

**Images of Royalty
in the Nineteenth
and Twentieth
Centuries.**

**Tradition
and Modernity
in Italy, Portugal
and Spain**

**Pierangelo Gentile
Leonardo Mineo
Miguel Metelo de Seixas
Isabel Corrêa da Silva
(eds.)**

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The Virtuous King and the Maiden Queen: the Public Image of Pedro V and Stephanie of Portugal Between Gender, Sexuality and Emotion*

Isabel Corrêa da Silva

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Putting together concepts such as gender, emotions and sexuality to look back to a king is not just trying to keep up with academic mainstream. In the case of Pedro V of Portugal and his wife Stephanie, this combination of concepts results from an extended literary genealogy and is in itself the object of analyses of this essay. The fact that the physical and psychological intimacy of this king and queen has been the subject of public scrutiny for almost two centuries is in itself a historiographical phenomenon. The aim of this article is, on the one hand, to systematize the literature on the subject (chronicles, historiography, medical writings, fiction), summarizing its contexts of production. On the other hand, to identify the data that may allow an analysis of the mental and cultural frameworks in which themes such as marriage, conjugality, sexuality, masculinity and femininity were evoked and debated. All along, this journey will be done with a sensitive lens in order to perceive the emotional repertoire that intermediates all these perceptions.

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Although this is an article about a king, it is not yet another contribution to the history of great men. Nor even to the unveiling of a more hidden dimension of their existence, on the contrary, this article deals with the process of forming the public image of king Pedro V, and the development of the public speculations about intimate aspects of his life. In this sense, the aim of this text is to use the abundance of empirical public material to suggest some thoughts about the role of emotions, of gender conventions, and sexuality paradigms, in the path of life and memory of Pedro and Stephanie. In a diachronic perspective that accompanies the couple's public image, but also those who wrote about them, and the society they all belonged to.

While it is true that the highly gendered nature of modern political culture has been mostly studied from the feminist point of view regarding the exclusion of women from political life, the fact is that the introduction of gender lenses into historical reflection continues to be limited to restricted historiographical fields often suffering from discrimination or self-segregation¹. As a perverse consequence of the revolutionary and bourgeois masculinization of the nineteenth-century political culture, despite being by nature a gendered concept, masculinity has been neglected in those studies. According to Pateman, the French Revolution' «sexual contract», that excluded women from political life and gave post-revolutionary society its eminently patriarchal character, would have resulted in an apparent naturalization of virile manhood². The analysis and systematization of the myth of Pedro carried out in this text reveals some of the contours of that naturalization and the paradigms through which it has expressed itself in different times and contexts of Portuguese society.

From the religious feeling that raised the king to the status of a saint, to the scientific faith that signed him up to the list of pathological individuals, the path of Pedro's memory was always linked to a heavy emotional burden. This path

1. S. Dudink, K. Hagemann, A. Clark, *Representing Masculinity male citizenship in Modern Western Culture*, Palgrave, New York 2012, p. XI-XII.

2. C. Pateman, *The sexual contract*, Stanford University, Stanford 1988. See also A. Clark, *The rhetoric of Masculine citizenship. Concepts and representations in modern western political culture*, in S. Dudink et al., *Representing cit.*, pp. 3-22.

has always also carried the enigmatic burden of sexuality and has never been free of gender bias.

1. The “auspicious king” and his priesthood

The rise of the XIX century was a troubled time for Portuguese history. Beginning with the departure of the royal family, the court, and the government to Brazil, to escape from French invasions (1807); followed by years of war against napoleons’ army, and a British protectorate after the defeat of the French in 1814. Court remained in Brazil for 14 years. Meanwhile, in 1820, there was a Liberal Revolution in the European Portuguese territory that led to the return of the king, to the proclamation of a Constitutional Monarchy and ultimately to the independence of Brazil, in 1822. But none of this was done without dispute: and therefore for most part of the first half of the century, Portugal was plunged into a wavering setting of civil-war between liberals and its adversaries, the absolutists, until eventually around 1850 a conciliation movement from all political factions agreed in opening a period of peace that became known as «the Regeneration»³.

It was in this environment of political rest and expectation that king Pedro V ascended to the throne. When his mother, queen Maria II, died in 1853, Pedro was still a minor and it was his father, Fernando, who took over the regency until the prince turned 18 years old on the 16 September 1855, when he was finally acclaimed king. The almost two-year interlude between the «the king is dead, long live the king» allowed his royal consecration to be carefully prepared and to be spared from mourning restrictions. After decades of conflict, the rise of a male heir, born in national territory and of indisputable legitimacy, reconciled everyone’s hopes and expectations. For this reason, even before being acclaimed, Pedro was already nicknamed the «auspicious king» (*o esperançoso*)⁴. His acclamation ceremony, the first to take place within constitutional normality, testified this broad feeling through

3. R. Ramos (ed.), *História de Portugal*, Esfera dos Livros, Lisbon 2009.

4. L. A. Rebelo da Silva, *Ilustração Luso-Brasileira*, 5 de Janeiro de 1856, p. 4.

the commitment of the political elite and the enthusiasm of the population⁵.

