



**Death and civic pedagogy in the portuguese republican context:
the funerals of “prominent dead” in the early decades of the
XXth century (English Version)**

*Morte e pedagogia cívica no contexto republicano português: os funerais dos
“grandes mortos” nas primeiras décadas do Século XX*

*Muerte y pedagogía cívica en el contexto republicano portugués: los funerales de
los "grandes muertos" en las primeras décadas del Siglo XX*

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Abstract

This text has the purpose to reflect upon the pedagogical and civic use of the funeral ceremonies of distinguished citizens during the Portuguese republican period (1910-1926). The civic cult of the dead emerged in connection with the affirmation of the new Nation-states and, particularly, with the reinvention of collective memories, indispensable both for its validation and for its future. The “great dead”, subject to civic consecration, went through a process of idealization that overlooked their flaws and emphasized their virtues. From then on, they were an example for the rest of the community. The way the ceremonies were organized and choreographed gave emphasis to their pedagogical potential. We chose the examples of Guerra Junqueiro, a poet, and Sacadura Cabral, a military airman, and we selected three of the most important newspapers of the time: *O Século*, *Diário de Notícias* and *O Mundo*.

Keywords: Civic pedagogy. Cult of the dead. Memory.

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Resumo

Pretendemos, com este texto, promover uma reflexão acerca da utilização pedagógica e cívica dos funerais de “cidadãos ilustres” durante o período republicano português (1910-1926). O culto cívico dos mortos surgiu ligado à afirmação dos Estados-Nação e, em particular, à reinvenção das memórias coletivas necessárias à sua legitimação e projeção para o futuro. Os “grandes mortos”, alvo de consagração cívica, resultam de um processo de idealização que relativiza os seus defeitos e realça as respetivas virtudes. A partir daí eles passam a ser um exemplo para o resto da comunidade. A forma como as cerimónias eram organizadas e coreografadas enfatiza o seu potencial pedagógico. Escolhemos os exemplos de Guerra Junqueiro, um poeta, e de Sacadura Cabral, um aviador militar, e seleccionámos três dos mais importantes jornais diários da época: O Século, o Diário de Notícias e O Mundo.

Palavras-chave: *Pedagogia cívica; Culto dos mortos; Memória.*

Resumen

Tenemos la intención, con este texto, de promover una reflexión sobre el uso educativo y cívico de los funerales de "distinguidos ciudadanos" durante el período republicano portugués (1910-1926). El culto cívico de los muertos surgió ligado a la afirmación de los Estados-nación y, en particular, a la reinvencción de las memorias colectivas necesarias para su legitimación y proyección para el futuro. Los "grandes muertos", objeto de consagración cívica, resultan de un proceso de idealización que relativiza sus defectos y realza las respectivas virtudes. A partir de ahí pasan a ser un ejemplo para el resto de la comunidad. La forma en que las ceremonias eran organizadas y coreografiadas enfatiza su potencial pedagógico. Hemos escogido los ejemplos de Guerra Junqueiro, un poeta, y de Sacadura Cabral, un aviador militar, y seleccionamos tres de los más importantes diarios de la época: O Século, Diário de Notícias y O Mundo.

Palabras clave: *Pedagogía cívica; Culto de los muertos; Memoria.*

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Contextualization

This text aims to reflect on the pedagogic and civic usefulness of the funerals of highly regarded figures during the Portuguese republican period, coinciding partly with the second and third decades of the 20th century. The First Republic, besides abolishing the constitutional monarchy, carried out a relentless combat on the social and cultural influence of the Catholic Church, and the symbolic presence of Catholicism within the public sphere and daily life. The emblematic Law of Separation of State and Church, dating from 1911, had as its main desideratum the promotion of a radical laicization of Portuguese society (CATROGA, 1991; 1988). Conscious of the need to find ritual and symbolic alternatives that would fill the gap left by the disappearance of traditional sources of legitimization and consensus, republicans sought to put together a vast set of civic celebrations with a clear pedagogic intent (BACZKO, 1978; OZOUF, 1976). The symbols and rites that were then promoted, were part of an ambitious project to transform Portuguese people's body and soul, aiming to educate republican and patriotic citizens considered essential to the preservation and consolidation of a regime which was breaking away from its monarchic and catholic past. At the same time, the regeneration of a society perceived as decadent was also sought, through the revalorization of some of its mythical references (PINTASSILGO, 1998).

The cult of Nation - its history, symbols, and heroes - arises then as the main manifestation of that which we can paradoxically consider a civic religiosity of a republican and secular nature (SIRONNEAU, 1980). This cult includes the construction of something akin to a civic hagiography, having as its main reference the notable figure of Camões, who had already poeticized the Nation in *Os Lusíadas*. The centenary celebrations of illustrious figures, a cultural practice that was promoted during the late 1800s and the beginning of the 20th century, was one of the main manifestations of the aforementioned project, which blended the image of the romantic hero and the positivist cult of great men (MENDES, CATROGA & TORRAL, 1996; MATOS, 1990). It is well known that, in the case of Portuguese republicanism, positivism, particularly in its less orthodox version, served as its main doctrinal source, which explains the centrality taken on by civic liturgies within the practices promoted at the time, having as their aim the construction of a symbolic community (RIVIÈRE, 1988).

