

# Looking Back at the Future: The Visit of President António de Almeida to the 1922 International Centennial Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro

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## Resumo:

Este artigo examina como a visita de António de Almeida à Exposição Internacional do Centenário da Independência do Brasil em 1922 no Rio de Janeiro contribuiu para a construção da mitologia da cultura tradicional portuguesa como pilar do imaginário do Estado-nação no Brasil do início do século XX.

**Palavras-Chave:** Primeira República; lusobrasileirismo; Exposição Internacional do Centenário da Independência; Brasil Moderno

## Abstract:

This article examines the visit of António de Almeida to the 1922 International Centennial Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro as a building block of the mythology of traditional Portuguese culture as a pillar of nation state imaginary in modern Brazil. Rather than focusing on the failure the Portuguese government to negotiate a commercial treaty with Brazil, it shows that this visit had cultural consequences in its promotion of a lusophile view of Brazilian history and culture.

**Keywords:** First Republic; 1922 International Centennial Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro; Luso-Brazilian; Modern Brazil

Portuguese and Brazilian political, economic, social, and cultural conjunctures underwent a series of major transformations in the first decades of the twentieth century. In Brazil, an increasing political support for urban changes and industrial growth took place, which accompanied the need for more trained workers in rapidly expanding cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital at the time, concentrated the country's largest community of native Portuguese workers who, due to the city's long love-hate history of Portuguese immigration, were not unanimously welcomed by the general population.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, a modernist movement swept Brazil in the early

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<sup>2</sup> Between 1822 and 1920, the Brazilian State went through the process of disassociating itself from institutional ties with Portugal. Nevertheless, in cities with a large number of Portuguese immigrants, like Rio de Janeiro, society was divided between pro-Portuguese groups and anti-Portuguese/nativists groups (MENDES, 2011, p. 208).

twentieth century, debating the role of Portuguese elements in the representation of the nation's identity.<sup>3</sup>

In Portugal, people's frustration with the constitutionalist monarchy motivated the declaration of the First Portuguese Republic in 1910.<sup>4</sup> During this period, the possibility of developing economic agreements with Brazil represented hope for members of the Portuguese political elites: their nation had one of the lowest per capita incomes of Western Europe along with growing inflation and multiple workers' strikes. Within the context of World War I, new approaches to Portuguese-Brazilian relations contributed to refocus Portugal away from its traditional subaltern position within the British alliance towards a more exalted international role in which Portugal and Brazil, working in tandem, could represent a significant global player.<sup>5</sup>

The rhetorical use of the relationship between Brazil and Portugal after Brazil's independence in 1822 developed additional layers and prominence in the early 1920s. Specifically, President António José de Almeida's ten-day trip to Brazil in September 1922 promoted this bilateral relationship. The president of Portugal left his country to attend the International Centennial Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro—hereafter referred to as the International Exhibition—organized by the Brazilian government to celebrate and showcase a twentieth-century independent Brazil to the world.

On September 7, the date that celebrates Brazil's declaration of independence from Portugal, the International Exhibition was officially revealed to the eyes of thousands of people. Visitors from across the nation and around the world travelled to Rio de Janeiro to witness one of Brazil's largest events at the beginning of the twentieth century. National and international pavilions were built in the newly refurbished urban center of the city of Rio de Janeiro, surrounded by wide streets, kiosks, areas for exhibition, and a large amusement park. As part of the celebrations organized by the Brazilian government to commemorate the centenary of the country's independence, the International Exhibition was an attempt to display modernization within the Brazilian society and redefine the nation's identity on the world's stage (SANT'ANA, 2008, p.11).

The presence of Portugal's president in Rio de Janeiro in that moment aroused nationalistic emotions among the local people and evoked historical memories concerning events that preceded and succeeded the independence of Brazil. Yet it also made it evident that the Brazilian government was willing to build a renewed relationship with the former metropolis, as long as it served the interests of the ex-colony.

This article uses the visit of Almeida to the International Exhibition as a window into further understanding the construction of the relationship between Brazil and Portugal after 1822. Literature on the bilateral relationship often undermines the presidential trip—

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<sup>3</sup> García Canclini takes into account the contradictions between "the cultured" and "the popular" in Latin America, and stresses that "modernism" in the region cannot be seen as the expression of popular socioeconomic modernization but as the means by which "the elites take charge of the intersection of different historical temporalities and try to elaborate a global project with them." (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 1989, p.46).

<sup>4</sup> Here we have the first persistent attempt to establish and maintain a parliamentary democracy in Portugal (see WHEELER, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. The Brazilian case in OLIVEIRA, 2017.

or quickly dismisses it as a complete failure—primarily because the negotiations on bilateral commercial agreements were unsuccessful. In contrast, I argue that President Almeida’s trip to Brazil did help strengthen these countries’ relationship through an emphasis on bilateral affection and on the promotion of a lusophile view of Brazilian history and culture.<sup>6</sup> Almeida’s trip to Brazil represented an important building block for a new kind of mythology of traditional Portuguese culture as a pillar of nation state imaginary in Brazil. The visit of the president of Portugal fostered cultural and diplomatic ties that shaped the relationship between both countries for much of the twentieth century.