Pedro was a complex personality. He had very well-defined ideas, and made sure that they were heard and followed: he wrote his own speeches, drafted law proposals, reported in detail all events in which he participated in a diary that he kept assiduously for several years, in which he also pointed out travel impressions, loose thoughts and reading reflections. He was equally prolix in his correspondence with family, friends, and employees⁶. When assumed the throne, he had already defined in his mind the king he wanted to be. Unlike his mother, he had had a strict education and a scrupulous preparation for the affairs of the state administration. During his father's regency, he took a *grand tour* around Europe during which he had the opportunity to contact with other sovereigns and to observe their modes of political intervention⁷. The English model positively impressed him. Especially in what he considered to be the effectiveness of the conciliation engineering between the monarchical and the democratic principles based on the crucial role of the sovereign. On July 3, 1854, he wrote down in his travel notebook:

The king in England, despite the spread of philosophical ideas, is still a sacred person who is nothing when he does not want to be and is everything when he wants to [...]. When he puts himself at the forefront of public interests, he takes on extraordinary strength, a moral strength that almost divinizes him⁸.

Pedro wanted to be that moral power, and consequently

5. I. Corrêa da Silva, M. Metelo de Seixas, *Uncrowned kings: rituals and ritual objects in eighteenth – nineteenth century Portuguese royal acclamation ceremonies*, «European Review of History», 28 (2021), pp. 28-49. DOI:10.1080/13507486.2020.1809639.

6. D. Peres (org.), *D. Pedro nas páginas do seu diário íntimo*, Portucalense, Porto 1945; R. Leitão (org.), *Cartas de D. Pedro ao imperador do Brasil*, Academia Portuguesa de História, Lisbon 1968; Id. (org.), *Cartas de D. Pedro aos seus contemporâneos*, Livraria Portugal, Lisbon 1961; Id. (org.), *Cartas de D. Pedro ao príncipe Alberto*, Portugal/Fundação da Casa de Bragança, Lisbon 1954; Id. (org.), *D. Pedro V e Herculanó*, Coimbra Editora, Coimbra 1954; Id. (org.), *Cartas de D. Pedro ao conde do Lavradio*, Portucalense editora, Porto 1945; F. Queirós, *Epistolário de D. Pedro V*, Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, Lisbon 1983 and Id., *Escritos de El-Rei D. Pedro V (1923-1926)*.

7. F. L. Vicente, *Viagens e Exposições: D. Pedro V na Europa do Século XIX*, Gótica, Lisbon 2003.

8. *Escritos de El-Rei D. Pedro V* cit., vol. I, p. 178.

aspired to that aura of sacredness. He wanted to make the throne his priesthood, not only in observance of the dynastic tradition that predestined him, but also in the fulfillment of what he believed to be the civic responsibility of modern monarchs. In this sense, Pedro did not see the veneration of the sovereign's figure as an atavism, but as a requirement of modern politics, in which kings, removed from common governance, should assume an almost Christ like authority, presenting themselves as a moral, affective, and spiritual reference for citizens.

Methodical and perfectionist, Pedro wanted to be the perfect constitutional king, to reconcile the promotion of material progress with the regeneration of consciences. His obsession with being a role model made him a missionary both of the throne and virtue: to convert by example, to promote the royal institution by publicizing his good conduct. During the two great outbreaks of yellow fever in 1857 and 1861 in Lisbon, Pedro visited several hospitals and asylums. Newspapers described him encouraging the sick with his presence, supporting the moribund foreheads and faces with his own hand⁹. The same hand that, by 1857 decree, he stopped handling to the subjects for the official hand-kiss ritual¹⁰. By abolishing this ancestral rite he was extinguishing one of the most traditional devices for worshiping the mystical body of kings, because he believed that in modern societies royal sanctity passed essentially through Christian virtues. By doing this, he was simultaneously working, not necessarily consciously, on the construction of a cult of his virtuous personality, embroiled in a sort of mystical aura¹¹.

2. The ideal royal couple

The concern to be an exemplary mirror seemed to be present in all dimensions of Pedro's life. Hence, he thought about marriage with the same missionary spirit with which he visited the dying of cholera on their deathbed. The de-

9. R. Martins, *Rei Santo. Crónica do reinado de D. Pedro V*, João Romano Torres Lda, Lisbon 1907, p. 21.

10. *Decreto* de 5 de Maio de 1858.

11. Cf. I. Corrêa da Silva, *Monarquia Secular e o 'corpo místico' do rei constitucional*, in R. Ramos, J.M. de Carvalho, I. Corrêa da Silva (eds.), *A Monarquia Constitucional dos Braganças em Portugal e no Brasil (1822-1910)*, Dom Quixote, Lisbon 2018, pp. 261-288.

sire to set up a model consortium explains the delay and hesitation in choosing his future wife – ought to be queen. In his choice certainly weighed the pious and devout reputation of the princess Stephanie of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (eldest daughter of Karl Anton, prince of Hohenzollern and head of the House of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, and of his wife princess Josephine of Baden) from the catholic branch of the kings of Prussia, who grew-up in Dusseldorf until 1858, when she came to live in Lisbon to be married with Pedro, at the age of twenty¹².

The marriage took place, first, in Berlin, by proxy, and some months latter, in Lisbon, in a proper face-to-face ceremony. This last occasion was a media spectacle in which the image of the perfect and virtuous couple started to be conveyed. Press pictured the young couple as exemplary as the Victoria and Albert British couple. We know today, that, in fact, Victoria and Albert had great influence in the Portuguese spousal arrangement¹³. Pedro had long since made his uncle Alberto a confidant, with whom he maintained an assiduous and prolific correspondence in which he asked his uncle for advice on the most varied questions. Marriage was no exception. And Albert stressed openly the advantages of a catholic princess, asserting that being Catholic was mandatory for the choice, being German was a plus (lets not forget that Pedro was himself son of a German prince). In these Alberto's dynastic remarks – “[...] completely new blood, not contaminated with mixtures of Bourbons or Habsburgueses” -, there is also present a confrontation between stereotypes of North and South that ended up echoing, more or less implicitly, in the public images of the future queen publicized by the media which focused on the reputation of honor and commitment of German women¹⁴.