This context is what enables an understanding of the importance of the study matter here at hand: the funerals of "deceased illustrious figures" that occurred during the republican period. The civic cult of the dead, as it developed between the 19th and 20th centuries, emerges alongside the affirmation of the new Nation-States, particularly, with the reinvention of collective memories indispensable to their legitimization, as well as to their future projection. The "prominent dead" subject to civic consecration go through a process of idealization, their eventual flaws being forgotten and their proclaimed virtues emphasized, thus becoming exemplary figures for the remaining members of the community.

The way in which the ceremonies are organized seeks to emphasize their pedagogic potential, the same applying to the choreography that they follow. The civic parade gives a public and collective dimension to the rite, which presents itself as a spectacle. The speeches given by the graveside become ways to make clear to the general public the civic exemplarity of the illustrious deceased, dramatizing the moment and enabling the communion of all

around the spirit and the significance of whomsoever was being paid homage to. In the case of funerals carried out during the period here analysed, the political message is equally clear: through the sacralization of martyrs, heroes or republican intellectuals, a symbolic renewal of the bonds between citizens and the regime is attained, something which its precariousness and permanent instability make absolutely crucial.

The notion of “civic pedagogy” here proposed seeks to underline the idea that pedagogy is not only school-based, but can also be thought of in broader terms, such as that of the *polis*. In this context, an education of citizens is intended, not just through the space of the school, but also by means of public space. The relatively informal character of this project does not mean that there is no intentionality behind it, but rather the opposite, as can be seen in the case of the Portuguese Republic, which brings about a set of symbolic practices and rituals which aim to transform Portuguese people, helping them rise to a state of citizenship, at least as understood within republicanism. The laicization of the calendar, the toponymic revolution, the cult of the flag and national anthem, and the civic celebrations programme then promoted, are all examples of this republican “civic pedagogy”. As with all pedagogy, here we find a reflection on educational action, but also, as Jean-Claude Passeron states, “une action de transformation culturelle méthodiquement conduite” (2002, p. 596-597). In this way, the “illustrious dead” here invoked, take on the role of “pedagogians” of the compatriots they left behind, thus having the obligation to lead them to the kingdom of virtues and civism. As such, this can be seen as a “pedagogy of death”.

Although we can elicit the notion of citizenship when referring to the political socialization fostered through the cult of “prominent dead”, and the broad popular participation that it appeals to, the restrictive nature of the foundations of political representation must be taken into consideration. Contrary to what the expression “democratic republic”, commonly used at the time, may indicate, the First Republic was never truly either of these, given the exclusion of important parts of Portuguese society in civic participation, namely of women and illiterate people. Furthermore, the project for the “republicanization of citizens”, of which the civic funerals were an integral part, implied a set of educational and cultural practices that brought it closer to a notion of “indoctrination” than to real concerns regarding the construction of a democratic and participative citizenship. We were still a long way from the universalism of modern citizenship. The main symbolic reference aimed at bringing together the community, in alternative to Catholic rituals now driven out of public space, is given to us by the Nation and its cult.

In order to contextualize civic funerals, it is important, for now, to give a general outline of the attitudes towards the burial of the dead during the first decades of the 20th century. Firstly, it must be taken into account the following: at the time, Portugal was a predominantly rural, traditionalist, illiterate country, where death was conceived as a passage to eternal life. Poor rates of urbanization limited the advancement of secularization and perpetuated the religious manner in which the population ritualized death, which involved traditional folkloric practices and those stemming from a popularized Christianity (FIGUEIREDO, 2006).

A wider diversity of attitudes can be found in the only large urban centres in Portugal - in the city of Porto, and especially, in the city of Lisbon. The bourgeoisie of the Portuguese capital looks to the European bourgeoisie in trying to differentiate itself and gain social

recognition through outward manifestations towards the deceased, of which the apotheoses surrounding “great men” are an example. These consecrations are in essence enveloped in sacrality, when reflecting the tradition and religious revivalism that characterized the Catholic Church from the end of the 19th century onwards, or constitute themselves as a manifestation of political militancy when aiming for a fundamentally illuminist and positivist ideology, which attributed to laicization a factor of political and social emancipation, to which some more vindicatory sectors of the working class also adhered.

Hence, free-thinkers, republicans, socialists and anarchists, which fuelled a growing anticlerical movement, do not cease to acknowledge, except for a few rare exceptions, the pedagogic value of the cult of the dead and the formal structure of its rites, even if dechristianized. The secular offensive by the republican State would end up reinforcing and amplifying the intentions of the vanguard that it proposed, at an institutional and world-view level, as an alternative to Catholicism, creating new political and social bonds, both familial and national (CATROGA, 1999).

