

Imperial faith and catholic missions in the grand exhibitions of the *Estado Novo***

During the 1930s Portugal's *Estado Novo* developed an impressive array of activities directed at awakening and maintaining Portugal's "national pride", in an attempt to define the new regime's symbolic ideology and consolidate loyalties. Those intentions were reflected in Portugal's participation in the main international expositions of the time, and in the successful organization of various national expositions, especially those of 1934, 1937, and 1940. The Catholic Church was featured in some form in all of these historical, economic, and colonial events. The purpose of this article is to analyze this participation and consider how it was useful for the Church. Finally, I will show how this participation was turned by the *Estado Novo* to its own ends.

Keywords: *Estado Novo*; colonial exhibitions; Catholic Church; Catholic missions.

Fé imperial e missões católicas nas grandes exposições do Estado Novo

Durante a década de 30 do século xx, o Estado Novo desenvolve uma intensa actividade tendente a despertar e manter vivo o "orgulho nacional" do povo português, com o objectivo de fixar o ideário simbólico do novo regime e consolidar lealdades. Tais intenções reflectem-se na notável participação de Portugal nas principais exposições internacionais do momento e na organização bem sucedida de várias exposições nacionais, com destaque para as de 1934, 1937 e 1940. De uma forma ou de outra, a religião e a Igreja Católica estão presentes nestes acontecimentos de carácter histórico, económico e colonial. Neste artigo analisam-se os principais contornos desta participação, reflectindo-se sobre a sua utilidade para a Igreja e sobre a forma como o Estado Novo a acaba por utilizar em benefício próprio.

Palavras-chave: Estado Novo; exposições coloniais; Igreja Católica; missões católicas.

Portugal's new regime that was instituted following the coup of May 26, 1926, assumed as one of its first obligations the renewal and expansion of the colonial enterprise. The regime immediately embarked upon an impres-

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** This article is part of a larger study which the author is preparing on the ethnographic-missionary exhibitions (Catholic and Protestant, autonomous or linked with colonial/international events) in Europe and the United States between *circa* 1880 and 1958. I offer my sincere gratitude to the anonymous reviewers at *Análise Social* for their comments and recommendations. Any deficiency of the text is, of course, the sole responsibility of the author.

sive array of initiatives, among which was the reorganization of the *Escola Superior Colonial* (High Colonial Academy) (1926) and the *Agência Geral das Colônias* (General Office of the Colonies) (1932), and the promulgation of the new *Bases Orgânicas da Administração Colonial* (Basis of the Colonial Administration) (1926). It also published, in the same year, the *Estatuto Orgânico das Missões Católicas Portuguesas de África e Timor* (Organic Statute of the Portuguese Catholic Missions in Africa and Timor), which served as a point of departure for the supposed “rebirth” of the Portuguese Catholic missions.

These legislative and reform measures were solidified in the *Acto Colonial* (decree-law, July 8, 1930), a new globally-focused legal framework articulating the revised imperial policies. This law was developed under the *Carta Orgânica do Império Colonial Português* (Code of the Colonial Empire) and the *Reforma Administrativa Ultramarina* (Overseas Administrative Reform) (both in 1933), both of which were incorporated that same year into the country’s new constitution. The Catholic Church enthusiastically embraced the new regime (after its difficult relationship with the administration of the First Republic). Further, it embraced the new regime’s commitment to the expansion of the Portuguese empire because such a commitment would imply explicit support of missionary work. However — as I will show below — the Church’s participation may have been at the cost of subordinating itself to the interests of the State.

The *Estado Novo*’s resolute colonial agenda was part of an intense imperial-nativist offensive with which it tried to breathe new life into Portuguese patriotism during the 1930s. This fervor crossed national borders, as evidenced by Portugal’s participation in the most important international colonial exhibitions of the decade. Following successes in Seville (1929), Antwerp (1930), and Paris (1931), the leaders of the *Estado Novo* decided upon organizing their own national exhibitions, seeking social and political payoffs from such high-impact propaganda. They would thus contribute internally to the “ideal” construction of the new State¹. In the pages that follow, I emphasize the Catholic Church’s contribution to general feelings of patriotism during those events². I analyze how missionary propaganda was

¹ I use the adjective “ideal” as Godelier (1990) employed it.

² I will examine the three principal exhibitions of the 1930s. However, apart from other minor events of industrial or economic orientation, the last historical colonial exhibition of importance was celebrated in Lisbon in 1960: the *Exposição Henriquina*. It concentrated on the period of discoveries and was exclusively historical in nature. It bore no references to contemporary colonial and missionary expansion. This exhibition was an issue totally foreign to the social and political atmosphere of the 1960s, and did not have the social impact that it was intended to.

employed, and show the mechanisms by which the *Estado Novo* manipulated the Catholic faith and transmuted it into a truly “imperial faith” in service of the “new national order”³.