D. Pedro himself, in a letter to his homonymous uncle, emperor of Brazil, confessed that he had dreamed “of a woman with habits of domesticity and with the instincts of

12. M. A. Lopes, *Rainhas que o povo amou: D. Estefânia de Hohenzollern, D. Maria Pia de Saboia*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2013.

13. M. F. Mónica, *D. Pedro V*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2005, p. 125.

14. J. Vilhena, *Cartas inéditas da Rainha D. Estefânia*, Academia das Ciências, Lisbon, 1922, p. 10-22; R. Leitão, *Cartas de D. Pedro ao príncipe Alberto*, Portugália/Fundação da Casa de Bragança, Lisbon 1954.

conjugal friendship that distinguish the German race.”¹⁵ The disgraceful example of Isabel II of Spain was the elephant in the room, from which unlimited extrapolations about moral conduct of Latin women could be made, and by contrast, all sort of idealizations about northern women integrities could be inferred¹⁶.

The months leading up to and following the royal wedding were particularly fertile in publications where these characteristics, loaded with nationality and gender prejudices, of austerity and virtue of the couple were highlighted. It was indeed in the context of the royal marriage that a more strong media image of Pedro began to be shaped. An image indistinctly linked to that of his wife and to the virtuous ensemble that the two of them formed together. In the 19th century, probably more than in any previous period of History, kings did not escape the socio-cultural canons of their time and in this sense the public image of Pedro would inevitably be fitted to the bourgeois standard that set virtue, respect and faith as archetypal codes for a head of the family model¹⁷. After half a century of fratricidal conflicts, after a turbulent period of intermittent civil war under a woman’s crown, Pedro is asked to assume the role of conciliator and chief of the Portuguese family. For this purpose, his gender is not an insignificant detail: he was a male son of indisputable dynastic legitimacy. On the other hand, as from a certain point in time, Pedro’s public image as an adult legitimate king will be built concomitantly with his marital engagement and he will also implicitly assume some of his wife’s gender characteristics. Among them: the halo of charity.

15. Letter from 21th December 1858 in Leitão, *Cartas de D. Pedro ao imperador* cit., pp. 63-71.

16. The bad Spanish example would be evoked again when debating the alternatives for Pedro second wedding, after he was widowed. The moral genealogy of the Spanish candidate princess Maria Isabel Francisca displeased both Pedro and Alberto, see M. F. Mónica, *D. Pedro V* cit., pp. 135-137. Cf. I. Burdiel, *The Queen, the Woman and the Middle Class. The Symbolic Failure of Isabel II of Spain*, «Social History», 29/3 (2004), pp. 301-319 and F. Peyrou, *Familia y política. Masculinidad y feminidad en el discurso democrático isabelino*, «Historia y Política», 25 (2011), pp. 149-174.

17. M. Wienfort, *Dynastic Heritage and Bourgeois Morals: Monarchy and Family in the Nineteenth Century*, in F. L. Müller, H. Mehrkens (eds.), *Royal Heirs and the Uses of Soft Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Palgrave-Macmillan, London 2016, pp. 163-180. A. Martin-Fugier, *Louis-Philippe et sa famille, 1830-1848*, Tempus, Paris 2012.

One of the recurrent features of Stephanie and Pedro's media coverage was their characterization as "charity angels". It is interesting to note how the attributes related to this image are indistinctly associated with the two members of the couple: emphasizing features that traditionally were associated to female, such as being handsome, kind, and caretaking of the misfortunates¹⁸. Pedro is, moreover, described as the exemplary civic king who refused the sword and only fights with his pen, thus embodying the nineteenth-century model of the citizen-king who cares for and not only rules his people¹⁹. In a context of peace, Pedro's only mission is to guarantee the union and the motivation of the Portuguese family under the political, but also moral, framework of the Regeneration. In a cultural environment that was witnessing the substitution of honor for virtue, the personality traits of Pedro and Stephanie suited them with particular precision to the role of the most virtuous couple²⁰.

3. The veil of death and the birth of a trauma

In 1859, when the country was still enchanted with the royal "angels of charity", an hecatomb came to wake up everyone from the fairy tale: on a quiet summer morning on July 17th the sudden death of the queen was announced to the country. Stephanie died from diphtheria after a short journey to the countryside, south of Lisbon. She was only 22 years old, and had been queen for 14 months. The king was devastated. The whole nation was in shock, and a sort of "canonization" process begun right away. Discourses on the queen's religious and virtuous attributes arose in the most varied forms: poems, drawing, publication of funeral speeches and preaches, etc. «Angel» and «white dove» were

18. Some examples, among many: J.H. de Almeida Blanco, *Blanco Anjo e cruz: canto elegiaco na infaustissima morte de S. M. F. a Rainha a Senhora Dona Stephanie*, Typ. de Joaquim Germano de Sousa Neves, Lisbon 1859; *Auto da vida e morte do Senhor Rei D. Pedro V e dos grandes desgostos e amarguras por que passou no seu reinado*, Verol Junior, Lisbon 1861; *Estephania Rainha de Portugal: vida de uma princeza allemã dos nossos dias*, Lallemand Frères, Lisboa 1873; A. Pimentel, *A porta do paraíso: chronica do reinado de D. Pedro V*, Lucas & Filho, Lisbon 1873.