This movement acknowledges that death was not a neutral social, political and ideological movement. As such, during the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, it invested in the secularization of cemeteries and defended non-Catholic burials, namely, as fundamental individual rights established in the Nation’s legal documents. The campaign in favour of the latter aspect began in the late 1870s, but was always on the behalf of a minority, confronting the resistance of traditional Catholicism, supported by political and administrative, as well as popular measures. Consequently, the secular militancy took advantage of the collective and public dimension of the funerals of particular “great men”, as “counter-manifestations” in the shaping of new attitudes towards death, the claiming of rights, the entrenchment of memories, and the affiliation of consciences, staging them as civic spectacles. Examples of this are: the funerals of José Elias Garcia (1891), professor, Freemason Grand Master and republican militant; Heliodoro Salgado (1906), journalist and militant free-thinker; and of the regicidists (1908), symbols of a political and social heroicity; as well as the death of Miguel Bombarda and Cândido dos Reis, founding heroes of the Republic, experienced as the apotheosis of a newly implanted regime (CATROGA, 1999).

How does this problematics manifest itself in the funerals and discourse on the death of the republican figures we have selected? In order to answer this question, we picked out the following examples - from a group which could also have included Manuel Arriaga, Sidónio Pais (MEDINA, 2007; 1994), Teófilo Braga, João Chagas, Magalhães Lima, António José de Almeida, and the entombment of the unknown soldier - Guerra Junqueiro, poet and leading figure of republican culture; and Sacadura Cabral, the ill-fated military aviator, who became a hero after bravely attempting to fly from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, along with Admiral Gago Coutinho, in 1922, the centenary date of Brazil’s independence.

It is of equal importance to mention the sources that were the basis for the comprehension of the funeral-spectacles here analysed, which are featured in the Lisbon-based written press of that time, where they also took place. In order to bring to fruition this aspiration, we selected three of the most important newspapers of the period at hand, and of Portuguese press history as well. Firstly, *Diário de Notícias*, founded in 1865 and still running today, the first predominantly news-based newspaper and without any party affiliation,

making it a source less influenced by sympathy towards the deceased and the symbolism that he represented. Secondly, *O Século*, created in 1881, under the direction of Magalhães Lima, which despite rivalling with *Diário de Notícias* with regard to the treatment given to news items, assumes itself as an openly republican newspaper, having provided relevant services in the use of propaganda that brought the republicans to power, but which involved itself in the preparation of public opinion for the imposition of a military dictatorship, when bought in 1924 by the Union of Economic Interests patronal confederation. The aforementioned press bodies stood out especially as means of expression for the grief and mourning over Guerra Junqueiro and Sacadura Cabral, figures of both social and political relevance. The scope of the journalistic treatment given to the passing of these figures, often on the front page, as well as the information made available, encouraged and facilitated the significant presence of the public at the funeral services. It is noteworthy that the day of national mourning for those “great Portuguese” was the only topic on the front page.

Thirdly, we resorted to *O Mundo*, a radical republican periodical founded in 1900, considered the most renowned newspaper, and of broader politico-ideological influence, during the period before the establishment of the Republic. After the Republic was established, its connection to democrats and an anticlerical militancy, turned it into a factional newspaper (TENGARRINHA, 1989). However, it didn't prevent it from preparing the people for the national glorification of Guerra Junqueiro and Sacadura Cabral.

In order to study this set of sources, we drew on the analysis of content, searching within news, interviews and editorials for images and recollections of the deceased, as well as their eventual legacy. This analysis will seek to, on the one hand, describe that which is visible, namely, the places of exhibition of each body and its adornment, the wake and its organization, the funeral procession and its route, organized participants and anonymous citizens, the final farewell at the cemetery, or in one case, at the National Pantheon, which was then located in the Jerónimos Monastery, where words and speeches became of primary importance. On the other hand, we tried to comprehend the secular world-view of the celebrations, which were still outwardly very similar to Catholic ceremonies. Finally, the documentation was examined so as to highlight the uses for the civic cult of great men, listing the exemplary virtues which they condensed, and which served as an ethical and political reference for the common citizen.

Guerra Junqueiro (1850-1923): “Poet” and “Patriot”

1923 was the year of the passing of one of the most important figures of historical republicanism, namely, Guerra Junqueiro, appreciated by many at the time as a leading figure of national culture. The poet only joined the Republican Party after the 1890 *Ultimatum*, having excelled in political and anticlerical militancy through the publication of various works that assured him the unconditional applause of those opposed to the Monarchy, as well as a heroic funeral, but which were subsequently silenced by the history of literature (FRANCO, 2001).