FIRST PORTUGUESE COLONIAL EXHIBITION (PORTO, 1934)

The idea of a national colonial exhibition percolated as early as 1931, inspired by Portugal’s successful participation in the Grand Parisian Colonial Exhibition of the same year. Its two principal supporters were the Minister of the Colonies, Armindo Monteiro, and the influential army captain Henrique Galvão⁴, who was named the event’s technical director⁵.

The Portuguese government solicited and obtained the collaboration and support of the Catholic Church for the event from the beginning. The

³ To adequately contextualize the complex system of relations established between the Vatican and the *Estado Novo*, the most interesting references are various articles published in the dictionary edited by Rosas and Brito (1996) and, above all, the studies executed by Cruz (1998) and Reis (2006). All of these works mention the exhibitions and commemorations of the 1930s, especially the event of 1940. Nevertheless, the framework of relationships between the missions, the Church, the exhibitions, and the *Estado Novo* is not explicitly addressed. Also recommendable is the third volume of *The Religious History of Portugal* (Clemente and Ferreira, (eds.), 2002) and the *Dicionário de História Religiosa de Portugal* (Azevedo, 2000-2001). Lastly, both of Alexandre’s synthesis articles (1996a and 1996b) published in the first aforementioned dictionary are especially useful.

⁴ Two years earlier, in 1932, Galvão had directed two regional colonial fairs, organized in Luanda and Lourenço Marques. The army captain Henrique Carlos Malta Galvão (1895-1970) is a curious figure in contemporary Portuguese history. In addition to working extensively in military affairs and colonial propaganda, he was the first director of the Emissora Nacional (Portuguese National Radio) (1935), edited a number of works on African nature and anthropology, and became a successful writer, most famed nationally for his fiction set in Angola. Though a fervent Salazar supporter during the early years, he gradually distanced himself from the regime, openly confronting the government from the end of the 1940s onward, during his tenure as delegate to the National Assembly of Angola (1946-1949). Additionally, he was a participant in planning a coup, for which he was detained, expelled from the army, and jailed, although he was able to escape to Venezuela. His most spectacular anti-governmental activity was the famous assault on the ship *Santa Maria*, on January 22, 1961, which Galvão planned and executed with the assistance of a group of Spanish anti-Franquist militants.

⁵ The exhibition remained open between June 16 and September 30. Despite interest, and the abundant documentation materials available, no study was done of the Porto event. Azevedo (2003) edited an attractive volume, which contains a good number of the images and newspaper articles about the event. This book, however, is essentially an evocative work which had been intended to vindicate both the exhibition itself and Portuguese colonial history; lastly, Azevedo’s volume is scarcely analytic and totally uncritical. Two years before, the Portuguese Center of Photography published a book with the extraordinary photographs of the event, taken by Casa Alvão, with interesting, though short, texts and footnotes, which was signed by Maria do Carmo Serén (2001).

explicit support of the Bishop of Porto (António Augusto de Castro Meireles) was especially important; both for reasons of public image, and because of the Church's role as propagandist in the colonial project generally and in the exhibition specifically. For its own part, the missionary community gave itself over to the "cause" (the colonial exhibition) with genuine fervor. In December of 1933 the influential magazine *O Missionário Católico*⁶ (hereinafter, *OMC*), edited by the *Sociedade Portuguesa das Missões Católicas*⁷ (Portuguese Society of Overseas Catholic Missions), passionately informed its readership on the "glorious" approaching event, which qualified as "one of the most important events in our current activity" and "a giant showroom for the richness of the portuguese empire, that will further demonstrate the epic quality of our military occupation and the admirable work of our colonization"⁸. In June of 1934, with the exhibition underway, the same magazine appealed to "all raceworthy portuguese to honour themselves by visiting the Crystal Palace"⁹. The Bishop showed special enthusiasm and keenness for this sort of propaganda; on the 12th of June, four days before the official inauguration of the event, he directed an encyclical to the Portuguese clergy, swollen with patriotic pride in the rebirth of the Portuguese imperial territories (Serén, 2001, pp. 108-109). In the piece, he encouraged parish priests to thoroughly tour the exhibition, assuring them that to do so would create a "more perfect knowledge of our worth as a colonizing nation." As such, it was considered "urgent that all efforts should concentrate on the Portuguese empire, for the economic and spiritual enrichment of our overseas possessions", that "God entrusted to Portugal [...] [as] a mandate from Providence". But the circular went further, ordering that "all priests should urge the faithful to visit the Colonial Exhibition, on Sundays or any other devotional day, organizing tours to Porto for this purpose. We have to exhort you to do this because it is in the highest interest of Religion and the Country".

Minister Armindo Monteiro enthusiastically thanked him for his support, assuring the Bishop that he had "contributed more than anyone else so that the Exhibition would penetrate the soul of the people of Douro and Minho" (Galvão, 1934, p. 11). Galvão also (*ibid.*, p. 23) emphasized the contribution of the city's Catholic authority, publicly affirming that he had "become a

⁶ The subtitle is *Boletim Mensal da Sociedade Portuguesa das Missões Católicas* (*Monthly Bulletin of the Portuguese Society of Catholic Missions*), which changed in June 1934 into the *Revista Mensal Ilustrada da Sociedade Portuguesa das Missões Católicas Ultramarinas* (*Illustrated Monthly Review of the Portuguese Society of Overseas Catholic Missions*).