Contemporary Brazilian and Portuguese newspapers, magazines, and official publications provide insights into the set of actions and discourses used by representatives from both the former metropolis and former colony to enact their “renewed” relationship. I chose to work with Rio de Janeiro’s mainstream press, since it offers the most detailed and accessible coverage of the presidential visit.<sup>7</sup> It is important, however, to acknowledge that a group of predominantly male republican businesspeople and intellectuals who were supportive of the Luso-Brazilian approximation led this mainstream press.<sup>8</sup> The magazine *Gil-Bras*, well known for its nativist claims, had a Catholic and anti-Portuguese profile. But the main newspapers from early twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro—*A Noite*, *O Paiz*, *Gazeta de Notícias*, *Jornal do Brasil*, and the opposition *Correio da Manhã*—were pro-Portugal. Among the Portuguese periodicals, I worked with three of the country’s most popular republican newspapers—*Diário de Notícias*, *Jornal de Notícias*, and *Diário de Lisboa*—as well as the magazine *Ilustração Portuguesa*. I also examined published transcripts of the speeches that both the Portuguese and Brazilian authorities delivered, commemorative books, and handouts from 1921 to 1923.

In the first part of the article, I provide a brief overview of the bilateral relationship after Brazil’s independence from Portugal. I show that, on the one hand, political and economic ties between both countries became looser throughout the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth century; on the other hand, Brazilian and Portuguese intellectual elites remained in close contact with each other during the mentioned period. In a 1904 project entitled “The Discovery of Intellectual Brazil by the Portuguese of the Twentieth Century,” Portuguese writer and diplomat Jaime Batalha Reis claims that nationalities that are “merely political” are “superficial and ephemeral” but “artistic nationalities” retain a “deep and permanent relevance” (REIS et al., 1988, p.81). Many of Reis’ native Brazilian counterparts shared his mindset. In 1882, Reis moved to Newcastle. While in England, he developed strong ties with Brazilian diplomats and intellectuals such as José Manuel Cardoso de Oliveira and José Pereira da Graça Aranha, two highly regarded Brazilian writers. Soon Reis joined a burgeoning transnational group of Portuguese and Brazilian writers connected

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6 “Lusophile” refers to a special admiration of Portugal or for Portuguese things.

7 The press had a huge appeal among the literate population in Rio de Janeiro. In 1900, *O Paiz* had a circulation of twelve thousand copies per day; *Gazeta de Notícias* had a circulation of forty thousand copies, and *Jornal do Brasil* had a circulation of fifty thousand copies per day. In 1920, *Correio da Manhã* had a circulation of forty thousand copies. By the end of the 1920s, *A Noite* had a circulation of two hundred thousand copies (see BARBOSA, 2007).

8 The expression “Luso-Brazilian” denotes the Brazilian appreciation of the Portuguese legacy.

to Rio de Janeiro's mainstream press—particularly the *Gazeta de Notícias*.<sup>9</sup> The intellectual approximation between Brazilians and Portuguese was, therefore, noticeable from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century. The uncertainties of the political and economic scenarios in Brazil and Portugal compelled representatives of both countries' intelligentsia to turn their attention to nation-related elements—which, according to Reis, would be able to retain permanent relevance—and engage further with an embryonic cultural Luso-Brazilian current that aimed to define and reflect on the commonalities and particularities of Portuguese and Brazilian identities.

The remaining parts of the article focus on the presidential trip and on the visit's outcome. In 1922, under formal and informal circumstances, many Brazilian and Portuguese journalists and politicians referred to each other's countries as "friend" or "mother" (Portugal) and "son" (Brazil) (*A Exposição 1822*, 1922). They also characterized the bilateral relationship by indicating feelings that close relatives and friends usually nourish for each other such as love, affection, friendship, etc. These emotions had a role during the presidential visit. Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha both discuss the question of the psycho-affective moment in the wider moment of political autonomy of former colonies (OLSON et al., 1999, p.34). Bhabha explains that the structures of feelings and the structures of affect provide an occasion for solidarity and the sense of community in former colonies. According to Bhabha, "we now have to start to understand the part that emotions, affects, play in the construction of community politics. If we see that, then we're seeing something that is motivating that construction of the group, or that construction of the group in action, that construction of a performative subject" (OLSON et al., 1999, p.34). During the presidential visit, an imagined bilateral affection legitimated the discourse on Brazil-Portugal relations. The contemporary Brazilian and Portuguese articles, interviews, handouts, and public speeches highlighted key elements of the Brazilian cultural and historical roots within the historic relationship between Brazil and Portugal, providing these elements with an emotional dimension. The outcome was the promotion of a new kind of mythology of traditional Portuguese culture as a pillar of nation state imaginary in Brazil. Taking Barthes' analysis as a basis for reflection, Márcia Naxara assigns the importance and effectiveness of myths to their ability to refer to something, give it a sense of observation, so that its existence will seem to be natural (NAXARA, 1991, pp. 214-215). The myth would simplify reality, abolishing not only all the complexity existent within it, but eventual questions about it as well.

In this article we see that main representatives of the Brazilian oligarchies echoed the mythology of traditional Portuguese culture as the cornerstone for the formation of modern Brazil; such myth was inserted in the process of construction of the nation state at a moment when the anxieties that the global crisis of liberalism generated became increasingly acute.

<sup>9</sup> Created in 1875 by Elísio Mendes, Ferreira de Araújo and Manuel Carneiro, the *Gazeta de Notícias* frequently invited important Portuguese and Brazilian intellectuals to write in the newspaper's cultural section. Some of these intellectuals were Machado de Assis, Artur Azevedo, Aluísio Azevedo, Oliveira Martins, Ramalho Ortigão, Eça de Queirós, and Batalha Reis (REIS et al., 1988, p.17).

