts, these *riograndense libertos* were regulars, schooled in gaucho-style war and in sedition. There were none more deadly, given their training and proximity to historic enemies. In the eyes of Brazilian authorities, those in the northern revolts were considered disorganized rabble, while the *farrapo* Black brigade had shown, just as in Haiti, that they could effectively operate together despite different ethnic origins and places of birth. Even upon the conclusion of the *farroupilha*, Rio contemplated entering the Banda Oriental if Black units were still operating there (GUAZZELLI, 2005, p. 20).

Canabarro, too, was a passionate defender of slavery and, consciously or not, inherited the *haitianismo* and *artiguismo* that underlay Porongos. With Caxias, he shared decisions on security, fashioned through the prism of the possibility of *libertos*' attaining real freedom backed by their own military capabilities. As a rancher, Canabarro lived within the *coxilhas* of *artiguismo*. It was not an impossible contradiction. *Estanceiro*-soldiers simply took the parts that they liked. Canabarro and the *farrapos* always had a more mercenary relationship with their *liberto* soldiers than had Artigas, who was more accepting of and encouraging in the non-military aspects of their lives. Artigas' populist federalism was far and away ahead of *riograndense* thinking on incorporating the dispossessed into the obligations of citizenship. *Riograndenses* took careful measure of Artigas' radical social ideas, which incorporated Afro-Americans, the indigenous, and others of the “*mas infelices*” into his armies with the promise of sharing enemy properties. For *riograndenses*, Artigas' biblical sounding phrases, such as the often quoted, “the

most unfortunate shall be the most privileged,” were insurrectional, not devotional (STREET, 1959; KATRA, 2017). There were other matters, too, which caused ranchers to worry: Artigas’ ideas on populating interior lands, which would slow *riograndense* expansion; and the implicit argument that giving freedom to armed ex-slaves could subvert frontier safety and ranching ways.

Skillful in its execution, Porongos was devised with subtlety to end not just the war, but the combined threat of *artiguisismo* and *haitianismo*, maintain the racial status quo, and erase the rebellion’s original sin of arming and training slaves, who were never truly accepted as comrades-in-arms, nor given the ultimate reward of citizenship in the new republic. Though the *farrapos* consistently demanded that freedom for slaves under arms was non-negotiable for any settlement, it was really testimony to their numbers and importance as fighters rather than a credible position to take because it brought fear to the rebels and the loyalists, and could lead to a breach for others enslaved. The *farrapo* leadership, given what happened and ensued at Ponche Verde, showed a minimal regard for the fate of the *libertos*. Except for Lima e Silva, Matos, and the Italians, there were just a few others who stood up for *liberto* interests. Bento Gonçalves and his friend, the *mineiro* José Pinheiro Ulhôa Cintra, once defiantly stood by their positions on *liberto* freedom in 1840 when in negotiation, but this, too, faded after 1844-45 (AHRGS, CV-3101; SILVA, 1985, p. 397).

Part III: Porongos and Its Aftermath

Porongos was a bone crushing *golpe* inflicted by Francisco Pedro de Abreu, Caxias’ most loyal *riograndense* colonel, in the early morning hours of November 14, 1844, where all the dead, wounded, and the vast majority of prisoners came from the *liberto* infantry brigade, an exceptional loss of more than 400 men, a significant number by the standards of the day. Just as incredible, Abreu’s force of 1200 Imperial troops went virtually unscathed. Undeterred, unaffected by the military embarrassment, and with Canabarro’s blessing, Antonio Vicente da Fontoura immediately continued with his peace mission to Caxias and then on to the Court, a conspiratorial plan which they had helped design. Other than Bento

Gonçalves' private letter to a friend concerning the battle and its immediate aftermath, in which he asked about the gruesome losses inflicted upon the Black infantry, and Almeida's sensitive documentary search after the war to find, but not necessarily publish, the truth surrounding Canabarro's treason and the "*aparatoso Convênio de Ponche Verde etc....*," the *coxilhas* remained silent (SILVA, 1985, p. 256-257; AHRGS, CV- 673, 2166, 697). Almeida was far from complimentary. He said he had proof, important papers. Still, to be fair, Almeida and others of his intimates were torn: "*...não se pode resvalar de Canabarro a suspeita de traidor ou de profundo político*" (AHRGS, CV- 673, 7428). Whichever label applied, the *libertos* were massacred under Canabarro's generalship. In his last years, Manuel Alves da Silva Caldeira, who was on the field of battle that day as a lancer, angrily cried out for justice in a communication with the great *riograndense* historian and archivist Alfredo Varela. Varela awakened a defiant impulse in the aging Caldeira to set the record straight: "*Inventem os documentos que quiserem, que não haverá água que lave a mancha de sangue posta por Canabarro na bandeira da República Piratinense. Fim*" (AHRGS, CV-3103).