⁷ From the middle of 1934, the organization was called *Sociedade Portuguesa das Missões Católicas Ultramarinas* (Portuguese Society of Overseas Catholic Missions).

⁸ *OMC*, no. 113, December 1933, p. 215.

⁹ *OMC*, no. 119, June 1934, p. 104.

true publicist, guide and collaborator of the event". The practical results of the Bishop's patriotic pride were doubtless excellent. Galvão himself described it: "Each day the exhibition grounds were crossed by colourful groups of villagers, guided by their parish priest who would explain to them the subjects on display and easily lead them to the knowledge and love of the things for which they had been prepared" (*ibid.*).

Although the event reached a limited geographic area, it had a noteworthy impact. Following the standard model of the great European colonial exhibitions, the Portuguese exhibit displayed a practically complete collection of installations and exotic attractions, including a special piece: a live recreation of a "native village" with its indispensable population, including children. Their presence in the city, and the fact that these people *lived* in the exhibition space, did not seem to generate any criticism. Galvão described it thus (1934, p. 20): "Each Colony sent its natives, who were lodged in villages or typical dwellings, carrying on with their lives, colonial uses and customs during the exhibition"¹⁰. No further explanation appeared necessary: those who had been "sent" were received and adequately processed.

Tens of thousands of visitors¹¹ appeared, attracted by the *pretos* (the African men) and, still more, by the *pretas* (the African women), which had occupied two Guinean villages. Why? All showed naked breasts. Curiously, the Catholic Church did not appear to be discomfited by this; perhaps it thought that because the exhibition dealt with "black savage women", it would therefore be impossible to make any comparison with the chaste Portuguese woman. Of course, the Catholic Church had no objection at all to the "exhibition" of human beings, either.

The main exhibition space was the *Palácio das Colónias*, the old Crystal Palace, which had been covered by a new temporary structure, built in a rationalist architectural aesthetic especially for the occasion. Though it was of modest dimensions, the central gallery arrestingly synthesized the imperial Catholic message of the new regime. The headboard demanded special attention; its frontispiece showed an allegory of the empire and, below that a frieze on which visitors read the following: "The rebirth of the imperial policy / is / an achievement of the *Estado Novo*". This was the core of the event's message: the ancient and glorious Portuguese colonial tradition had been scorned by the previous political regimes. The new corporate State had restored to the Portuguese nation its original imperial pride, and in so doing, opened the way to an even more splendid future.

¹⁰ Note that Galvão speaks of "colonial customs", not of the traditional ways of life that existed prior to colonization

¹¹ Though he offers no documentation to justify such a statement, Galvão (1934, p. 25) assures us that the exhibition received one million three hundred visitors.

Beneath the frieze, occupying a space which was a mix of a Christian altar and a theatrical stage, was the most dramatic scene in the gallery. In the center, elevated upon three stone steps, a powerful column supported the Portuguese coat of arms, and above this, a large cross of the Order of Christ consecrated its surroundings. In front of the column, and resting her back upon it, was a native African woman with naked breasts who lifted her small son in an act of offering to God, and definitively, to Portugal. Just in front of the woman, a missionary elevated a cross to the heavens in an emotional act of faith. The message of this sculptural ensemble was obviously intended as allegorical, to be interpreted as a recreation of the missionary civilizing and Christianizing projects, and, broadly, of the Portuguese nation among the “savages”. In actuality, the allegory referred more to the past than to the future; or perhaps it was a mere projection of the past. In any case, and given the physical posture of the natives who were included in the scene, it could also have been seen as the representation of a human sacrifice, opportunely interrupted by the missionary, who with his behavior shows the world not only the tremendous value of his work, but also the incommensurable moral superiority of the Church and the Portuguese colonial project *vis-à-vis* the savageness of the African lands and people.

The dramatization of the Catholic faith displayed in the Crystal Palace was not limited to the scene on the headboard. A few meters away one could observe various sculptural installations, of four male congregations (Franciscans, Jesuits, Fathers of the Holy Spirit, and Secular Fathers) and two female orders (the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and the Missionary Sisters of Saint Joseph of Cluny). The position of the nuns overtly recalled their traditional educational and humanitarian roles. The most dramatic scene shows a Franciscan Sister consoling a leper, who lies upon a rustic cot with a pained expression, his extremities completely deformed by disease. More than for its pathos (typical of almost all the sculptures of contemporary Catholic exhibitions) and its enormous symbolic weight (Africa is savage and sick in both body and soul, and lies before those sent by God and by the West), this composition is interesting because it was probably used in more than one missionary event. In fact, we have documented that it had already been exhibited by the Franciscan nuns in the Spanish Missionary Exhibition in Barcelona in 1929. This fact is a small proof that certain collaboration existed between religious congregations, a collaboration that crossed national boundaries¹².