## A Brief Overview of Brazil-Portugal Relations between 1822 and 1910

Throughout the nineteenth century, the bilateral relationship between Brazil and Portugal was marked by a series of transitions strung together over time, revealing core narrative structures. The transfer of the Portuguese Court to Brazil (1807-1808) due to the Napoleonic invasion in 1807, for instance, has been directly linked to the declaration of independence of Brazil by Dom Pedro I in 1822. At the time, Dom Pedro I's primary interests were to maintain the territorial integrity of the empire and preserve commercial ties between the former colony and the former metropolis. Nevertheless, the Brazilian emancipation was not a consensual process. Multiple groups from around the former colony developed competing political projects. Some of these groups aimed for autonomy and freedom inside the Portuguese Empire; others were not supportive of a political rupture between Brazil and Portugal. Dom Pedro I abdicated the throne on April 7, 1831 due to constant frictions with the political forces of Brazil and made his Brazilian son, Dom Pedro II, the new emperor.

England had exerted a historic political and economic influence on the Portuguese court and, consequently, became an intermediary in the Brazil-Portugal relationship.<sup>10</sup> Between 1831 and 1888, the commercial ties between Great Britain and Brazil were consolidated and for the duration of the Brazilian empire, the majority of foreign investment in Brazil was British.<sup>11</sup>

The establishment of the Brazilian Republic on November 15, 1889 motivated the issuance of a decree that stated that the Imperial Family was banned from entering Brazil, demanding that all properties they owned within the Brazilian territory were to be transferred over to a third party. Concerned that the new government would have a negative political and economic impact in Portugal, the Portuguese political elites delayed the recognition of the Brazilian Republic until September 18, 1890.

By the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, the bilateral relationship mainly consisted of interactions between private companies and among intellectuals from both countries who had the desire to promote cultural collaboration. Portugal was essentially a rural region starting to feel the effects of incipient industrialization, urbanization, and the social changes that these processes generated. Its newly configured political forces did not have access to the country's extremely oligarchic and elitist power structure. Additionally, the new petite and middle bourgeoisies were dissatisfied with the monarchy. For many, the creation of a Portuguese Republic was the most democratic and promising alternative for Portugal's modernization and progress.

<sup>10</sup> In 1905, the British investment in Brazil remained substantial. It corresponded to seventy-five percent of the foreign investment in the country (CARVALHO, 2011, p.27).

<sup>11</sup> The images that Brazilians and Portuguese created about the other changed between 1831 and 1888. Brazilians were often depicted as rude and ignorant people in Portugal, and lusophobia—aversion to Portuguese people or Portuguese things—was noticeable in main Brazilian cities. In 1832, while in Rio de Janeiro, the Portuguese diplomat João Baptista Moreira wrote: "the Portuguese people became victims of hate and personal revenge [in Brazil]" (MENDES, 2011, p.117). When Portuguese immigration to Brazil increased in the middle of the nineteenth century, Dom Pedro II responded to the Portuguese presence with a nationalist law forbidding any individual who was not born in the country to enjoy the rights pertaining to Brazilian citizens. Nevertheless, national military and positivist elites were unhappy with the centralized power in the ex-colony and fought against the imperial regime.

The men and women who lived under such a conjuncture believed that “national salvation would only be possible through the Republic” (ROSAS et al., 2009, p. 62).

In October 1910, the Republican Revolution took place in Portugal and the Royal Family was exiled to the United Kingdom. The politicians of the First Portuguese Republic sought to intensify and consolidate a bilateral relationship with Brazil.<sup>12</sup> António Luiz Gomes, member of the Portuguese Republican Party, was sent to Brazil as the representative of Portugal in an effort to help advance new bilateral diplomatic relations still in a formative stage (CASTRO, 2009, pp.59-60).<sup>13</sup>

### **National Imaginaries in Republican Brazil and Republican Portugal**

The nineteenth-century Brazilian economy had not opened many doors to national technological and scientific development. It revealed traces of monoculture, plantation, and slave labour. Despite the country’s efforts to look like a progressive nation, the stereotypes that European nations attributed to Brazil remained strong (FOOT HARDMAN, 1988, p. 63). In fact, visitors of the universal exhibitions in the nineteenth century were much more interested in Brazil’s exoticism and agropastoral activities than in its industrial potential. With the establishment of the Brazilian Republic in 1889, the premise of progress became a matter of honor. The new government stood up in favor of building a new society driven by nationalist, technocratic, and modernist ideals. However, there wasn’t a rupture with the conservative ideas of the previous government. A curious mix was created of progressive and conservative views materialized. The political and cultural transformations in Rio de Janeiro led to the coexistence of old and new orders within the government and throughout society. The complex project of Republican modernity was institutionalized as governmental discourse and used to benefit only a few segments of the population.