The Varela-Caldeira correspondence occurred many decades later during the eruption of what became a public controversy amongst prominent *riograndense* historians, and the public, as well, one that persists today: whether or not Porongos was conceived in treason, and not the stealthily delivered "*surpresa tão gloriosa*" that Caxias had told the nation. (CAXIAS, 1950 p.148-149). Many of these arguments rest on the authenticity of a single document, a copy of the marching orders from Caxias to Chico Pedro that spoke to collusion (IBID, p. 147-148). In the *ofício*, one line specifically offered a glimpse into society's dehumanizing attitudes towards slaves. In the *ofício*, Caxias instructed Chico Pedro to save only whites and Indians in his coming battle. Those loyalist *riograndenses* riding quietly in the night alongside Chico Pedro may have had their own mutinous slaves in their sights, if he had unlikely shared Caxias' secret instructions with them. The clearest signs of Caxias and Canabarro's complicity was the magnitude of the defeat itself and the designated targets. The *ofício* neatly spelled out what would happen, principally the targets and escape routes for important *farrapo* officers. Even if, as

some say, the *ofício* was forged by Chico Pedro to sow dissension amongst the rebels, other incriminating evidence points toward a conspiracy. Chico Pedro dealt a heavy blow to the mystique of Canabarro as an extremely cautious general. Canabarro had shed Bento Gonçalves' advice on pursuing guerilla operations; instead, he mustered all the *farrapo* forces on to the *Cerro*. Bento Gonçalves stayed away with his small force, staked out in a defensive position far from the field of battle, still interested, Caxias said, in "...*tirando cavalos e escravos*" (CAXIAS, 1950, p. 135-136). Uncharacteristically, the well-prepared Canabarro chose to ignore advance notices of Chico Pedro's main force. His most egregious action on the eve of Porongos was the disarmament of his Black infantry, over a weak dodge over wet powder. All fly in the face of his reputation for combat readiness (SILVA, p.256-257). Other events that preceded and followed the Peace of Ponche Verde, too, spoke of secrets which, when viewed together, were specifically designed to reduce the *liberto* threat. The suspicious surprise attack on the lancers, just two weeks after Porongos at Arroio Grande by Chico Pedro, and the arrangement between Canabarro and Caxias to turn over a sizeable portion of the *libertos* after the peace signing, were all part of the same Porongos conspiracy.

Setting aside the aforementioned negligence, a deal reveals itself in other ways, most importantly in Caxias' precautions, plans, and past actions relating to Rivera, as the *barão* prepared to check the *libertos*' potential to shift the calculus of war and diplomacy against longstanding Brazilian interests. *Artiguismo* and *haitianismo* were the bitter lessons of borderland distrust, born from a flammable mix of *riograndense* colonels and Uruguayan caudillos. But now, another incendiary ingredient, more dangerous than in the past, stood in the way: politicized and militarized *libertos*, organized into a potent, offensive weapon. Both generals had an interest in eliminating this impediment to opening the door the peace. The rebels would receive amnesty, special payments, future fiscal protections, and hopes for more advantageous borders. The Empire would receive peace and vital *riograndense* support in the Plate. But in 1844, Caxias' overwhelming strength and occupation of critical points within the *campanha* were still not sufficient to ward off an uneasiness, a disturbing outlook for him, keen on

decisive action. If the *farrapos*, through guerilla war, interrupted his momentum, the war would become harder and take longer. True, he was winning on all fronts, but Rivera, in particular, whom he had written off by rejecting his offers to help secure a peace, was a meddling distance from the frontier (CAXIAS, 195, p 143). Although the *farrapos* were terribly reduced, Caxias needed to militarily show them their cause was lost. By July, Almeida, Matos, Ulhôa Cintra, and Joaquim Pedro Soares were all under Caxias' protection; João Antonio Silveira was far across the frontier; and Colonel Antonio Manuel do Amaral was dead. Thus, with the Porongos conspiracy, Caxias turned over two stones at once, making evident complete military collapse while crippling the *liberto* threat.