¹² In any case, the Catholic orders have no system of exchange or systematic lending of materials such as those that characterized the Protestant missionary exhibitions, especially the British exhibitions.

The installations depicting male orders represented both liturgical scenes and a carpentry workshop. The altar that appeared in one of them had a unique feature: along its sides were inscribed the names of 150, “fallen in the service of the missionary cause” over the last 40 years (Império, 1934, p. 406). Apart from another building where visitors could see graphics and statistics on missions and examples of work of the evangelized natives, the missionary enterprise is visible in one more section of the exhibition: in the monument “To the Portuguese Colonial Effort”, erected before the main façade of the Colonial Palace. One of the six key characters portrayed in the monument is the figure of a missionary.

At this point, what conclusions can we extract about the Catholic Church’s participation in such an event? The first thing we ought to highlight is that, despite the patriotic fervor of the *Sociedade Portuguesa das Missões Católicas Ultramarinas* (Portuguese Society of Catholic Missions) and the Bishop of Porto, and despite the intense presence of religious iconography in the Colonial Palace, neither the clergy nor the involved congregations seemed to have had much control over their participation in the exhibition. And though article 24 of the *Acto Colonial* of 1930 considered the overseas missions as “instruments of civilization and national influence” and ensured that they “will be protected and helped by the State as institutions of learning”, those statements had little bearing on a reality of subordination of the administration to the Church. In the Porto exhibition, the State utilized and manipulated the Catholic religion and its missionary activity; the missions and the Church consented to being utilized, thinking they could obtain some advantageous compensation. The leaders of the *Estado Novo* were fully conscious that the Catholic religion and the “epic of the missionary” consecrated both the “epic of colonialism” and the State itself; and in a country so fervently Catholic, such as Portugal, this could only work to the favor of Salazarist political projects – domestically as much as abroad.

One case of this holy association between faith and the State is documented in an article in the *OMC*, a commentary on a visit made by a group of seminarians to the exhibition on July 7, 1934¹³. Following an inflamed and patriotic description of the contents of the Palace, the writer assured the readers that, upon entering its interior he felt “as if an electric current had jolted my nerves, loading me with feelings I cannot even describe, but which were probably none other than: *the pride of being Portuguese!*”. He continued “We do not understand how some people dare to disparage a work (the Catholic missions) that apart from being truly patriotic, is also entirely human and humanitarian. And it is fair that even bad Portuguese are also men.

¹³ *OMC*, no. 121, August 1934, pp. 144-145.

Unfortunately not everyone thinks like this”. In brief: the exhibition of 1934 consecrated, almost literally, the indefectible and eternal union existing between the Catholic Faith and the *Estado Novo*.

Harmonizing relationships between the Catholic Church and the State was another issue entirely, much more difficult to officially articulate. It should not seem strange that, despite the thanks that Minister Monteiro and Captain Galvão directed at the Bishop of Porto in the exhibition catalogue, there was no mention made of implications of the Church’s participation in the colonial enterprise. It is also significant that in the extensive issue that the *Boletim Geral das Colónias*¹⁴ dedicated to the exhibition, there appears only one brief article written by a religious authority, wherein comments amount to little more than congratulations for the “fortunate return [...] of missionary Portugal”¹⁵. It is no less telling that during the publicity push about the event organized by Porto’s *Ateneu Comercial* and presided over by the Archbishop of Oxyrhynchus, it was the director of the exhibition who made the inaugural speech (a speech about the history of the Portuguese missions as marked by an imperial-patriotic character)¹⁶.

Little can be said about the Portuguese missionary project in the context of the *Estado Novo* at that point in time. The exhibition offered no innovative perspectives on how missionaries approached and interacted with native populations; in this respect, the religious orders’ limited organizational autonomy does not seem to have had any negative influence. As such, the book *Portugal Missionário*, published by the missionary community of the *Padres Seculares Portugueses* (Missões, 1929) is especially interesting. The *Padres Seculares Portugueses* were highly enthused by the renewal of the missionary project after the fall of the First Republic and the spread of the missionary statute of 1926. A single example will be sufficient to capture the essence of the evangelizing model that this missionary community employed, which surely would not have been much different than that of the regular orders. The only “educational” model that was considered appropriate for the evangelized populations was interpreted thusly: “Make no mistake: the religious factor is paramount everywhere and particularly among the deeply deistic african natives. António Enes¹⁷ understood it clearly when he wrote:

¹⁴ In two issues, the magazine published the best and most complete synthesis and commentaries about the contents of all three exhibitions. The complete collection of *Boletim* is available on the very interesting website *Memória de África (Memory of Africa)*, a project promoted by the Portugal-Africa Foundation, and developed by Aveiro University and the Center of African Studies and Development (<http://memoria-afrika.ua.pt>).

¹⁵ *Boletim Geral das Colónias (BGC)*, no. 109, pp. 69-72

¹⁶ *BGC*, no. 109, pp. 335-350.

¹⁷ António Enes, from Lisbon, was a writer, journalist, and politician (metropolitan and colonial) of note during the last two decades of the 19th century.