The idea of hosting an International Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro emerged within this context. Its organizers envisioned the event to be a great representation of the “emancipatory” and “newness-oriented” environment of modernity—permeated by tradition—and part of the changing models process unleashed in Brazil in the early twentieth century. In a speech on the event, Gustavo Pena, a representative of the General Commission of Minas Gerais, pointed out:

The great Brazilian progress; after a century of independent life... will unfold before the eyes of so many thousands of visitors all the best elements of our homeland in its agriculture, industries, in the opulence of its mineral kingdom, in its railway and water transportation...in the development of its literary and artistic life, in short, in all branches of human activity... The exhibition will have, among so many other things, a section that I find very interesting because it aims to show our past, our old customs, and the lifestyle of past generations.(PENA, 1921,p.6)

<sup>12</sup> The Brazilian Republic had a strong ideological influence on the Portuguese Republican movement, and members of the Portuguese republican elites expected to see a political approximation between both countries after 1910 (see BARBOSA, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> *In.*: GUIMARÃES *et al.*, 2009.

There was a latent concern for the image of Brazil in the “civilized world.” The occasion of the International Exhibition favored the establishment of an environment of self-criticism in Rio de Janeiro. Representatives from several segments of society debated and questioned the permanencies and transformations in the economy, culture, society, and politics. However, besides fomenting an analysis of the past and present, the occasion also required the mapping of modernity in Brazil: it would endorse the self-improving capacity of the nation. The ideas arising from such an environment reverberated in the representations showcased at the event in 1922 (SANT’ANA, 2008, p.47).

The strategy implemented a propaganda campaign to help build the international image of Brazil as a “land of the future.” Concerned about American representation in the International Exhibition, the U.S. Congress allocated one million dollars to the Brazilian celebration. It was the largest investment the United States had ever made in an International Exhibition (*A Noite*, 17/02/1922). European and Latin American journalists moved to Rio de Janeiro to cover the event; French and Spanish magazines were dedicated entirely to the centennial celebration taking place in Brazil in 1922 (SANT’ANA, 2008, p.102). World War I and the devastation on the European continent favored the Brazilian propaganda campaign. The war emphasized the distinction between Europe—then seen as old and decadent—and the eminent potential of the American continent.<sup>14</sup> The socio-economic situation of Portugal, Belgium and particularly France, Italy, and Great Britain worsened in the post-war period. However, the crisis did not stop these countries from sending commissions to participate in the International Exhibition. Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands also confirmed their presence at the event (SANT’ANA, 2008, p.104).

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Away from the conflict zone, Brazilian industry grew at a breakneck pace from 1910 to 1920. The country was going through its second phase of coffee valorization and its export economy reached its peak. Art and culture flourished in São Paulo, the Brazilian capital of the largest coffee economy in the world at the time, mainly due to the city’s economic and industrial growth (PINHEIRO, 2005, p.7). Moreover, the atmosphere of the centennial celebrations highlighted the dispute between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro with regards to the most promising project for the “new nation” to embody as the modern and genuine Brazil in its arts and letters (KESSEL, 2002, p.96).

At São Paulo’s 1922 Week of Modern Art, held in February, a group of artists and intellectuals from the modernist movement stressed miscegenation as an essential characteristic of the Brazilian identity. Nevertheless, within this modernist project of the nation, technological and scientific development remained associated with the European element. Visions of exoticism, sensuality, and savagery continued to characterize the representations of Indigenous and African elements.

Meanwhile in Rio de Janeiro, sectors of the intelligentsia identified some key elements of Brazilian cultural roots specifically within the relationship between Brazil and Portugal. At the 1922 International Exhibition, the (Luso-Brazilian) neocolonial acquired the status of national style, and the appropriation of Indigenous and African cultural

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. The Mexican case in TENORIO TRILLO, 1998, p.270.

elements for the event (i.e. *batuques* and samba music) expressed a discourse of cultural unity projecting a common “Brazilian race”—clouding socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial contradictions exposed in that society (SANT’ANA, 2008, p.113). Finally, the idea of the Portuguese element as instrumental in both the development of a “Brazilian civilization” and in the formation of nationalism in Brazil only enhanced the emotional dimension of the official invitation that the Brazilian government made for President Almeida’s visit to Rio de Janeiro in 1922.

Elected in 1919, Almeida was the first president of Portugal who actually agreed to visit Brazil. After 1910, the Portuguese Republican Party split into several parties producing waves of political tension in the country. Four different people held the position of heads of state in the country between 1915 and 1919, but none of them finished the presidential term. During this time, Portugal’s new political and intellectual actors were invested in exploring the meanings of being “Portuguese.” Poverty, backwardness, and migration were often associated with Portugal’s present; glory, richness and pride were the characteristics of Portugal’s past (REIS et al., 1988, p.64). There was, however, a common feeling among the Portuguese elites that their socioeconomic problems would be alleviated through the establishment of agreements with Brazil. They named it the “Luso-Brazilian moment,” “an admirable and ...exciting moment” reflecting the demands for the formation of new networks amongst both nations (*Diário de Notícias*, 21/08/1922).

President Almeida’s team aimed at creating a free-trade zone in Lisbon with the goal of commercializing commodities from Portugal’s African colonies and Brazil. Portugal and Brazil would then control the fixed price and negotiation of these products. Additionally, they proposed the formation of an export-import bank that would support trade, specifically between Brazil and Portugal in order to augment the exports from both countries (i.e. increase the exportation of Brazilian commodities to Portugal, and of Portuguese wine to Brazil). A *Diário de Notícias’* article from August 1922 encouraged the Portuguese government to take advantage of the “Luso-Brazilian moment” and forge useful international politics with Brazil as a way of guaranteeing Portugal’s improved future (*Diário de Notícias*, 21/08/1922). In another note, the same Portuguese newspaper explained further that the Portuguese public opinion considered the presidential trip to the Rio de Janeiro a step closer to establishing Luso-Brazilian control of the commodity markets (*Diário de Notícias*, 21/08/1922).