Collusion becomes more obvious and explainable when looking at the expanding role the *libertos* were playing in their full explosive impact that they presented to Caxias and Canabarro. By this time, all the war's principal actors, with the important exception of Rivera, knew their roles were no longer permissible. The *liberto* units were too strong to be simply folded back into slavery. Even after Porongos and Arroio Grande, some *libertos* had realized this. Although the numbers appear small, disillusioned *libertos*, long before Porongos, had left rebel ranks, wishing to take their chances, even with the Imperial army (FACHAL, 2010, p. 107-08). Neither general, nor those whom they represented, wanted former *libertos* operating in the borderlands. The allure of Caxias' power and those who drew near to it, as they sought influence and monetary gain, mattered more than any tenuous bonds of comradeship which may have existed between *farrapos* and *libertos*. The two generals had reached a point to separate Rivera from the Black troops.

Rivera's interests in the *libertos* was unlikely to subside. Rio was aware of three major pacts, 1838, 1841, and a larger one in 1842 at Paysandú, that involved Rivera and other riverine states. In 1842, an unholy complex of challenges, including a disturbing European naval component, was bringing the two great Platine enemies together, Rosas' Argentina and Pedro II's Brazilian Empire. Both saw the same impending threat of Rivera and the *farrapos* woven together as part of an old, recurring *artiguista* dream, a confederation of the riverine states, into

what was called the *cuadrilátero*: Corrientes, Uruguay, Entre Rios, and at times other states confederating to oppose Buenos Aires. Most of these schemes included wrenching away the Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul. In the first month of January 1842, Tomás Guido, the Argentine envoy, had written to the Brazilian minister Oliveira Coutinho about a deal for the *farrapo* loan of “... 500-700 *negros* ... *para emplearlos en infantería y caballería en la injusta Guerra que [Rivera] sostiene contra ...*” Argentina (FIGUEIRDO and GUAZZELLI, 2012, p. 25). For various strategic reasons, Argentina backed out of the proposed treaty with Rio, with the realization that Oribe was just as much a problem as was Rivera (MESSIAS, 2018 p.99-100).

No other *farrapo* troops were singled out to take part in these cross border activities, just the *libertos*. As disciplined regular troops, they were more reliable, less likely to desert, flee battlefields, fall under the influence of *riverisista* partners, or strike out for personal enrichment. Injecting hundreds of *libertos* into the Banda Oriental was not, at the time, a modest undertaking, but had larger strategic purposes: to replace one Oriental party with another and improve opportunities for additional state rewards, including diplomatic ties with other nations, loans, and new supply avenues, which would flow from recognition. While these pacts were tactical, they were also shaky first steps to membership in the family of nations. The ill-fated constitutional convention was a more direct effort to gain some partial diplomatic recognition, to show the republic as a viable state. Allowing these ex-slaves to enter Uruguayan territory under white *farrapo* officers was not fraught with much concern since Rivera, the primary recipient, already had opened his armies to slaves and freedmen. He needed good experienced troops, as did the *farrapos*, who wanted them back. These possible situations reinforced the *libertos*' reputation as fearsome fighters and intimidating agents of terror.

Rivera could not be taken lightly; even counting out a weakened Rivera was never a good idea (CÂMARA, 1970, v. 2, p. 407). He had demonstrated an inexhaustible capacity to mobilize new offensive efforts from limited resources, even when on the run or exiled to neighboring lands. At Arroyo Grande in Entre Rios, December 1842, Oribe crushed Rivera, pushing the ousted caudillo further into the

hinterlands and closer to the Brazilian frontier, where he was preparing to recapture his reputation with few men and means, much as Lavalleja had done in the Cisplatine War. Rivera was becoming more active in June and July of 1844, rustling large Uruguayan cattle herds into Rio Grande do Sul for ready cash to use in his next adventures. His extensive raiding reverberated as far away as Europe, causing hide prices to collapse (CADY, 1969, p. 122-123). His activities coincided with the *couraçoês*, unauthorized raids by *riograndense* rebels to strip hides from the ranches of friends and foes alike. The borderlands were aflame. If Rivera could sustain his depredations, he could expand his armies and make himself more attractive to the *farrapos*.