19. K. Hagemann, *The First Citizen of The State: Paternal Masculinity, Patriotism, and Citizenship in Early Nineteenth-Century Prussia* in S. Dudink et al., *Representing* cit., pp. 67- 88.

20. Cf. R. A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*, Oxford University Press, New York 1993.

expressions repeatedly used²¹. In addition to her 22 tender years of age that made natural the metaphor of purity, Stephanie's curriculum of Christian piety helped in the construction of her posthumous image of a kind of holy martyr. Religion assumed the main role in all the writings: the only consolation in the face of the inconsolable pain.

Twenty-eight months later, the unimaginable happens: the death of the young king. Outbursts of typhoid fever or cholera in autumn 1861 brought close to death four of the seven children of queen Maria II. Three of them died, among them Pedro. It was felt as a national calamity. The country was still grieving for the young prince Fernando that died five days before at the age of 15 when, at 11 November, the death of king Pedro was announced. The tragic event was immediately associated with the list of misfortunes that had marked the reign of Peter, suggesting that the veil of death had covered Peter's throne: cholera and yellow fever outbreaks in 1853, 1856 and 1857; big earthquake in 1858; the death of Stephanie; the loss of the young prince Fernando few days before the king's death. The court endeavored to pay due respect to such unjust fatality and the program of the king's funeral ceremonies was written and publicized in order to widely reach the common people. There was even a request by the Lisbon Society of Artists asking that

in the name of the great public sentiment [...], the coffin that encloses the august corpse of S: M. (was) taken by all classes of the society from the Palace of Necessidades to S. Vicente de For a²².

Press and memoirs descriptions of those days give us an idea of an immense crowd around the royal palace and an extraordinary attendance of thousands of people in the funeral procession. Pedro's dead body remained in viewing the 14th and 15th, days during which hundreds of people flocked to the palace to mourn the king; chronicles say

21. One example, among many: J. H. Correia, *Uma lágrima de saudade, angustia, e dor tributada pelos portugueses á saudosa memoria de Dona Stephanie.*, Typ. Nova, Lisbon 1859.

22. J.M. de Andrade Ferreira, *Reinado e Últimos momentos de D. Pedro V*, Livraria António Maria Pereira, Lisbon 1862, p. 73.

that even beggars (*rotinhos*) were seen there²³. On the 16th, the funeral march took five and a half hours to complete the five kilometers that separate the Royal Palace from the church where the king was buried. The funeral procession was attended by thousands of people and more than 50 representatives of civil associations. Less than a month after, prince João died on the 27th December. The death of the three princes in less than two months was traumatic and covered the country with a veil of deep mourning and despair. An anguish mood took over all public opinion. The nation submerged in great awe and rumors about conspiracy and murder arose, giving way to social turmoil²⁴.

Pedro's mourning was a process expanded throughout the second half of the 19th century and expressed in the very will to understand the king, to try to frame his passage through the Portuguese throne and, in a way, give some kind of meaning to his unexpected death. Because any collective psychology is obviously a daring and slippery exercise, never enough attention was given to the national trauma of the tragic events of 1858-6²⁵. For the generation that had experienced the civil war of the first half of the century, Pedro's death must have deepened the hope and inspiration for the future: a kind of anti-climax, increased by the sense of injustice given the king's youth. It was not just the political regeneration that must seem shaken, but also the very faith in the monarchy that may well have been compromised. What to think about the sudden and unjustifiable death of two princes, the queen, and the king, all in the bloom of their age? Obviously, no one believed in the infallibility of royalty anymore, but to see it massacred by Providence was a big step. A step that by perplexity and skepticism had all the ingredients to close the hearts of the people to the redemptive capacity of the crown, and simultaneously to open the doors to the expansion of a metaphysical dimension, so characteristic of the religious romanticism of the second half of the century. The funeral

23. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

24. M.F. Mónica, *D. Pedro V* cit., pp. 198-200.

25. See on virtue and political imaginary: J. Burr Margadant, *Gender, Vice and the Political Imaginary in Postrevolutionary France: Reinterpreting The Failure of The July Monarchy, 1830-1848*, «American Historical Review», 104 (1999), no. 5, pp. 1461-1469.

speeches and memories produced in the following years reflect this kind of subtle mental reprogramming that assumes the subjugation of the political/dynastic condition of kings to their human/mortal condition as sons of God: «What do I care that our beloved monarch was the son of kings, grandson of kings? [...] he was born as all other men are born, but he died, as very few know how to die»²⁶.

Almost without exception, all those who evoked Pedro introduced this tear of metaphysical humility into their speech. Ecclesiastics, in particular, who in the months following the king's death produced dozens of funeral prayers that were read in countless churches throughout the country, did not miss the opportunity to claim the supremacy of religion and repudiate the privileges of the throne: «The insignia of royalty, dragged in the dust, wrapped in black crêpe: the splendor of that glory disappeared, erased itself in the icy breath of death»²⁷. And even left warnings:

Kings and powerful men around the world, look...
and tremble! Crown and scepter, crimson and ermine,
everything lays merged with the dust. This is how God
instructs the kings and the people when He pleases²⁸.