‘If it was possible to substitute the Priests by moralists or school teachers, we would lose in this process the specific leverage over the indigenous people particular only to those who address them in the name of supernatural powers’” (*ibid.*, p. 20). Self-reflection within Portuguese missionary work seemed to get only as far as considering traditional missionary aid relief and educational enterprise as “objective” obligations (though doubtless subjugated to the evangelizing effort). The “rights and needs” of the evangelized natives were reduced to this, as an interesting text published in the *OMC* notes. The writer comments on speeches made by Salazar and Minister Monteiro in the inauguration of the Imperial Conference celebrated in Lisbon in 1933: “The concept of the rights and needs of the backward races has changed completely, imposing to the dominating peoples an obligation to assist and teach, two very effective and delicate responsibilities”¹⁸.

In contrast to comparable Belgian missions of the time, Portuguese missionary practice seems to have remained anchored in the 17th century, a fact that did not go unnoticed by some Portuguese missionaries, including at least one of the columnists of the religious publication I have cited. When the 22nd session of the International Colonial Institute¹⁹ convened in Lisbon in April of 1932, one of the participants was the Jesuit writer and celebrated Belgian missionary scholar Pierre Charles, professor at the Catholic University of Leuven. During his stay in Portugal he granted an interview to a Lisbon daily from which the religious magazine extracted and commented. It was precisely the enormous distance that separated the development of the Portuguese and Belgian missionary studies (and the renewal of the missionary practice) which led the author in the *OMC* to comment — with surprising conviction — that his country “was still sleeping” and that it “lagged behind the universal movement to update missionary activity.”²⁰ This slumber would be a long one.

¹⁸ *OMC*, no. 107-108, June-July, 1933, p. 94. New contributions were not documented in the scarce materials published to celebrate the National Missionary Congress of Barcelos in 1931. There are only two published flyers: one historical review of the Jesuit missionary project, and the inaugural speech delivered by Monsignor Gustavo Couto, the title of which is rather illuminating: *Influência benéfica e civilizadora das missões do clero atravez dos tempos* (Lisbon, 1932).

¹⁹ The International Colonial Institute was founded in 1894, in Brussels, by the French politician Joseph Chailley.

²⁰ *OMC*, no. 106, May 1933, p. 84. Despite our negative evaluation, some attempts (not overly fruitful) to modernize the Portuguese missionary project are recognizable. An important figure in the task was Joaquim Alves Correja (1886-1951), general *procurador* of the Holy Spirit Missions; see Martins (2007-2008). This article is part of an interesting issue of *Lusitania Sacra* (t. XIX-XX) about “Correntes cristãs, política e missão nos séculos XIX e XX”, published by António Matos Ferreira and Paulo F. de Oliveira Fontes.

HISTORICAL EXHIBITION OF THE OCCUPATION (LISBON, 1937)

Despite the fact that the vindication and reinforcement of the colonial enterprise followed a certain “logic” in a fascist or para-fascist state — as was Portugal under Salazar — the fervor with which the *Estado Novo* assumed its colonial duties was nonetheless surprising. Following the success of the first Portuguese colonial exhibition of 1934, the new regime planned a second event for 1937, which opened in Lisbon on June 19²¹.

For this new project of Colonial-Patriotic exaltation (of the period extending from 1800 and 1914), Portuguese leaders employed an exhibition model very different from the one they had used in Porto. This time, the *Estado Novo* targeted a more selective, more “intellectual” public, or at least, a public that was more bourgeois and more committed (in deed or in theory) to the colonial past, present, and future of the homeland. In the Exhibition Palace²² in the most elegant green space of the Portuguese capital (Edward VII Park), visitors could no longer regard native Africans, nor could they see exotic plants or animals, or shacks, or informative ethnographic collections. There was not the slightest feeling of an authentic colonial environment without these things. Books, documents, maps, plans, photographs, slide projections, mannequins, models, a select few original objects — limited, carefully chosen, and created expressly for the exhibition — were presented soberly and functionally in the different rooms of the palace, giving the visitor the impression of a selective, modern museum.

Apart from the Hall of Faith (to which we shall return below), the spaces most charged with the “patriotic sacredness” were the vestibule, the Drama of the Occupation Hall, and the final hall of the tour, dedicated to glorifying the *Acto Colonial*. In the center of the first one was a bust of the President of the Republic, accompanied by statues of both Henry the Navigator and Afonso de Albuquerque, and a large number of historic flags. The *Acto Colonial* Hall offered an atmosphere which was truly that of a sanctuary. On one end, where the crucifix would have been in a church, a large statue of Salazar — reflexively positioned, and dressed in the academic garb of Coimbra University — presided over the Hall, blessing it. The statue reminded visitors just who was the mastermind of the new colonial legislation

²¹ Rather telling is the explicit reference to the “occupation” of colonized territories in the official event title. However, it is obvious that in Portugal (and almost all of Europe in 1937), this was interpreted as a part of the key concept of “civilizing”, and not as a mere exercise in brutal domination. Literature on this exhibition is very scarce. Lira (1999) is one of the few authors who refer to it in some detail.