Just like Bento Gonçalves, Canabarro, too, had little choice but to cut a deal with Caxias. But both *farrapos*, now rivals, had undertaken discussions, independent of one another, with the *barão*. Plagued by corruption, prone to accept pardons, and with divisive commanders like Bento Gonçalves and Neto still around, Canabarro's army had become ineffective (CAXIAS, 1950, p. 129, 136). His ace-in-the-hole were the *libertos*, who appeared obedient to his authority, which was evaporating. With time passing, Caxias had the resources to keep his impressive armies in motion as he squeezed the *farrapos* into tighter spaces, impatient as ever to close out the conflict. In negotiations with Caxias, who had rising confidence in Canabarro over other *farrapo* chiefs, Canabarro viewed *libertos* as internally dangerous, therefore expendable. His army was fast becoming a majoritarian Black force, a situation changing the revolution's principles, as well as weakening the underpinnings of *riograndense* slavery. *Farrapos*, in general, also had few misgivings about *libertos* as a group being denied their freedom, since their origins were in expropriated property. However, their regard for individual *libertos* was different, decided on a case-by-case basis, best seen in the standoff in the immediate aftermath of peace when an ownership dispute over a *liberto* oddly arose between Canabarro and Chico Pedro, the very same former antagonists at Porongos, neither bashful about trading on their connections to Caxias. Clearly both had shared a similar lack of regard to expose the famous Ponche Verde 4th article on *liberto* freedom. While the disposition of the *liberto* in question is

unknown, it showed the same tenacious habits of white ranchers invested in racial dominance. These attitudes were turned into strategies just a few years later when *riograndense* cattlemen, on their satellite ranches in Uruguay, insisted that the authorities there look upon their slaves, rebranded as *colonos*, as not subject to Uruguayan emancipationist laws.

Canabarro nimbly used Rivera's interests in *liberto* troops as leverage against Caxias. The Cerro Largo episode, in August of 1844, took place inside acknowledged Uruguayan territory, where two corps attacked *orbistas* to relieve pressure on Rivera and extract a large herd of horses (CAXIAS, 1950, p.153; VARELA, 1929, 354-355; LEITMAN, 2018, p.143-144). Caxias did not identify them as *libertos* to Rio, but indicated that this no small force was sanctioned by Canabarro. (CAXIAS, 1950, p. 141, 143). Cerro Largo was surgical, but Rio understood the power that unbridled *libertos* in larger numbers possessed if sent deeper into the Banda Oriental. Although the attack on Melo, in Cerro Largo, failed miserably, it was pivotal, opening up a back door channel between Canabarro and Caxias. Both men were already building levels of trust in a series of prisoner exchanges (AHRGS, CV-3393, 3397). The one after Cerro Largo proved the most important, where the powerful *oribista* colonel, Dionisio Amaro, served as the go-between. Messages from Canabarro went into the hands of Chico Pedro, who certainly carried them to Caxias (AHRGS, CV-3393). The attack there had shown Caxias, whether by design or not, Canabarro's ability to influence Rivera. However, Rivera continued to misrepresent himself to Caxias about his standing with the *farrapos* (VARELA, 1933, v. VI, p.200; VARELA, 1929, vol. II, p. 329).

A wary Caxias politely brushed away Rivera's intercession proposals, perhaps because he had strong inklings of the existence of a recent pact between Canabarro and Rivera, which had led to Cerro Largo (AHRGS, CV-3725, 3726; CAXIAS, 1950, p. 142). Caxias bluntly informed the rebel chiefs of his distaste for their associations with the Uruguayan. His forceful rejection of Rivera's interference told the rebels what they already knew, that it was time to strike a deal with the Empire, to be sweetened by the first installments of what Caxias called small favors (CAXIAS, 1950, p. 159). Bento Gonçalves, who was kept outside the

private discussions, knew it was “...os ambiciosos de mando e ouro...” that drove the final bargain (SILVA, 1985, p. 259-260; SOUZA, 2008). For Caxias and the Empire, *liberto* freedom could not stand; it was a sacred stipulation in his secret instructions from the Court. In no way could they establish a most dreaded precedent, rewarding rebellious secessionist slaves with freedom, allowing them to exist like a magnet for other captives to follow, entangling Brazil into unwanted Platine affairs before Rio Grande do Sul was firmly back into Rio’s orbit (AHRGS, CV- 3727). Rio had begun planning against this inevitability back in 1841, aware of grander aspirational *artiguista*-like plans to ally and coordinate troop movements between Rivera and the *farrapos*. Rio would never acquiesce to any military-diplomatic reordering in the south which included trained Black brigades. The past *riverista-farrapo* treaties of 1838 and 1841 brought these concerns to the fore, never mind their harmful ramifications on the institution of slavery inside Brazil.