The July 8, 1923 edition of *O Século* broke the news – “Guerra Junqueiro is dead! The passing of the Great Poet, symbol of [our] People, brought on the most extraordinary grieving

in all of the country”. These expressions would set the tone for the praise following his death, which would turn him into a national hero: “One of [our] most noble children, the greatest poet of Latinity of our time and one of the greatest of all time”, “[The] figure who, at this time, most perfectly incarnated the national spirit”, “the fighter for generous ideals”³, “the first figure of the Republic”⁴, “one of the most beautiful examples of our People”, “one of our most popular poets”, “the great Poet of our People”⁵, the “genius Poet”, “the unmatched praiser of Bread and Light”⁶, “a glory of the Nation”⁷ and, “a superior man”⁸. Amongst this set of references, the exemplary nature of his character attributed to him should be noted, making him somewhat of a “representative man” of the People, and of an entire Nation. The fact that he was a poet, as had happened with Camões, seemed to facilitate that identification, making him an even more acceptable hero. As a poet, he was “an eagle” that “rose so high, that he came close to God”⁹. His conversion to republicanism, of which he was a staunch propagandist via means of his grandiloquent quill, allowed for the interconnection between Nation and Republic so costly to republican rhetoric. His profile was idealized, purified, so that his virtues would stand out and he would be able to be presented to the community as an example to follow: Guerra Junqueiro was a being “thirsting for justice, of an impeccable character, a prototype of loyalty as a friend, and benevolence as an adversary”. Even so, newspaper writers acknowledged that in life he had not always been consensual and had been at the centre of some controversies, due to promoting “satire of an unheard of violence”, which “divided opinions and polarized sides” around him. But now was the time to appeal for consensus with regard to him: “A unanimity, however, remained and remains indestructible [...]: a unanimity concerning the recognition of his unsurpassable merit, and his portentous grandiosity as an artist”¹⁰.

According to his own volition, which his family was to respect, the burial was to be religious. This choice may seem paradoxical, given that he was claimed a hero by a Republic that became renowned, particularly during its initial years, for its radical secularism. However, it needs to be noted that we were in 1923, when the “religious issue” was less heated and some sectors of the regime strove for some appeasement in the relations between State and Church. The religious devotion of the poet could even favour the consensus that was sought after, taking advantage of his physical disappearance. In accordance, the government made known that, “given the wishes manifested by the great Poet, it did not oppose in the least way the carrying out of a religious burial”¹¹. This ambivalence is also highlighted by newspaper writers: the poet had simultaneously devoted himself to “the cult of God and Nation”¹². It was thus possible to

³ Morreu Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14870, 8-07-1923, p. 1.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 4.

⁵ Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14871, 9-07-1923, p. 4.

⁶ Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14874, 12-07-1923, p. 1.

⁷ A morte de Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14875, 13-07-1923, p. 1.

⁸ Os funerais do Poeta. *O Século*, n.º 14877, 15-07-1923, p. 1.

⁹ Morreu Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14870, 8-07-1923, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 1.

¹¹ Guerra Junqueiro será conduzido amanhã para o Palácio do Congresso realizando-se o seu funeral depois de amanhã às 18 horas. *O Século*, n.º 14874, 12-07-1923, p. 2.

¹² Morreu Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14870, 8-07-1923, p. 1.

carry out in the Estrela Basilica, a “funeral mass”¹³, “a mass for the soul of the glorious Poet”¹⁴. The moment in which “the family handed the Poet’s body over to the Nation” is interpreted by *O Século* in the following way: “His body, after having rested in the welcoming shade of a Catholic temple, stayed in the Nation’s building, that of the Congress of the Republic [...]. Following the religious homages, came the civic homages”¹⁵.

The poet had equally manifested the desire that his funeral be “modest”, without any “wreaths” or “flowers”, and especially, without any “speeches”, a practice that was a trend at the time in this type of civic celebration, and which contributes to our current interpretation of the conveyance of meaning that was intended. In this manner, Guerra Junqueiro probably attempted to avoid the ceremony in honour of him turning into a stage for political fights, thus, presumably guaranteeing, as much consensus as possible. The image of modesty and humility that would come to characterize the poet is highlighted by the press in various moments. According to which, he had always been “oblivious” to the “vain glories of the academies and only felt good amongst the humble and the simple”. Reciprocally, he had the “adoration of the People” that, “though barely knowing how to read his verses”, saw him as “the discoverer of their dream and redeemer of their soul”¹⁶. The apparent contradiction between the simplicity that Junqueiro had intended for his funeral, and the grandiosity of the tributes paid to him, does not go unnoticed and attempts to be explained:

The Commission [responsible for organizing and directing the funeral] decided that the ceremonies that were to take place, be carried out with the simplicity that Guerra Junqueiro so wished, without affecting, nonetheless, the grandiosity of the tributes that the Nation decided to pay him, both as Poet, and as Patriot¹⁷.

The political desire to seize the moment so as to contribute to the strengthening of the envisioned community represented by the Nation-Republic pair, prevailed over that which seemingly was the will of the one being paid homage to. As one newspaper affirms: “Junqueiro belongs to the Nation; he is a great figure of the People”¹⁸.

Guerra Junqueiro passed away at his home on Rua Silva Carvalho, in Campo de Ourique, at 73 years of age. His body was then taken to the Estrela Basilica, being accompanied, in a “pious pilgrimage”, by “a crowd consisting of people of all classes”¹⁹. This interclass reference seeks to underline the consensus surrounding the poet’s figure. “The urn was covered with a national flag”, giving visibility to the idea that the poet constituted a true symbol of national identity. All while the destination of the body of the illustrious deceased was being discussed. The Chamber of Deputies unanimously votes for the carrying out of a

¹³ A caminho da imortalidade e da glória. *O Século*, n.º 14873, 11-07-1923, p. 1.