²² One year previously, the “Exhibition of Year X of the National Revolution” had occupied the same exhibition space, and one room had also been dedicated to colonization. This event was inspired by the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista*, organized by Mussolini in Rome, in 1932, though the Portuguese exhibition was of much more modest size.

and who was in charge of expanding Portuguese imperialism²³. Excerpts of contemporary colonial legislation appeared on four large panels on the walls. In this exhibition space — and the Portuguese government expected that outside of it as well — the colonial legislation was consecrated, shown as a true collection of sacred writings which, like the Bible, would conduct the colonized populations to salvation, and Portugal to the eternal glory.

The other patriotically sacred space was the exhibition in the Drama of the Occupation Hall. The official catalogue noted that this small room had “an atmosphere of pious seclusion”, in which the visitor “will certainly keep a respectful silence”²⁴. The goal was not only to extol Portugal’s “hard duty” (Kipling’s famous “White Man’s Burden”, now upon the shoulders of the Portuguese colonizers) in its extraordinary civilizing mission and the tremendous sacrifices which were demanded, but also to pay homage to those fallen in military campaigns in Africa and Asia. To achieve this feeling, the Hall displayed an installation of sculpture in its center, an oil triptych on one side, and a series of bas-reliefs on the opposite side. At the end, a softly illuminated cross offered an “enticing and mysterious opalescence” which was meant “to keep the souls alive of those who have died in colonial wars”.

It is possible that the cross and its dramatic lighting stimulated this sort of response. However, the three pieces displayed were not as apt; the bas-reliefs represented different scenes of struggle and death in military campaigns, but were not especially evocative. Neither was the triptych, which did not show combat, but rather three sweaty, tired, seated soldiers. The sculpture carried the most symbolic weight: it was a work of Hein Semke, entitled “The Colonial Drama”. According to the catalogue, the sculpture was an incarnation of the “spirit which has always inspired portuguese colonization: the elevation of the savage tribes to the moral level of a higher belief and a more generous culture”. It depicted a Portuguese soldier and a converted native soldier advancing over a battlefield. However, the expressionistic character of the figures and their strange composition contributed little to the exaltation of patriotic faith. On the other hand, the blunt form in which the “generous” Portuguese project was portrayed demands attention: both soldiers (the African depicted as the most forceful) trample and annihilate the native who dares to reject such a “selfless gift”.

The Drama of the Occupation Hall was perhaps the most clumsily designed of the entire exhibition: its organizers did not create a space capable of successfully combining military patriotism, empire, and Catholic faith into an exhibition of contemporary colonialism. Although there was a stylized Christian cross, the allegorical consecration was not believable. It seemed

²³ The Hall’s content extended beyond the year 1914, justified by the necessity of recording the continuity of the colonial effort.

²⁴ All quotations come from the official exhibition catalogue (*Ocupação*, 1937).

excessively secular and completely alien to the religiosity of the majority of the Portuguese population, including the comparatively select sector of the population who had access to the display.

The true “Imperial Faith” — that which combined the traditional concepts of homeland, religion, and empire in a more nuanced way—materialized in the Hall of Faith. Obviously, the contents of this space had been supplied by the Portuguese Church and the Portuguese missionary orders; from there, their participation in the executive commission was theoretically indispensable. Consequently, and as had occurred at the Porto exhibition, the leaders of the *Estado Novo* publicly placed the Catholic Church in a privileged position with respect to its relationship with the State. In practice, the relationship was not quite like that: bishops and religious orders were only suppliers of exhibition materials, without executive capacity. Appearances and conventions were — of course — dutifully respected: the Honor Committee of the event included — after the President of the Republic, the President of the Executive, and the Minister of Education, and before the academic authorities — the Cardinal of Lisbon and the Archbishop of Oxyrhynchus; those inclusions seemed to effectively close all other channels between the religious personnel and the exhibition.

The Hall of Faith had been designed to recreate a Church (in a highly unoriginal way), with a central nave, an apse, and side chapels. A vestibule sheltered high-reliefs of Saint Anthony of Lisbon and Saint Francis of Xavier — both by Semke and both markedly expressionistic, perhaps too “modern” for much of the visiting public. Very different was the figure in the apse: a “Christ of the Missions” from the Machado de Castro Museum. According to Father Serafim Leite, before this image “we feel [...] that Portugal is fundamentally christian and, hence, its work in the World had to be worthy of Christ: a calling to Faith or catechesis, teaching and labour, assistance and charity, the exploration of unknown regions and, as true proof of this, the testimony of martyrdom and blood...” (*Ocupação*, 1937, I, p. 98). It was precisely this notion of “intervention” that structured the five spaces within the Hall: catechesis, teaching, assistance, exploration, and martyrdom.