In advising the Court of the victory at Porongos, Caxias proudly announced that in the papers left behind by the fleeing rebels, Imperial officers had found concrete evidence of a treaty of alliance between the *farrapos* and Uruguayans (CAXIAS, 1950, p. 150). Caxias told Rio, “*Esta apreensão da Correspondência he de summa importancia: sobrepuja em valor á Derrota que soffreu o inimigo...*” (CAXIAS, 1943, p. 300-306). So secret and treacherous, he trusted only his closest confidant to hand deliver it to Brazil’s foreign minister during Fontoura’s peace mission to Rio. At the heart of the past *riverista-farrapo* pacts were the *liberto* transfers. The Cerro Largo August engagement was no different, justifying to Caxias the measures and tactics employed at Porongos and revealing the “*boas intenções*” of Rivera (CÂMARA, 1970, v. 2, p. 531). Perhaps Canabarro had baited him. Though Caxias does not give specifics, it appears that he was correct about the existence of such a *convenio*, which did take place on the frontier in March of 1844 between emissaries of the *farrapos* and Rivera, an alliance more menacing than ever imagined. Caxias was, at the time, taking every military and diplomatic precaution to separate Rivera’s forces from linking up with Canabarro’s (CAXIAS, 1950, p. 119-120). With Canabarro’s Porongos documents in hand, Caxias was now aware of the ominous role played by the well-known Daniel Gomes de Freitas.

Freitas was no ordinary revolutionary. He was one of the principal leaders in the Bahian slave rebellion, *sabinada*, 1836-37, an experienced artillery officer, fervent republican, person of color, and its minister of war. If any place in Brazil resembled the Haitian experience, it was Bahia, supported by sugar cane plantations, worked by a slave population vastly larger than its white oppressors. He was not the only Bahian from the *sabinada* who joined the *farrapos*, each with his former rank intact, a bone of contention for some colonels. Bento Gonçalves owed his 1837 escape from Fernando de Noronha fortress in Salvador to Bahian republicans, to whom he remained indebted. On his return from prison in the north, in the face of withering push backs from certain powerful *riograndenses*, Bento Gonçalves and Matos stood up to defend these darker skinned outsiders.

Again, in May 1844, Freitas was part of another secret *farrapo* mission, carrying letters from Canabarro and Manoel Lucas de Oliveira, the last rebel minister of war, to revolutionaries of the *mineiro-paulista* revolt of 1842, of which he had also been a part. Nevertheless, his involvement was a measure of personal trust and familiarity with conspiratorial diplomacy. Freitas' latitude in his treaty discussions with Rivera's representative, its content and approval process, and the extent *libertos* were expected to play remain unanswered. Interestingly, during the *sabinada*, despite his own mixed background and revolutionary experiences, Freitas was reluctant to establish a *batalhão de libertos* and admit slaves, in particular those African-born, into standing rebel units. Obviously, since the *libertos* led the attack on Cerro Largo, he must have changed his earlier thinking or was carrying out strict orders reviving engagement of *libertos* in Uruguay. Ever the revolutionary, Freitas proved as stubborn as Neto when coming to terms with Rio in 1845. He and an unknown number of *libertos* followed Neto into the Tacuarembó, later becoming Neto's bookkeeper for his several ranches (KRAAY, 2004; AHRGS, CV -5007,7333, 5727 and 5728; VARELA, 1929, v. II, p. 330; SPALDING, 1963).

If Caxias had any doubts about his arrangement with Canabarro and the resulting Porongos massacre, they receded when he was informed of the impressive body count, the prisoners taken, battle flags gathered, and arms taken off the field

along with several hundred horses. In scoring the most devastating victory of the war, Caxias confirmed his partnership with Canabarro and Fontoura. He further bound them tighter to his plans, introducing only these two *farrapos*, Fontoura in person, to Rio's secret terms and conditions and the Decree of December 18, 1844. According to Almeida, if the other rebel chiefs had known of the humiliating content, amnesty, they would not have kneeled at Ponche Verde (AHRGS, CV-7437.) But, according to Bento Gonçalves, they had already been bought. Almeida, in the 1860s, was expressing bitterness over fortunes lost and Fontoura's personally offensive role in restitution.