The “Luso-Brazilian moment” encompassed the realms of politics, arts, literature, work, and immigration. Politicians and intellectuals from Portugal and Brazil entertained the idea of a future federation between both countries. In fact, their approach to Atlantic politics often relied on an absolute and indestructible bilateral solidarity with immigrants as political actors. Following the end of World War I, the influx of Portuguese citizens in Brazil dramatically increased.<sup>15</sup> The Portuguese government intended to negotiate further ways to ensure that Portuguese workers living in Brazil had the same benefits and rights available to them in their native country—including social security, professional education,

<sup>15</sup> According to official data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the number of Portuguese immigrants entering Brazil between 1915 and 1918 was 41,897. This number increased to 99,554 between 1919 and 1922 (IBGE, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil*, 1954, ano XV, p.59).



authorization to create professional associations, etc. Reciprocally, the Portuguese legislation would ensure worker's rights to Brazilian immigrants who lived in Portugal.<sup>16</sup> The illegal reproduction of Portuguese artistic and literary works in Brazil made the question of intellectual property especially relevant in Portugal; it motivated the country's government to develop a proposal for Portuguese and Brazilian books to be considered legally registered in both countries, regardless of where the actual physical registration was performed. The regulation of dual citizenship (Brazilian and Portuguese) and military work also required bilateral action.

For the Portuguese intelligentsia, this bilateral artistic and literary relationship linked national, intellectual, and social progress (*Diário de Notícias*, 27/08/1922). Political and cultural projects were imagined as steps towards the configuration of a strong Luso-Brazilian culture mainly rooted in a shared language and traditional artistic aesthetic that would overcome the geographic distance between the former colony and the former metropolis (GONÇALVES, 2003, p.17).

### **The Visit of António José de Almeida to Rio de Janeiro, September 17 - 27, 1922**

On August 9, 1922, the Chamber of Deputies of Portugal approved the details concerning President Almeida's trip to Brazil. On the same day, the head of state in Portugal sent a telegram to Epitácio Pessoa with the following statement: "Your Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Brazil, I can finally inform you that ...I plan to leave Lisbon on August 20th or 21st ...I will carry out this visit with an incommensurable pleasure and honor, and with the approval and applause of the Portuguese public opinion" (*Diário de Notícias*, 12/08/1922). In fact, most of the Portuguese elites strongly supported Almeida's participation in the celebration of Brazil's independence despite the continuous political and economic crisis at home. Álvaro de Castro, associated with the Reconstitution Party of Portugal, stressed that the presidential visit gained precedence over all issues since it related to the strategic need for a closer relationship between Brazil and Portugal (*Diário de Notícias*, 06/08/1922).

The refurbishing of *Porto*, the presidential ship, was unexpectedly delayed and soon it became obvious that Almeida's trip would have to be postponed. The Portuguese president and delegation were finally allowed into the *Porto* on August 26. The magazine *Ilustração Portuguesa* described this moment as the realization of "President Almeida's long-term aspiration" despite the many ship-related setbacks, and concluded: "Brazil is only a larger and more exuberant Portugal. To take our friendly greetings [to Brazil] through this visit is an act... that has been an aspiration of our head of state for a long time... The old transatlantic ties that bind us [to Brazil] shall [now] be straightened" (*Ilustração Portuguesa*, 1922, p.234).

On September 7, 1922, the date that celebrates Brazil's declaration of independence from Portugal, Brazil's President Epitácio Pessoa opened the 1922 Rio de Janeiro

<sup>16</sup> On August 3, 1922 President Almeida approved a decree that only authorized the emigration of Portuguese individuals who could prove that they had a job offer abroad (*Diário de Notícias*, 03/08/1922).

International Centennial Exhibition with an eloquent speech to thousands of visitors. He then proceeded to attend several inaugural celebrations that took place at the International Exhibition's Street of Nations amidst the foreign pavilions. A note from the *Diário de Notícias* reported that national and foreign political authorities regretted the absence of the Portuguese President among the international dignitaries in attendance that day. This note also pointed out that the Portuguese pavilions at the Street of Nations remained under construction. Indeed, the information that the Portuguese newspaper published was accurate. The government of Portugal had failed to transfer the necessary funds to complete the project, and the construction workers were about to go on strike due to a lack of pay.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the death of one of these workers on September 6, 1922 caused by the partial collapse of one of the Portuguese pavilions, aggravated the crisis and required the intervention of Portuguese authorities.