All the exhibit spaces displayed publications, documents, maps, photographs, and slides: they omitted other types of objects, apart from various models of colonial churches. The homage to the martyrs seems to have been composed exclusively of documentary materials. It did not include the instruments of torture which were outlined in a text of the exhibition catalogue (and which could have been organized into a gruesome, tantalizingly attractive exhibition for at least one part of the visiting public). In fact, the exhibition boasted only one scene of martyrdom: a painting by Domingos Rebelo that showed the suffering inflicted on Father Gonçalo da Silveira in Monomotapa in 1561.

Artist Ricardo Bensaúde was tasked with illustrating a section on the aid activities carried out by nuns and monks. The painter positioned two nuns

in the foreground, against a stylized, luminous cross in the background. Beautiful, and resplendent in shining habits, they support a black invalid who is unable to stand on his own. Behind them, a third attends to a young native. To the side, friars protect and offer food to a small black child dressed only in a loincloth. The other two sections (less thematically spectacular, but doubtless of greater spiritual transcendence) were both illustrated with works by José Almada Negreiros. His modernist style was much more attractive than Semke's: the forceful, almost geometric simplicity of his figures and the precision of his design made his pieces an excellent channel for missionary propaganda. The most celebrated piece was that dedicated to catechesis, which the artist illustrated with a scene in which a neat, bearded Jesuit pours a shell of purified water over a Native American.

With such hardly spectacular content, it is understandable that the exhibition of 1937 did not become part of the Portuguese patriotic colonial cannon the way the exhibition of 1934 had, and the way the great exhibition of 1940 would shortly thereafter. The organizers had wanted to limit the exotic "excesses" of 1934, the superficiality of certain messages, and the perhaps scarcely ideological motivations of visitors. In order to do so, they offered a fundamentally documentary, sober exhibition, investing their energy instead in vindicating modern colonial expansion. The message perhaps penetrated the social class at which it was directed, but not the popular imagination. The presence of the Church and of the Catholic faith continued to be clearly controlled by the State, but it was now represented more coldly than in Porto (and less symbolically than in 1940). It is certain, however, that in the official ceremonies surrounding the event, the Catholic ritual (*Te Deum* opening, masses, blessings, etc.) was more relevant than in 1934, timidly predicting the lavish liturgical and para-liturgical rites that would characterize the exhibition of 1940.

EXHIBITION OF THE PORTUGUESE WORLD (LISBON, 1940)

Despite the importance of both of these exhibitions (1934 and 1937), both were largely preparatory — serving as practice for a much more loaded event: the *Exposição do Mundo Português* of 1940. In fact, the 1940 show fused the markedly popular colonial exhibition of 1934 and the intellectualized historical-documental exhibition of 1937²⁵.

²⁵ Acciaiuoli (1998) made perhaps the most extensive and interesting study on the exposition of 1940. This author focuses especially (though not exclusively) on the architectural design and the artistic contents of the event. Equally recommendable are articles by França (1980), Jorge R. do Ó (1987), Santos (1998) and Corkill and Almeida (2007). Almeida (2005) and Cunha (2001) also analyze the exhibition, both in studies of identity and representation of the Portuguese State during the *Estado Novo*.

Though the initial idea of an expository-patriotic event appeared as early as 1929, actual preparations for the Lisbon exhibition came later. Curiously, its development ran almost parallel to the period of complex negotiations between the *Estado Novo* and the Vatican over the drafting of an agreement meant to restore harmony between the two powers. When the diplomatic accord was signed, on May 7, 1940, there was little more than one month left before the exhibition's opening. Considering Portugal's political and religious environment at the time, it is probable that the coincidence of the two events was considered by many to be truly divine will — the practical, earthly creation of an eternal link that existed between God and the Portuguese nation.

The first official publication noting the future celebration of the “double centenary” (of independence and its restoration), dated March 27, 1938, concretized the exhibition and commemoration's goals: “to give to the Portuguese people a tonic of joy and self-confidence”. This would be achieved by recuperating and revalidating Portugal's glorious past, and impressing upon the Portuguese nation that its “mission in the world” had in no way concluded. In this “educational” project, the State reserved an apparently central role for the Church. In effect, upon entering the exhibition²⁶ it was soon clear that the Catholic faith permeated the Historic Section, though it did so in a much more symbolic and decidedly more “abstract” manner than had the exhibition of 1934 (similar to the historical presentation of 1937). This abstraction, however, did not stop crosses and national-catholic allegories from appearing almost everywhere — quite to the contrary. On this occasion, the exhibition was able to avoid the uncomfortable association made in 1937 between faith and modern militarist colonial expansion: now the message was of “imperial faith”, of Portugal's glorious history abroad.

This assortment of religious evocations, though intense and powerful, was not in reality as transcendental for the Catholic Church as it may have initially appeared. It was the State that truly profited, or supposedly profited, from the association between the Catholic faith and such an essential element of Portuguese history. For the moment, the clergy had to limit itself to accepting the rules of the game and remaining alert to new opportunities.