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The cult of Pedro was built throughout the 1860s, in a process of an almost civil canonization in which the word “saint” was repeatedly found in the kings’ evocations. In fact, there was a kind of Christianization of his memory, divesting it of from the attributes of royalty to crown it with the qualities of a Christian martyr. Therefore, in Pedro’s posthumous image there were the facts that attested these features that were highlighted: his kindness and closeness to the people; the “green box” that he placed outside the Royal Palace so that people could write directly to him; his courage during the epidemic outbreaks; the end of the royal hand-kissing ritual; all the charity and artistic associations to which he gave his financial support.

26. Pe. J. M. Moreira de Seabra, *Oração fúnebre nas exéquias de El-Rei D. Pedro V*, Typ. Universal, Lisbon 1862.

27. Pe. F. S. Donato, *Oração fúnebre nas solenes exéquias de D. Pedro V*, Imp. da Universidade, Coimbra 1862, p. 9.

28. Presbytero J. M. S. Leite, *Oração fúnebre recitada na Sé de Castello Branco por ocasião das exéquias solenes de Sua Magestade Fidelíssima o Senhor D. Pedro V*, Typ. de G. M. Martins, Lisbon 1863, pp. 1-2.

The three theological virtues: faith, hope and charity, occupied a prominent place in Pedro's evocations, whose memory, like that of Christ, was perpetuated by the legacy of love: «it was not the blood of the Afonsos, the Avis and the Braganza that ran through his veins, but the entrenched affection of our hearts that were all his»²⁹. A gift of purity was added to this inheritance of virtue, highlighting the idea of the young man who resisted the temptations and vices of his time and age: «licentious mores seem to be the most common these times [...]. In the vigor of age, Pedro kept a behavior of purity and severity that would honor an old man in ancient times»³⁰. More than a capacity to control passions, Pedro's personality was pictured as a dispassionate one, endowed with almost superhuman characteristics. These almost asexual descriptions implicitly carried gender judgments: by holding Pedro off from the image of manhood and virility of his predecessors (kings Pedro and Miguel, and his own father Fernando), as well as from the men of his age, by highlighting Pedro's depreciation for bohemian and promiscuous behaviors and, simultaneously, emphasizing his beauty and youth (with many descriptions of his physical features), his purity and virtue.

Pedro's grief had a very large material expression: odes, poems, preaches, panegyrics, didactic books, postcards, lithographs, photos, many sorts of prints, statues, toponymics, evocative monuments, pamphlets, memoirs etc. Everyone that had a story or something particular to recall about the king, dared to publish a small booklet or wrote an essay to the newspapers. Pedro became a sales success. Some of these small stories were such a sales success that authors felt the need to justify themselves in the preface to second editions, clarifying that they were not taking advantage from the Pedro's fever³¹.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

30. F.A.R. Azevedo, *Oração Fúnebre nas Exéquias do Sr. D. Pedro V.* s.l., s.n., 1862, p. 14.

31. H.A. da Cunha Soares Freire, *O rei e o soldado, facto histórico do reinado do senhor D. Pedro precedido de um resumo biográfico do mesmo monarca*, Editora José Augusto Rocha, 1862 (first edition), Setúbal 1868 (second edition) and Id., *D. Pedro V – esboço biográfico e o Rei soldado*, M.L. da Silva, Lisbon 186-.

4. From the spirit to the body: explaining Pedro with the eyes of Science

Attempting to understand Pedro was also a way to grieve him. To try to uncover his complex personality whose premature death had made indecipherable. While in the streets, people mourned the saint, in the press other people sought to give meaning to Pedro's tragic fate by looking for signs of omens in the course of his life. The need to make Pedro intelligible was made clear immediately a few weeks after his death when, simultaneously to the panegyrics and the funeral prayers, the first chronicles came out. Hence, detailed descriptions of various moments of his life came to light by the publication of the king's correspondence, writings and, above all, by the testimonies of those who had direct contact with the king and therefore, apparently, could make reliable considerations about his personality. In 1861, the journalist José Maria Andrade Ferreira published a book with the purpose of drawing a "moral portrait" of Pedro. *Reinado e últimos momentos de D. Pedro V* (Reign and last moments of Pedro V) sold a thousand copies in 1862' first edition, and had three other editions during the XIX century. Ferreira sketches a dark psychological image of the king: picturing him as a very pessimist and mournful man, suffering from depression, and relates the misfortune of the reign to this mental gloomy portrait considering that the king was, unconsciously, conducting his own destiny to a tragic outcome³².

Two years later it was the turn of the king's tutor, Martins Bastos, to write his memoirs³³. Bastos also advocates a pathological explanation for Pedro's black personality, explicitly saying that he suffered from depression. Just as Ferreira had done, Bastos compares Pedro to the late medieval Portuguese king Duarte I, a very erudite, bright and virtuous prince who died bachelor after five years of a short reign, and left as legacy the first writings about the clinical condition of depression: «Da maneira que fui doente del menencorico, e del guareci»³⁴. It is in the memories of his

32. Ferreira, *Reinado cit.*

33. F. A. Martins Bastos, *Memórias para a história de El-Rey fidelissimo o senhor Dom Pedro V e de seus augustos irmãos*, Typ. Universal, Lisbon 1863.

34. Duarte, king of Portugal, *O Leal Conselheiro* (1438), Atlântida, Coimbra 1973.

tutor that one finds the first and clearer allusions to the physical materialization of Pedro's virtue and chasteness. Bastos justifies the purity of the king, including his indifference towards the mundane aspects of life, as a consequence of his psychological condition and writes: "With my hand in my conscience I can say that His Highness had not the slightest idea of malice: that He died as innocent as when He left the hands of the Creator"³⁵.