Rio de Janeiro's press reported the delay of the Portuguese delegation's trip in discreet and small notes but the Portuguese press did not hide its discontentment (*Jornal do Brasil*, 6/09/1922). A chronicler from the *Diário de Notícias* mentioned that both the delay of President Almeida and the crisis among the Portuguese workers at the International Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro were evidence of a "sad and grotesque" scenario associated with the incompetence of a "few Portuguese representatives" who would have spoiled "the huge effort that many" had invested in the process of restoring the confidence of the international community in Portugal: "these are simultaneous mistakes... and their consequences... may ... [compromise] the reputation of our nation" (*Diário de Notícias*, 1/09/1922). An anguished feeling bubbled beneath the collective attention toward the strategic advantages of the presidential visit and Portugal's historic participation in the celebrations of the centenary of Brazil's Independence—an anxiety linked to the desire to improve the reputation of Portugal abroad and showcase values that would help place the country among the world's modern nations.<sup>18</sup>

*Porto* arrived in Rio de Janeiro at 10:00 a.m. on September 17, 1922. President Pessoa met with President Almeida on the deck of the ship as Brazil's national anthem played and thousands of spectators cheered in ecstasy. The official program for the presidential visit started that day, at 12:00 p.m. at the *Palácio do Catete*. However, actual bilateral negotiations did not start until the final days of Almeida's trip (*Diário de Lisboa*, 23/09/1922). Newspapers and magazines from both countries provided daily coverage of the presidential visit, including meetings and other events that Almeida attended. Journalists on both sides of the Atlantic emphasized and praised the public speeches from the head of state of Portugal on these special occasions.

President Almeida did not focus on contemporary political or economic topics concerning Brazil and/or Portugal in his public communications. Instead, the "Independence of Brazil" was the central theme in all his speeches. Almeida constantly referred to this

<sup>17</sup> These workers were Portuguese citizens who lived in Brazil.

<sup>18</sup> "...it is not only about honouring Brazil but about a national need ...[The Portuguese presence at the International Exhibition] could help increase the commercial relations between both [Brazilian and Portuguese] republics and create mutual advantages ... it could also open new markets [for the Portuguese] in Europe and the Americas . . ." (*Diário de Notícias*, 22/08/1921).

theme out of his desire to transform the independence of Brazil into a pivotal moment for the relationship between Brazil and Portugal. Evidence can be found in the messages that the Portuguese President delivered at the Presidential Palace on September 18, and at the National Congress on September 20, to an audience composed of Republican leaders including the Brazilian President Epitácio Pessoa and members of Brazil's Senate and Chamber of Deputies:

The political emancipation of the great country that today is Brazil was a spontaneous ... fact, a consequence of an inexorable trend that no force could have stopped; Brazil has to thank Portugal for having left an intact and rich patrimony [which was built] at the expense of [the Portuguese people's] streams of blood and tears. Portugal has to thank today's independent Brazil for the energy, bravery, intelligence and love... with which [the latter] has sustained...and developed...the greatest glory of our [Portuguese]... past. [If Brazil owed us anything] I believe that we are now paid before history. (ALMEIDA, 1922, pp.7- 8)

We, Portuguese, were great inventors of worlds; we were prodigious sowers of civilizations; our mighty arms... gave rise to new lands ... from the... waters... but... at a certain point, we were exhausted and debilitated, due to the enormous efforts that we employed [when building] our great enterprise. If Brazil had not proclaimed its independence, what would we have done? What would you have done... if you were to become subject to the greed of... the enemies who wanted to steal this or that portion of land from you? What would we, Portuguese, have done... if we were to lose everything [in Brazil]; the hospitality for our [Portuguese] people, the preservation of our traditions, the continuing power of our race, and more than that, this admirable language we speak? Furthermore, I must tell you, the independence of Brazil... dates almost from the day of this country's discovery... When Pêro Vaz de Caminha wrote to his King ... heralding the discovery of the land of Brazil, he employed the following terms: "And God, who brought us here, had some reason for this." It was predestination! The purpose was not to create here a colony to enrich Portugal. This was never, indeed, the aim of the Portuguese. Our true purpose was to unveil here a world that, later on, would become what Brazil is today. (ALMEIDA, 1922, pp.15-19)

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The ideas expressed in these excerpts built the core of the argument which was conveyed through all public speeches that the Portuguese president delivered in Rio de Janeiro in 1922. They mostly emphasized the moral and material investment that Portugal had made in Brazil, and how the latter was supposed to be grateful for it. President Almeida also thanked Brazil for nourishing Portugal's traditions, being hospitable to its people, and promoting the development of a land that represented the "greatest glory" of Portugal's past. Almeida neither fully recognized independent Brazil as a separate entity from Portugal, nor acknowledged the former colony's non-Portuguese heritage and influences. Instead, his speeches portrayed Brazil as a depository of Portugal's pride and culture—a young country that was never intended to be exploited by the former metropolis. And, in the words of President Almeida, the independence of Brazil was a process developed in harmony with Portugal's plans: the fulfillment of Brazil's "predestination." Such a mythological account involving Pêro Vaz de Caminha's quote created an incontestable semantic tie between Brazil and Portugal that helped justify the establishment and maintenance of an affectionate relationship between both countries.

Fundamentally, President Almeida glossed over the serious conflicts and tensions between Portuguese and Brazilians that marked the independence years and their aftermath. However, his official discourse did succeed in stressing the interest that the government of Portugal and its elites had in strengthening the relationship with Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century. The presidential message proved to be especially effective to advance

Almeida's ideas and popularity among the political elites and general public in both Brazil and Portugal. While it is true that nativist newspapers in Rio de Janeiro criticized the president's references to the affection between Brazil and Portugal, the same references were highly appreciated and endorsed by the majority of the press and audiences in the federal capital.<sup>19</sup>

On September 24, 1922 at 4:00 p.m., two hundred thousand people gathered at the International Exhibition to hear President Almeida's speech. The area was reportedly packed with thousands of people well before the scheduled time (*Correio da Manhã*, 24/09/1922). Almeida addressed his audience at the International Exhibition with the following greeting:

People of Brazil! You are my friends; you are my brothers and sisters! I open my arms to receive you; I kiss you on the cheek; my heart is wide open just so you can give the warmth of your everlasting youth to my old and almost decrepit self. You are tremendous; you are the great ones in the history of Brazil and Portugal; you are the generating soul of everything. (ALMEIDA, 1922, p.41)

Brazilian and Portuguese press pointed out that the crowds interrupted Almeida's speech numerous times. Every few minutes, both Brazilian and Portuguese individuals in attendance jumped up and shouted their approval. The *Jornal do Brasil* considered this popular reaction to the presidential visit evidence that the former colony "was far from belittling its glorious and noble historical Portuguese heritage." The newspaper also confirmed that the visit revealed, for the first time, the real Portuguese feelings toward the Brazilian people: "after that, all the doors were opened to the ...[bilateral] approximation, everybody [in Rio de Janeiro] loved [President Almeida]" (*Jornal do Brasil*, 26/09/1922). Similarly, discussions at the Portuguese Chamber of Deputies highlighted the emotional atmosphere surrounding the presidential visit. According to Barbosa de Magalhães, Minister of International Affairs of Portugal, the public manifestation in Brazil reached such a high emotional intensity that it was impossible for anyone to truly describe both the popular and elite-led joyful acclamations of President Almeida (DEBATES PARLAMENTARES, 1922, p.11).

Following the presidential visit to the International Exhibition, the general atmosphere in Rio de Janeiro clearly became ideal for the Portuguese delegation to start focusing on much anticipated bilateral negotiations. Multiple private meetings with Brazilian authorities and entrepreneurs were scheduled, and the Portuguese economic mission proceeded to stress the potential advantages of developing a commercial treaty or at least a bilateral customs convention with the former colony. The reasoning behind the proposed economic agreements included the "historical affinities" between both countries, as well as the contemporary post-war conjuncture:

An increasingly intimate approximation between Brazil and Portugal must be... the goal of an authentic national policy [in both countries]. Purely diplomatic alliances based on the opportunism of transitory interests or on simple conventions of foreign ministries have

<sup>19</sup> "[This] weekly nationalist independent newspaper that is able to properly guide the public opinion, reaffirms now that... it will never stop defending...[our] Brazil and [the] Brazilian [people]... who's [value has been]... deprecated in our own land by the heavy and inconceivable hegemony of the Portuguese element... that is exercised on behalf of a resounding rather than sincere affectivity" (*Gil Bras*, 22/09/1922).

failed... The war has shown the inanities of these artificial groupings... Within the new configuration of ideals and interests, Portugal and Brazil have... a set path. Brazil is the natural extension of Portugal in the Americas, and Portugal is the natural route of Brazil in Europe... The same historical destiny, and an identical tradition, unite [Brazil and Portugal]. (*Diário de Notícias*, 28/09/1922)

A Brazilian commission was put together to evaluate Portugal's economic proposals which remained under negotiation for over a year and were finally rejected. Meanwhile, President Pessoa stressed that bilateral agreements were important but not as essential as the feelings that the former metropolis and the former colony nourished for each other. Clearly, the Brazilian government was not interested in signing a commercial treaty with Portugal. In the 1920s, Brazilian politicians and entrepreneurs were focused on the increasingly strong economic ties with the United States—Brazil's largest export market at the time—and Belgium, one of Brazil's most important commercial partners since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the Brazilian commission accepted the remaining proposals from the Portuguese mission.

On September 26, 1922 bilateral agreements on emigration and work, artistic and literary property, and a treaty on dual citizenship were signed (*A Noite*, 27/09/1922).<sup>21</sup> The mainstream press in Brazil and Portugal referred to these three agreements as major accomplishments from the presidential visit. The *Diário de Notícias* reported that Democratic, Liberals, Restoratives, Monarchists, Catholics, and Independents, congratulated the president for what they thought to be “an extraordinarily successful” trip which served the interests of their nation and honored their country (*Diário de Notícias*, 13/10/1922). Portuguese political elites were confident that other treaties and agreements between Brazil and Portugal—such as the commercial agreement that was awaiting approval—would be eventually signed with the strengthening of the bilateral relationship (*Diário de Notícias*, 10/10/1922).

In Rio de Janeiro, *O Paiz* published texts about Almeida's trip that were just as optimistic. This newspaper pointed out that Brazilians had been waiting for that presidential visit for a long time. In view of the tensions and uncertainties of the post-war period, the “restored” relationship between Brazil and Portugal was “an example to be followed for the international community” (*O Paiz*, 28/09/1922). *O Paiz* asserted further that this “restored” bilateral relationship had materialized “in three very important agreements that would stimulate long-lasting collaboration between both countries” (*O Paiz*, 28/09/1922). Similarly, on October 26, 1922, a chronicler from *Gazeta de Notícias* expressed a positive perspective regarding the presidential visit. It did point out that it was too early to precisely define the great consequences of the rapprochement between Brazil and Portugal. Nevertheless, the chronicler declared:

It is impossible to minimize or obliterate... [President Almeida's] intelligent gesture and patriotic resolution if from all classes responsible for the future of [Brazil]... emerge praise toward this illustrious [man]... who crossed the Atlantic with the purpose of cementing the old emotional ties that have always connected us [Brazil and Portugal]... As if there were