¹⁴ Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14871, 9-07-1923, p. 1.

¹⁵ A família de Junqueiro entrega à Nação o corpo do Poeta. *O Século*, n.º 14876, 14-07-1923, p. 1.

¹⁶ Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14874, 12-07-1923, p. 1.

¹⁷ A família de Junqueiro entrega à Nação o corpo do Poeta. *O Século*, n.º 14876, 14-07-1923, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Idem*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Guerra Junqueiro. *O Século*, n.º 14871, 9-07-1923, p. 4.

“national funeral”, beside approving a period of “national mourning”. Furthermore, it is decided that Guerra Junqueiro be placed in the Jerónimos Monastery, which then functioned as National Pantheon, “next to Camões, Garrett, Herculano and João de Deus”²⁰; all of them writers and poets already deserving of similar homage. Following the wake and the mass, the corpse was transferred, as has already been mentioned, to the Palace of Congress, where a vigil was once again kept over it, being moved from there to the Jerónimos Monastery. In anticipation of the funeral, *O Século* writes:

On that day, the people of Lisbon will leave their homes and take en masse to the streets, lifting up onto their robust shoulders the sacred urn containing the body of Guerra Junqueiro. Instead of a funeral, Saturday’s procession shall be, without a doubt, a true apotheosis. The path that it shall take, through the city, shall be the path of glory. Carried by the people, the Poet shall tranquilly come to rest in the Jerónimos Monastery, on the blessed altar of the Nation, which he sung the praises of like no one else²¹.

Besides the appeal for popular participation, a clear intent of promoting the sacralisation of the moment can be noted. The use of expressions such as “sacred urn” and “blessed altar of the Nation” are employed for this purpose. It must be remembered that alternatively to the cult and rituals of Catholicism, in the context of a vast project for the laicization of society, republicanism promoted the creation of something akin to a civic religiosity, which had as its central element the cult of Nation seen here. As such, there is a transference of sacredness from traditional religious references to an abstract entity, such as that of Nation, or symbols that seek to represent it, as is the case with Guerra Junqueiro, now elevated to the category of saint or apostle of this supreme cult. Moreover, a moment that appears to be one of sadness, because of the poet’s death, is seen as festive and promising, due to it being integrated into a redemptive and glorifying narrative of the Nation, as can be observed in expressions such as “a true apotheosis” and “the path to glory”.

The funeral took place on Saturday, July 14, 1923, the procession having made its way from the Palace of Congress to the Jerónimos Monastery, “between two compact lines of people, with the presence of several thousand children”²². In fact, the large numbers of young college and university students, scouts, and particularly, of primary school children accompanied by their respective teachers, participating in both the wake and the procession, is greatly emphasized and praised. There was a marked mobilization in this regard, which was a habitual option in civic celebrations of republicanism. Besides enlarging the crowd, youths and children appear here as the promise of a radiant future for the Nation. This practice was, however, subject to some controversy. Defended by supporters of a “republican pedagogy”, it was heavily criticized by educators linked to the New School movement, which saw it as violent and indoctrinating.

²⁰ A morte do grande poeta Guerra Junqueiro enlutou o país. *O Século*, n.º 14872, 10-07-1923, p. 1.

²¹ Guerra Junqueiro será conduzido amanhã para o Palácio do Congresso realizando-se o seu funeral depois de amanhã às 18 horas. *O Século*, n.º 14874, 12-07-1923, p. 1.

²² Os funerais do Poeta. *O Século*, n.º 14877, 15-07-1923, p. 1.

At the national “Pantheon”, “the great lyric poet stayed in the Chapter room, next to Herculano”²³. As a newspaper writer notes, “in the Pantheon of Great Men, the Poet has his right place”²⁴. In truth, the National Pantheon, as a place of memory, is seen as a space enveloped in an intense sacredness and destined to house the mortal remains of supreme heroes of the collective, those who through their relevant contributions to the aggrandizement of the Nation were able to attain, to a certain extent, “immortality”. It is in this manner that all the effort and sacrifices are made up for: “It is not in vain that great men work for the aggrandizement of their Nation”²⁵. But this is a celebration that essentially has the future in mind:

The Republic that years ago received in Batalha the corpses of the Unknown Soldiers and yesterday took to Jerónimos the body of Junqueiro, interpreted how a whole Nation felt. Heroism and genius both under the same flag, the one and the many all certainly serving as examples that shall bear fruits in generations to come²⁶.

We have now arrived at the core of this type of commemorations, namely, civic exemplarity. Guerra Junqueiro, promoted as a genius, great man and hero of the Nation, appears here in his purified and sacralised version, as a representative figure suggested to the whole community, particularly younger generations, as an example to follow, and as a kind of beacon that lights the Nation’s way to a messianic regeneration that the Republic promised in its early days, but which tarried to fulfil itself.

Sacadura Cabral (1881-1924): a national hero during the Republic

The navy commander, Sacadura Cabral, who was a geographer, aviator and air navigation specialist, disappeared on November 15, 1924 in the English Channel (CORREIA, 1964), when returning from the Netherlands, where he had gone to get, along with some associates, one of the *Foker* planes acquired by Portugal through public subscription. He became known for, along with Gago Coutinho, the aerial crossing of the South Atlantic in 1922.