Throughout the following decades, the amount of portraits of the king instead of contributing to illuminate, only made Pedro's image more difficult to discern. Finally, in 1881 one of the most influential Portuguese nineteenth century historians, Oliveira Martins, would stabilize the memory of Pedro. In his *Portugal Contemporâneo* (Contemporary Portugal), Martins traces the most sinister and dramatic, because also grotesque, portrait of the king, describing him as a sort of a mystical lunatic, a walking omen, with undisguised absolutist inclinations:

It was no longer in use to consult witches and soothsayers, but the king had in himself the temperament that asks for miracles [...]. [In the plagues] of Lisbon, D. Pedro V was canonized by the people. And when four years later he died, in his halo of charity the people added palms of martyrdom"³⁶.

Martins seemed determined to destroy with implacable rationality the metaphysical path in which the memory of Pedro had traveled until then. By the hand of Martins, Pedro descended into the world of ordinary mortals and his exceptionalities were transfigured into human faults: the king's rigor is transformed into obsession, scruple into intolerance, piety into superstition, and psychological restlessness into fatalism. The emotional burden that Pedro's memory carried after decades of exaltation should be unbearable for Martins' skeptical rationalism. Although the ruthless and 20-year posthumous judgment he made of the king was not devoid of emotionalism either. Nevertheless, Martins is probably one of the only authors to have written

35. Bastos, *Memorias* cit., p. 174.

36. J. P. Oliveira Martins, *Portugal Contemporâneo*, Livraria de António Maria Pereira, Lisbon 1895, p. 395.

about the king without calling upon any kind of psychiatric accounts. For Martins, there were no diagnosis or circumstances, only personality traits. And what worried him about Pedro's personality was what he considered to be the characteristics that made him unfit for his time and function as a constitutional king: the overbearing of worldly aspects of life, the contempt for politicians, the lack of confidence in institutions, the excess of piety. In this sense, Martins is perhaps one of the few who judges exclusively on the king and not on man.

The 20th century brought along new lens to the scrutiny of Pedro. In a context of progressive secularization and consolidation of the intellectual power of physicians, metaphysical interpretations lost their place to scientific ones, allowing what until then had been merely a fait-divers in Pedro's biography, the doubt about his virginity, to take a central place in the posthumous radiography of the king³⁷. In fact, Freudian psychoanalytic theories, cherished at the time by the medical community and beyond, allowed Pedro's alleged anaphrodisia to be no longer seen as a mere gossip but as an explanatory element of his character. First explicit reference to this was found in a 1903 publication, *Cartas Inéditas d'el Rei D. Pedro seguidas de estudo psicológico* («Unpublished letters from king D. Pedro followed by psychological study»)³⁸, where the authors refer to the rumors about Pedro's frigidity and Stephanie's virginity to deny them. Previous explicit written references to this rumors are not known, but the fact that in 1903 Loureiro and Remédios felt the need to deny them on write is a sign that they already had some expression.

Historiographically, the reference that opened the debate on the theme of Stephanie's virginity is that of the hygienist physician Ricardo Jorge in an article on "parthenoplasty" (i.e. the physical simulation of virginity or hymen repair surgery) in the 1909 review *Medicina Contemporânea* («Contemporary Medicine»). Jorge wrote that «queen D. Estefânia, D. Pedro V's wife, died as it is known from diphthe-

37. M.R. Lino Garnel, *O poder intelectual dos médicos (finais do século XIX - inícios do século XX)*, «Revista de História das Ideias», 24 (2003), pp. 213-253.

38. J. Mendes dos Remédios and E. Loureiro (eds.), *Cartas Inéditas d'el Rei D. Pedro seguidas de estudo psicológico*, F. França Amado, Coimbra 1903, p. XV.

ria: as the false membranes spread to the vulva, the doctors examined her and were surprised to find the hymen intact», adding that this information was only known «by tradition never divulged until today»³⁹. But we know that at least since 1903 there were written references to this same oral tradition. The information, rumor or allegation that traveled throughout the second half of the nineteenth century in oral track, now found the environment to be discussed publicly. It could not have been any other way. If in the early 17th century Portugal, it was possible to discuss among the court the sexuality of king Afonso VI (which eventually led to the annulment of his marriage with Maria Francisca of Savoy)⁴⁰, in the 19th century bourgeois purist society, this kind of allusion, even if concerning dead people, had no place for written discussion, much less publicly. That is why it is natural that the report of Stephanie's autopsy, where the so-called medical reference to the incorruptibility of the hymen could possibly be, disappeared. The same way that it is also absolutely expected that none of the three doctors who were present at the examination has ever left any written testimony⁴¹. Already in the 1920s, when a former monarchy minister, Júlio Vilhena, took up the subject again, the most he could obtain was the oral testimony of a son of one of the doctors.

Vilhena was perhaps the most dedicated *pedrista* of the many authors who for over 150 years wove Pedro's chronicle. Besides a biography and a history of his reign in two volumes (1921), Vilhena also did the work of compiling, editing and publishing the almost exhaustive ensemble of the king's writings (1922)⁴². He was unable to disguise his preoccupation with deciphering the psyche and the sexuality of the king. The theme that had been forbidden to Vilhena as deputy, minister and head of the conservative party during the monarchy, now seemed natural to the 75-year-old

39. R. Jorge, *A parthenoplastia*, «A Medicina Contemporânea», 11, IV (1909), vol. IV, pp. 114-117.

40. Â. Barreto Xavier, P. Cardim, *D. Afonso VI*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2006, pp. 183-203.