The *liberto* handover at Ponche Verde represented rebel good will to what was agreed upon, and provided an important reassuring visual, further reinforced by newspaper reporting on their embarkation to and arrival in Rio. With his instructions from the Court, Caxias sent them off to a quasi-military life in Rio's naval yards, forts, and hospitals, not much different than the restricted liberty they once had as *farrapo* soldiers. In both sets of circumstances, they were freedmen who were not truly free. As ex-rebels now in service in Rio, the *libertos* took pride in their military duties, exchanged bonds of loyalty with their comrades, appreciated their own self-worth when confronting their new harsh and unjust naval conditions, as well as suffered indignities and constrained movement. Stirred by what befell them, the former *libertos* were unafraid to formally and boldly grieve their circumstances. Caxias and the Court were correct in their apprehensions about *liberto* solidarity and courage (CARVALHO, 2011).

The Empire was steadfast in denying *libertos* their freedom as a part of any peace accord, although most Brazilians then and now believed liberation had come to these faithful soldiers. Once, not long after Ponche Verde, questions arose in the Brazilian parliament about costs and the numbers receiving *alforrias*. Francisco Álvares Machado, the *paulista* parliamentarian in charge of the debate, cut it off: “*Não e bom que sejam chamadas todas estas cousas a exame*” (VARELA, 1929, II, p. 447). By saying little he had spoken volumes about the deals, intrigues, payouts, and false promises wrapped up in the peace. Machado understood better than anyone Rio's hard and fast position. In 1840, he had led important discussions in

Rio Grande do Sul, where Rio's terms and conditions mirrored those eventually reached in 1845. The atrocities of Porongos and Arroio Grande, and the farce of the Peace of Ponche Verde, together showed the fragility of *farrapo* commitments (FLORES, 2004). Unable to recognize an alternative society, Rio saw only a debilitated state if slaves who rebelled, or, worse, were on the losing side, and walked away free, a terrible model and incentive for others.

When signing the Peace of Ponche Verde, *riograndenses* believed that they had struck an accord with the Empire. But by design, neither Caxias nor any other Imperial officers were present. Since there were no ceremonial counter signatures, Caxias had softened the terms of surrender, allowing the *farrapos* to hold on to the belief of two nations coming to the table, an act that restored rebel honor (FLORES, 2004). After Ponche Verde, there were murmurs in private correspondence, but little else to call out Canabarro's treason. The many times more powerful Caxias was, likewise, absolved from criticism, as long as enough money had been sprinkled to compromise public complaints. Canabarro and Caxias' collaboration was based on the sharing of the two surprise attacks and other explosive monetary secrets. Untouchable, then, Caxias' career would go on to reach still greater heights. *Riograndense* loyalists and *ex-farrapos*, too, expressed true admiration for him, voting him in as their new provincial president, as they awaited restitution from his special paymaster, none other than Fontoura.

Militarily sold out at Porongos and Arroio Grande, the *libertos* were too weak and fragile for any kind of group response. Porongos had completely decimated the “[I]nfortunada infantaria” (SILVA, 1985, p. 256-257). They had no white allies, just enemies. The clearest lesson on what the *libertos* really meant to the rebel elite was the shockingly little obligation shown, not only in the moments of battle, but afterwards, as the *liberto* fragments were returned to masters or dispatched to Rio's naval facilities. Caxias and the Empire took fast and rapid action to cleanse the battlefield of this domestic enemy. Where impunity reigned and Imperial forgiveness became the rule, the *libertos* were reduced to military footnotes (VARELA, 1929, v. II, p. 398). In finalizing the tacit agreement, Brazil satisfied *farrapos* and loyalists alike in reparations to reduce any ill will. Secret

payouts were always in the offing, and everyone knew who was on Fontoura's list, but not the amounts received (SILVA, 2010, 2016).

In addressing long standing *riograndense* grievances, the Empire began to seriously take up Brazil's southern limits, adjust the imbalanced duty structure weighing on *riograndense* cattle products, and promote provincial ranching interests, which included officer status. In return, the Empire, after a stubborn war of long duration, finally had peace and the restoration of its prized cavalries. For the moment, the borderland areas where *riograndenses* predominated were relatively quiet as conciliation set in under Caxias' presidency. Chico Pedro raided across frontiers and the *guerra grande* continued on in bursts, but within the confines of the province Caxias was determined to stamp out leftover signs of internal unrest. Brazil could not afford any repeat performance or variation on *haitianismo* and *artiguismo* themes, as the challenge of Rosas' Argentina seemed inevitable. The most tragic cost was pacification paid in lives and the removal of the *libertos* as an internal and transnational threat.

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