The newspapers examined ran detailed news of the tragic event, divulging commentaries and testimonies of praise, as well as sorrow, collected from both national and international press, and which helped to mitigate the collective suffering resulting from his tragic disappearance. The general press, *Diário de Notícias* and *O Século*, mediated the maintenance of national expectations with regard to the body’s destination, and amplified the feeling of national pride by reporting the condolences of the diplomatic body, as well as of other figures.

The closing of the funereal tributes was closely accompanied by the press, particularly on the day of national mourning (December 15). On its eve, an event at the Navy League promoted by the Conservative Monarchic Youth had already taken place. On said day, ceremonies at the Lisbon Cathedral, presided over by cardinal Mendes Belo, were carried out, as well as memorial prayers requested by the family, and various other initiatives. The

²³ *Idem. Ibidem.*

²⁴ *Idem*, p. 4.

²⁵ *Idem*, p. 1.

²⁶ *Idem. Ibidem.*

newspapers reported both civic and patriotic acts equally, and included tributes by fire-fighters, the half-closure of businesses, and a two-minute silence observed by the anonymous public in Lisbon, at the square where a commemorative stone column, or *padrão*, of the Lisbon-Madeira long-haul flight was erected. On a smaller scale, tributes took place in other parts of the country, and in Brazil.

The epicentre for the official tributes was the Centre for Maritime Aviation, where an “imposing ceremony” took place under the presidency of the head of government, extending out to a two-minute silence signalled by gun salutes and clarion calls carried out in the barracks, the procession of schoolchildren, and the reception of students and scouts by the president of the Republic. *O Século* and *Diário de Notícias* filled their front pages with the day of national mourning, featuring illustrations of Sacadura Cabral and the corporal mechanic Correia, the plane, as well as other elements: an angel, an eagle, and poetry and laudatory texts traversed by sorrow and a vague religiosity, serving as a bridge between the hero’s feats and the eternity/immortality which he now had access to.

The journalistic discourse and the interventions at the public ceremonies on the day of national mourning, are marked by the grandiosity of the 1922 air flight between Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro. With it, as *O Século* affirms, he “rehearsed for eternity in the infinite flight over the Atlantic”²⁷, and conquered (along with admiral Gago Coutinho) the merits of a national consecration: “through it, Portugal’s old and most noble name became aggrandized, dilated and renowned [...]. There was a bit of everything during that spiritual take-off! [...], on that epic flight undertaken by prime Portuguese [...]. As such, the greatest of honours and apotheoses are owed to these heroes”²⁸. The pioneering spirit of the voyage, and the courage revealed, led the press to establish parallels between this feat and the voyages/conquests during the Age of Discovery: “he made a wing out of Portugal, and with it crossed the Atlantic, disappearing, mysteriously, in the tragic immensity of the sea, the sea which loathes us because we won over it, because we never ceased to freely roam over its restless back”²⁹.

Paradoxically, his scantily glorious death during a voyage that did not present any special difficulties brought him the merit of having the sea for his grave. Not so much because Sacadura Cabral was a sailor, but because the sea was intimately connected to Portugal’s Golden Age: “The sea, by keeping the Hero’s body, was just, noble, Portuguese. A people that attained their glory at Sea, should not give its glorious men a Pantheon other than the Sea. To the venerable immensity of the waters, the lifeless remains of those demigods; to the Sky, their memory”³⁰. As such, Sacadura Cabral gives continuation to, by air, the maritime chronicles of fifteenth-century men, it being unanimous that one of Portugal’s greatest heroes of Portugal had been lost: “he joined the lineage of great figures of the maritime cycle who had been fascinated by aviation”³¹. Like them, he had been a sailor; like them, he had fearlessly braved the Atlantic; like them, “if the sea had not swallowed up his remains, there was only one place for them: Jerónimos”³², which the republicans transformed into national pantheon.

²⁷A notícia ontem chegada de ter sido arrojado à praia de Ostende o cadáver do ilustre aeronauta Sacadura Cabral não está confirmada. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21138, 21-11-2015, p. 1.

²⁸Sacadura Cabral. O monumento aos autores da travessia aérea do Atlântico. *O Século*, n.º 15377, 5-12-1924, p. 1.

²⁹Apareceram os destroços do avião de Sacadura Cabral. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21 136, 20-11-1924, p. 1.

³⁰*O Século*, 15-12-1924, p. 1.

³¹Portugal está de luto. *O Mundo*, n.º 8199, 20-11-1924, p. 1.

³²*Idem. Ibidem.*

Sacadura Cabral fits the profile of a hero continuing the grandiose work of a lineage of past heroes inscribed in the collective memory, through which the country could rebuild itself. In this sense, Sacadura Cabral was a hero of the Nation that could be appropriated by Portuguese people of all social and ideological quarters, as demonstrated by the tributes of a religious and political nature organized by different sectors of national life.