41. M. Perrot, *Les acteurs* in Id. (dir.), *Histoire de la vie privée*, vol. 4 (dir. P. Ariès and G. Duby), Seuil, Paris 1987.

42. J. Vilhena, *D. Pedro V e o Seu Reinado*, Imprensa da Universidade, Coimbra 1921, 2 vols; *Escritos de El-Rei D. Pedro V* cit.

retired minister writing in the full 1920s, in an intellectual and social context in which science was gradually acquiring totalitarian prerogatives. Hence, an important part of the of Vilhena's second volume is dedicated to discuss the frigidity of the king. He collects parts of Pedro's writings that presumably reveal his misogyny, his indifference for women, his obsession with morality and his disdain and re- crimination for bohemian and libertine behaviors. Vilhena seems truly convinced that Pedro had no sensual appetite and seeks desperately to prove his thesis. To do so he writes to the probably most famous Portuguese psychiatrist of the time, Júlio de Matos, asking for his medical opinion, and publishes the doctor's answer:

D. Pedro was not gynophobo (aversion to women) nor even homosexual, he was constitutionally a frigid man [...] an individuals in whom the sexual instinct did not come to be constituted [...]. The sexual indifference of the constitutional anaphrodisiacs may be painful to them by the awareness that they are diminished relative to other men. And this is perhaps the case of D. Pedro V, who historians describe as a person of a sad character and not having other inclinations or interests besides the purely intellectual⁴³.

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Vilhena wrote also to the prince of Hohenzollern asking for any evidence on the subject that could be found on Stephanie's correspondence, kept in the German palace. From this correspondence sent by the German prince, Vilhena picked a passage from one of Stephanie's letters to her mother, where the princess recalls the wedding night and that Vilhena presents as another evidence of Pedro's frigidity:

I did not sleep a wink. I was very embarrassed, uncomfortable, and I think, in short, that this custom of the spouses sleep together is not very pleasant. But I consider it a duty before God and the excessive purity and delicacy of Pedro touches and pleases me; is a great bliss for me, because without it there would be things that would be very difficult for me. As you see, my dear mother, I write to you with my heart open⁴⁴.

43. Letter from Matos to Vilhena (26th November 1926) *apud* Vilhena, *D. Pedro* cit., vol. 2, p. 396.

44. Vilhena, *D. Pedro* cit., vol. 2, p. 403.

Other pieces of Pedro and Stephanie plot were brought by Júlio de Sousa e Costa in 1941, in the book suggestively named *The Secret of D. Pedro* (Pedro's secret)⁴⁵. Costa was a republican journalist, a self-taught historian who did a remarkable job of compiling oral history about various moments and characters of 19th century Portuguese history. He built his book on Pedro based on a collection of testimonies from Pedro's servants or employees, and particularly from the private notes of General Claudio Chaby, who attended frequently the royal palace. The episode of Stephanie's death and autopsy occupies only one of the 24 chapters of the book, and yet the mystery surrounding the consummation of the marriage runs through the entire work. But unlike the previous chroniclers, Costa does not suggest any theory about Pedro's condition – frigidity, impotence, homosexuality – allowing the unspoken to live up to the book's title. It is clear that Costa had an opinion on the subject, but he is never explicit, what is also understandable since he writes during the conservative dictatorship of the Estado Novo. Nevertheless, Costa is the first to publish a supposed full transcription of the notes written by one of the doctor who performed Stephanie's autopsy, the same notes that presumably were used in 1908 Ricardo Jorge's article. But, in fact, it never becomes clear who were Costa's sources. What matters is that, with an inescapable wide margin of imagination, Costa's book brought to light a series of oral testimonies and accounts of small stories that helped to reconstruct the domestic and convivial setting of Pedro and Stephanie.

During the Estado Novo's dictatorship, several intellectuals of the regime made their contributions to the study of Pedro's figure and reign, including the publication of much correspondence⁴⁶. Nevertheless, this was, as one would expect, a period of some truce in the scrutiny of the king's intimate life. The subject only returned to the spotlight in the 21st century when the historiographical milieu rediscovered the biography and the historical novel gained popularity. In more strict academic research, as well as in literary fiction,

45. J. de Sousa e Costa, *O Segredo de Dom Pedro V*, Romano Torres, Lisbon 1941.

46. Most relevant of these authors was Ruben A. Leitão, worked cited.

with more or less sensationalist or sentimental style, the secret of Pedro continued to feed pages of speculation⁴⁷.

5. Final notes

From his death in 1861 to the present day, the memory of Pedro has been built on thousands of written pages of the most varied styles. The proportion between time of reign and bibliographical production is probably unique in Portuguese history, or only comparable to the case of king Sebastião. Unlike other monarchs, such as Carlos I, Pedro IV or Manuel II, whose chronic and historiographical production is justified by the exceptional political circumstances of their reigns, Pedro V has no particular event or political upheaval worth highlighting from his time as king. In fact, who, throughout this century and a half, chroniclers, historians, and novelists have been looking for is not the king, but the man. Since no one ever found evidences of what could possibly be proved (the queen's virginity), and since any personality judgment is essentially subjective and permeable to its context of production, decade after decade the effort to try to decipher the man Pedro has proved redundant and naturally inconclusive.