<sup>20</sup> See WIESEBRON, 1994, p.138.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. For more information on each agreement see *Coleção de Tratados, Convenções e Actos Diplomáticos entre Portugal e as mais Potências*, Vol. IV, Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1976, pp. 887-890.

no exuberant testimonies of this fraternal friendship... the evidence of [Portuguese] strong affectivity for us are now seen on a daily basis... when they say how much they care for us, and how much we deserve them... so we can assess their esteem with exactitude. (*Gazeta de Noticias*, 26/10/1922)

## Final Considerations

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Portuguese and Brazilian intellectuals, artists, entrepreneurs, and politicians were compelled to reimagine the historical relationship between Brazil and Portugal in order to assert their contemporary national identities. This process required intense negotiation and (re)creation of practices and traditions in both countries. The Brazilian oligarchies aimed for industrial and economic progress and, therefore, forged their main economic and financial relationships with stronger external parties, such as the United States. These elites prioritized cultural progress as well, especially in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. However, according to the main agents of influence on the socio-political and cultural scenarios in the federal capital, the “new” Brazilian cultural identity connected to its colonial past, resulting from multiple images of alterity that Portuguese elements legitimized. In Portugal, the political complexities and economic difficulties of the republican regime raised a series of discussions about what it meant to be “Portuguese.” For the thousands of emigrants who left the country every year, Brazil still represented a land of great opportunity. The government of Portugal also believed that the establishment of strong ties with the former colony would enable the progress of the former metropole. It is in the midst of all these dynamics that in 1921, the Brazilian president invited President Antônio de Almeida to visit Rio de Janeiro and participate in the celebrations marking the centennial of Brazil’s independence.

Even though the Portuguese attempt to craft an economic treaty with Brazil proved fruitless, this article showed that the presidential visit to Brazil in 1922 succeeded in allowing both governments to meet the strategic need for a rapprochement.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the visit contributed to shape the bilateral relationship that the two countries maintained throughout the twentieth century. In the following decades, the economic interactivity between Portugal and Brazil remained subject to the oscillations of the global economy. The development of the Brazilian industry limited the need for imported products from Portugal, and the strengthening of Brazil’s bilateral economic agreements with other countries inhibited privileges in the exchanges with that country. Portugal’s maintenance of an individualistic and nationalistic view of trade and foreign relations restricted its interaction with the complex world economy; even after 1974, the economic interactivity between Brazil and Portugal was still low in comparison with that between Brazil and the

<sup>22</sup> Brazil’s government never approved the Commercial Bilateral Treaty that Portugal proposed. However, among the Brazilian elites there were many supporters of stronger cultural and political relations between both countries after 1918. The elites controlling Brazil in this era were relatively well integrated; they wanted to attract more European immigrants to the country and rethink the Brazilian identity (SKIDMORE, 1974, p. 220). The strengthening of a cultural relationship with Portugal helped crystalize the narrative of a historic common national, as well as the “modern” Luso-Brazilian identity.

United States, Japan, and Holland (HIRST et al., 2005, p. 23). Nevertheless, the cultural and political ties between the former metropolis and the former colony acquired growing importance (DÁVILA, 2010, p.24).

Bilateral agreements were revisited for further negotiation several times—demonstrating the continued importance placed on bilateral friendship—fact that reflects the newer elites' interest in maintaining close collaboration between the two countries.

The lusophile view of Brazilian history eventually developed into the Luso-Brazilian identity discourse that Salazarist and Getulist governments used to legitimate their national politics.<sup>23</sup> It also appeared in some of the most influential studies from the 1930s and 1940s about the formation of Brazilian society and the history of the Portuguese Empire, from Gilberto Freyre's *Casa Grande & Senzala* to Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's *Raízes do Brasil* and Freyre and Antônio Sergio's *O Mundo que o Português Criou*. Freyre, in particular, highlighted the continuity between Portugal and Brazil in *Casa Grande & Senzala*.<sup>24</sup> The author acknowledged the mixed roots of Portuguese society and referred to Brazil as an extension of this type of ambiguous, mixed society, one that is influenced by other civilizations but remains essentially Portuguese (SOUZA, 2003, p.6).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, between the 1930s and 1990s, the governments of Portugal and Brazil hosted a series of conferences, congresses, and exhibitions around the world reaffirming the cultural and diplomatic cooperation between the two nations (SOUSA et al., 2010, pp.134-136). This ongoing cooperation strengthened and supported the myth of one community on both sides of the Atlantic, which enjoyed a free exchange of intellectuals, artists, technicians, while sharing a language, culture, and deep affection through a singular historical past.

In conclusion, by ignoring the visit of Almeida to the International Exhibition in 1922 or reducing it to an economic failure, literature has been unable to see that this event played a role in the making of a mythology of traditional Portuguese culture as an integral part of nation state imaginary in modern Brazil. The visit contributed to redefine, reinforce, and perpetuate the idea of Portugal and Brazil as united by a common emotional element: Portugal's historic past. This imagined unity legitimized Brazil-Portugal relations at a time when nationalism and the global economic crisis might have increased the distance between both countries, potentially inhibiting future bilateral collaboration.

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<sup>23</sup> See MARTINHO et al., 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Gilberto Freyre was nominated president of the new Brazilian National Department of Immigration and Colonization in the 1950s.

<sup>25</sup> In.: KOSMINSKY et al., 2003.

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