The political and social context of Sacadura Cabral's death, marked by the defeat of many republicans, was propitious to the renewal of the genius and valour of the Portuguese "race", of which Sacadura was a major example, and in whom all were to see themselves and recognize as a factor in the projection of Portugal in the world.

[Sacadura Cabral] is [...] a symbol of the collective's own virtues and qualities, having affirmed himself in a critical moment of national destinies. When a sailor [...] completed the Lisbon-Rio de Janeiro long-haul, Portugal was remembered as being a great immortal Nation from which a great deal could still be expected; even those strangers who doubted such a small and impoverished nationality, could not hide their admiration. Sacadura Cabral had worked the miracle³³.

His partner in the crossing of the Atlantic, Gago Coutinho, referred to Sacadura Cabral as "an honourable symbol of a man of our People, which we all should seek to imitate"³⁴. *O Século* underlined that, "the crossing of the Atlantic did not immortalize a man: it immortalized a race"³⁵. For this reason, during the event at the Navy League promoted by the Conservative Monarchic Youth, their president stressed that the meeting was "not a manifestation of a political faction, but rather a manifestation of an exclusively national purpose, given that the whole country should honour its heroes, either by glorifying them in their moment of triumph, or by mourning them in the funereal moment of their disappearance"³⁶.

The press also established a similarity between the aviator who reached his zenith but fell into the depths of the sea, and the trajectory of glory and decadence that cyclically marked the History of Portugal: "Following the apotheosis, following the greatest flight, the dive into darkness [...]. It is our destiny fulfilling itself, a destiny of victories and falls"³⁷. Since the politico-social situation of the country fit that of a period of decline, some comments by the press tried to counteract the pessimism that was in place, seeking in Sacadura Cabral's life an example of the overcoming of obstacles: "this time, however, we need to react, and not give in to Destiny..."³⁸. And just as if Sacadura Cabral had perished into the mist, *Diário de Notícias* warned that it would only be possible to overcome difficulties by means of some sort of saviour of the Nation that possessed Sacadura Cabral's qualities, as a reincarnation of the Sebastianist myth: "Sacadura Cabral did not die. Sacadura Cabral is hidden in the mist, out of which he will appear either with that name or some other, when the Nation beckons him. Let us all be Sebastianists"³⁹.

³³ À memória de Sacadura Cabral. *O Século*, n.º 15368, 25-11-1924, p. 1.

³⁴ O retrato de um herói. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21136, 20-11-2015, p. 1.

³⁵ Ainda não foi confirmada a notícia do cadáver ter sido. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21 138, 22-11-2015, p. 1.

³⁶ Sacadura Cabral. A sessão na Liga Naval. *O Século*, n.º 15377, 15-12-1924, p. 2.

³⁷ Apareceram os destroços do avião de Sacadura Cabral. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21 136, 20-11-1924, p. 1.

³⁸ *Idem. Ibidem.*

³⁹ *Idem. Ibidem.* Sebastianism was a mystical belief propagated in Portugal immediately after the disappearance of King Dom Sebastian I (1554-1578), according to which this king, as a new messiah, would return to restore the brilliance and glory of bygone days. Sebastianism became one of the major myths in Portuguese culture. In times of crisis, it appears as a hope for better days, of greater social justice and grandeur. The myth (as happens with myths) has been adapted to the realities of each moment.

In the press and the speeches given at the tribute events, Sacadura Cabral's image as a man, serviceman and aviator is reconstructed, becoming dominant the human, intellectual, military and scientific qualities⁴⁰ that made him a superior man⁴¹. According to commander Cisneiros da Faria, he was "a brilliant example of the kind of men that during the course of the History of Portugal had made the Nation grand and glorious"⁴². He asserted himself to all through his virtues, his courage, tenacity and patriotism shining through, which is to say, he did not give up when faced with adversities, and used his qualities to serve in the elevation of Portugal. Not being content with the feat of his journey to Brazil, he devised new air travel projects, and even the first national commercial flight routes.

Sacadura Cabral may have been the "glorious wing on which the genius of the Portuguese Race vibrated"⁴³, but did this mean that he did not have any flaws? Those he was accused of were overlooked or rejected by resorting to events in his life that contradicted that image⁴⁴. Conversely, Sacadura Cabral's beneficent qualities were to be emulated by the Portuguese, particularly the new generations. As such, tributes by the public and private schools of Lisbon were carried out, their students having been transported in a tug to the Bom Sucesso dock, from where the Lisbon-Rio de Janeiro voyage had taken off, to there throw flowers; in addition to the student and scout march to Belém, to express condolences to the president of the Republic⁴⁵. As noted in *Diário de Notícias*: "Sacadura Cabral was great amongst the greatest. In mourning his loss, let us not forget the admirable example of courage that he bequeathed us [...]. May Portuguese youth always maintain present his example"⁴⁶, learning from, according to the head of government, "[one of] the great examples of love of Nation and the Republic"⁴⁷.

So as to perpetuate the hero's memory, *O Século* launched a fundraising campaign for the construction of a monument commemorating the aerial crossing of the Atlantic, "to materialize the fame of his feats, as a perpetual testament of the Will and Faith of the Portuguese race"⁴⁸, assuming that it would "stand [...], as a symbol of the collective's own virtues, affirming itself in a critical moment for national destinies"⁴⁹.