The purpose of this essay was to synthesize this bibliographic production, paying due attention to authorial and context idiosyncrasies and trying to understand what they reveal us about the historicity of themes such as marriage, sexuality, masculinity, the feminine condition, which occupy a central place in practically all the literature mentioned. In fact, the empirical material here compiled has taken us out of strict Institutional and Political History to lead us into the History of Historiography, into Cultural and Social History, or even into more unsteady terrains those of History of Private Life, of Sexuality, of Emotions, and Gender. At the end of the journey, what seems more important to retain are not the facts on the marriage, sexuality, masculinity, or the gender condition of the king and queen, but how these

47. Academic examples: M. F. Mónica, *D. Pedro V* cit. and M.A. Lopes, *Rainhas que o povo cit.*, and M. de F. Reis, *D. Estefânia e D. Maria Pia de Savoia, 1837-1859 e 1847-1911: a caridosa e o anjo da caridade*, QuidNovi, Vila do Conde 2011. Fiction examples: O. Leite, R. Oliveira, S. Trigueirão, *A vida louca dos reis e rainhas de Portugal: a verdade escondida pela História*, Marcador, w.p. e. 2011; S. Rodi, *D. Estefânia: um trágico amor*, A Esfera dos Livros, Lisbon 2012.

concepts were discussed and judged by those who evoked them regarding the king and queen.

Because the personal rather than the political judgment prevailed, the emotional dimension of this memory path was dominant. Obviously, on a first moment, because of the tragic events that led to the royal couple's death. In fact, the literature that attests to the longevity of the mourning for Pedro should invite us to pose the question on how the fatalities of Pedro and the royal family affected the national spirit and the dynastic, monarchical, devotion⁴⁸. Could it be that, as Oliveira Martins insinuated that the «death in the Palace» was seen as a «symbol of death in the Kingdom»?⁴⁹ It is, for sure, impossible to quantify how much of the public opinion skepticism on the monarchy can be attributed to the emotional echoes of this trauma, but it is reasonable to recognize that the anti-climax of hope caused by Pedro's tragedy left deep marks of discouragement on the future of Portuguese society.

In this sense, the nineteenth century bibliographical production gains in being read in its emotional dimension, corresponding to a kind of catharsis moving in different directions. In the direction of the Panegyric, which gives continuity to the religious, Christian and civic frame, enhancing the sanctity features of the king's memory. Also in the direction of those who renounced to metaphysical plans, to discover Pedro in the light of rationality and science, resorting to pathologies and psychological conditions to explain him. An ambivalent device that, if at the one hand brings the king down to the mundane plane of mortals, relieves him from the burden of his weaknesses, on the other.

The increasing affirmation of science as an absolute explanatory paradigm and a rational framework for human existence has in the history of Pedro and Stephanie a rich field of expression. If in the second half of the 19th century, concepts such as "depression" and "hypochondria" were already used to characterize Pedro, even though without any explicit mention of his sexuality, we know that the issue of the queen's hypothetical virginity was not then clearly

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48. Interesting to read this according to what Eduardo Lourenço says in *O labirinto da saudade. Psicoanálise mítica do destino português*, Gradiva, Lisbon 2020 (1978), pp. 23-67.

49. J. P. Oliveira Martins, *Portugal* cit., p. 316.

stated. It traveled for 50 years in the oral tradition, until it found ground to be expressed in writing just in the first decade of the 20th century. During this period, the emotional tone of the writings was already serenaded by time, but it became, in its turn, deeply engaged in the rhetoric of infallibility of science. This was the medicalization peak of Pedro's and Stephanie memory, with science lending legitimacy to expose the couple's intimacy, without any obvious political justification (checking the legitimacy of a marriage annulment, or of an abdication, as was for instance the case of Afonso VI).

If the 19th century bourgeois canon of masculinity only allowed to talk about Pedro's affections using expressions such as "charitable", "pious", "disinterested in human passions", "metaphysical purity" or "misogynist" at the most⁵⁰. At the beginning of the 20th century, with the triumph of hygienic, psychiatric, and psychoanalytical theories, the parameters of characterization took on more objective outlines, gaining status of diagnosis. Then, Pedro was no longer "gynophobe", nor even "homosexual", he was a "constitutional frigid", in the words of Júlio de Matos that attest how clinical hermeneutics did not condemn only women and their "hysterias". But if gender didn't save Pedro from being exposed, it somehow managed to spare Stephanie, since concerning the doubts on the consummation of marriage, the onus always fell on Pedro. The queen's sexuality and libido were never object for speculation, being taken for granted the female sexual potentiality and the assertion of a passive femininity. In all the scrutiny that was made of each sentence, of each comma or intimate confession both of the king or the queen that could possibly help to decipher the marital mystery, one was always looking for the sexuality of the man and never of the woman. On all of proof compilation – Pedro did not care for the theater dancers, he felt uncomfortable around women and was often unpleasant with them, he mocked about the virtue of the nuns – Pedro was always being confronted with a paradigm of heterosexual active masculinity in which he did not seem to fit, and therefore his sexuality was denied from him. The fact that

50. About this 19th century manliness paradigms see G.L. Mosse, *The image of Man. The creation of modern masculinity*, Oxford University Press, New York 1996.

Stephanie was not subjected to such an examination is not irrelevant. The displeasure at sleeping with her husband, or the anguish about the couple's intimacy expressed in the letters to her mother didn't seem enough reason to speculate about the queen's sexuality, simply because her reproductive potential was naturalized in her feminine condition and no proof of that was expected. Unfortunately for Pedro, as a male king, more was expected from him.

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