The consolidation of Sacadura Cabral's memory would become a factor of national consensus, a place in the collective's memory where devotion to a great Portuguese, identified as a symbol of unity and the nation's potentials, could be expressed. After all, the "eagle" of Portuguese aviation had died when he was preparing to carry out another aerial feat, a sign that the future could be viewed with hope: "through reverence to and through his life's example, which he altruistically dedicated to the People and the Earth, his compatriots, his comrades in arms, and the Portuguese military youth can draw inspiration [...]. In this monument, beyond our gratitude, we have concentrated and sworn our honour, as an expression of our *thoughts* and *feelings*"⁵⁰.

⁴⁰As celebrações realizadas ontem à memória de Sacadura Cabral. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21 161, 16-12-1924, p. 3.

⁴¹Sacadura Cabral. *O Século*, n.º 15387, 15-12-1924, p. 2 e 4; Sacadura Cabral. *O Século*, n.º 15388, 16-12-1924, p. 4; As celebrações realizadas ontem à memória de Sacadura Cabral. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21161, 16-12-1924, p. 3.

⁴²Sacadura Cabral. A sessão na Liga naval. *O Século*, n.º 15388, 16-12-1924, p. 3.

⁴³As celebrações realizadas à memória de Sacadura Cabral. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 12 161, 16-12-1924, p. 3.

⁴⁴Sacadura Cabral. *O Século*, n.º 15388, 16-12-1924, p. 4.

⁴⁵*Idem. Ibidem*; O dia de luto nacional. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21 161, 16-12-1924, p. 3.

⁴⁶O dia de luto nacional. *Diário de Notícias*, n.º 21160, 15-11-1924, p. 1.

⁴⁷*Idem. Ibidem.*

⁴⁸Trindade Coelho, Glorifiquemos o herói. *O Século*, n.º 15367, 24-11-1924, p. 1.

⁴⁹À memória de Sacadura Cabral. *O Século*, n.º 15368, 25-11-2015, p. 1.

⁵⁰*Idem. Ibidem.*

The government ended up inclusively authorizing the supply of bronze that was needed, as well as providing the means necessary for the casting, but the subscription was not successful and ended up sharing the same destiny as previous attempts. In 1991, in Lisbon, a replica of one of the seaplanes that completed the Lisbon-Rio de Janeiro voyage was finally erected, featuring life-sized busts in its interior of the two aviators responsible for this feat.

Final Considerations

In light of the current state of hermeneutics on the theme, we can put forward several conclusions that arose through the study of various funerals. What firstly stands out is the harnessing of the death of great republicans, the exhibition of the body and the funeral procession, as moments of republican political affirmation, clearly expressed in the case of Guerra Junqueiro, which can be explained both by a need for the legitimation of the regime, as well as by the instability that marked all of its existence.

Secondly, our attention was drawn to the intense ritualization of the funerals studied. Although devoid of the spaces, agents, gestures and symbols of Catholic funerals, their external configuration presented many of their emulated characteristics, making evident the ambiguity of the secularism pertaining to these events. It was as if secular man could not do without a certain religious investment in death, so as to aid the deceased with his transition to the other side, and appease the living with the inevitably painful spectacle of the end, creating a general emotional environment that contributed to anchoring in the memory of all the alternative secular practices.

Thirdly, we retained the effort made to eternalize the memory of the deceased, or better still, the representation of the deceased elaborated upon their death and funeral, so that they would linger in the world of the living as an exemplary memory, ready to be recovered cyclically or in moments of greater collective despair. The funerals functioned as identity and socializing liturgies, allowing for an easier anchoring in the living, as a lesson for the present and the future, of an idealized interpretation of the contribution of the “great men” studied, for both the public good and the republican cause. In this sense, the funerals allowed for an appropriation, interpretation and spreading of ideas and values that aimed to perpetuate an existing social order. This representation of the political is indicative of the need for power to take root in the founding fathers, as well as the need for it to be personified so as to ensure authority, thus producing social order and legitimizing the Republic to men of that time.

Fourthly, the Republic constructed a secular hagiography filled with a vague religiosity laden with pedagogic value, so as to reconnect the Republic. The celebration of the death of “great men” like Guerra Junqueiro and Sacadura Cabral, consolidates and strengthens the construction of a new sacralized tradition that exalts great men of the arts, politicians and military figures, for their talents and sacrifices, and which acknowledges the nation through a politics of memory. The construction of the representation of the great republican, greatly contributed to by the political commentary and eulogies produced and propagated by the press, reminds all citizens that immortality is possible as long as, in the Republic’s eyes, one deserves it, either through one’s life and/or through one’s death. In this way, a republican education ritual aiming to broaden the bases of national unanimity, was forged. Guerra Junqueiro’s funeral, and his enthronement in the national pantheon, is a prime example of this, serving to recall the ideals of historical republicanism, that is, of the idealized and yet to be realized Republic, though remaining a desired utopia.

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