Such an opportunity appeared in a different exhibition space, one more directly linked with the contemporary missionary project: the Colonization Pavilion. Although its contents were strongly historical in character, the organizers focused on creating an exhibition that was faithful to the contemporary reality of Portuguese colonialism. As such, in the Hall of Faith and Empire, they offered an allegorical perspective of colonialism in panels designed, as in 1937, by Ricardo Bensaúde. In the hall housing the “Current

Panorama of the Portuguese Colonial Enterprise” a large tablet presented information on various works associated with the colonizing and missionary “effort”. However, the evangelizing was portrayed as just another element of the greater civilization project, something that only partially satisfied the propagandistic expectations of the Catholic Church. Fortunately for the Portuguese Church, there was a last space to display doctrines in favor of the expansion and consolidation of the Catholic faith. It was the Colonial Section.

Though perfectly set in a tropical environment, this section occupied an area markedly different than the rest of the exhibition spaces, known as the *Jardim Colonial* (Colonial Garden). Its organizer was a man with extensive experience in such matters, Captain Henrique Galvão, who had been responsible for Portuguese participation in the Parisian exhibition of 1931, and who had served as director of the Porto exhibition of 1934. For financing the exhibition, Galvão procured five million *escudos*, a far greater amount than the mere million and a half invested in the Porto fair. As in 1934, there were dramatic recreations of “native villages”, symbolically charged “exotic landscapes”, and groups of individuals brought from the colonies. All of these were undoubtedly the most popular attraction of the event. And, as in the Porto exhibition of 1934, the Catholic Church did not question the nudity of the Africans or the morality of the “human zoo” that was displayed in Lisbon.

The Pavilion of the Catholic Missions was integrated in this odd environment. It was composed of a church, a cloister, and two adjoining Halls: the Hall of the Holy Spirit, and the Documentation Hall. Galvão ([1940], p. 21) noted that the entire Pavilion had been built in a presumed “portuguese style, adaptable to Africa, easy, economical, simple, discreet [...]”, and that it was attended by “missionaries who will exercise their sacred office with the natives present at the Exhibition, thus functioning as a living Mission [...]” (ibid., p. 279). At this time, none of the sculptures of missionaries and natives that had characterized the European missionary exhibitions of the 1920s and ‘30s, and which were present at the Porto show, appeared in Church exhibition spaces.

Galvão’s notes regarding evangelizing of and interaction with the natives *during* the exhibit were more than a personal observation; they were included in the official event catalogue (Guia, 1940). These references to an on-site ‘dramatization’ of missionary work are certainly exceptional, given the general history of this kind of colonial exhibition. In extensive research on this type of event in Europe in the last third of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, we have found no evidence of real aid to or evangelizing of the natives present on the fairgrounds. It was relatively frequent to see exhibitions of colonial “successes”, such as the public presentation of Christianized natives (very commonly children who were schooled and brought to the empire’s metropolis by the missionaries them-

selves). It is improbable, therefore, that Galvão's notes, as published in the exhibition catalogue, are accurate, though we would not discount evidence to the contrary. However, it is highly significant that both the event authorities and the official event guide noted such a practice. This is one more example of the administration's self-interested use of the missionary domain, which in this case was intended to publicly situate the native and the missionary on something of a lower level (though presenting the exhibition in the guise of an educational and documentary event). It was one thing to exhibit the natives, but a very different thing to exhibit a missionary. The Catholic hierarchy could potentially admit having established the former, but in some form would also have to acknowledge the latter.²⁷

We turn now to the framework of relationships between the Church and the State which circumscribed the exhibition. As mentioned, Portugal and the Vatican had only just settled an agreement and an accompanying *Acordo Missionário* (Missionary Agreement) when the show opened on June 23, 1940. Moreover, on June 13 (Festival of Saint Anthony of Lisbon) of this same year, Pope Pius XII signed the encyclical *Saeculo Exeunte Octavo*, dedicated exclusively to praising Portuguese missionary activity²⁸. The Pope congratulated the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon (Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira) for the centennial commemorations of 1940, assuring him that it "fatefully coincides with a period of spiritual rebirth for the Portuguese people", an environment which the recent signing "apart from regulating and promoting a friendly collaboration between Church and State, promises an even better future". The Pope demanded even more missionary zeal, more dedication, more energy, as much from Portugal as in the colonies themselves. Such an arduous enterprise was intended to "elevate the intelligence of so many poor enslaved by degrading superstitions and covered by the 'shadows of death'". In these tasks a Portuguese priest was truly a privileged figure, now that the Pope affirmed that "in your wonderful colonies you have millions of brothers whose evangelization is particularly entrusted to you. This is why we summon all of you to a holy crusade on behalf of your missions".

²⁷ In fact, nothing of the sort is mentioned in the *OMC*; where it was supposed that missionaries would teach the catechesis and organize workshops. Journalist Mimoso Moreira confirmed this in an article synthesizing the contents of the colonial section, which was signed well before the exhibition's opening, in September 1939 (no. 182, pp. 128-130).

²⁸ As a complement to the circular, and also dated on June 13, Pius XII sent President Carmona a letter in which he offered congratulations for the centennial commemorations and the *Acordo Missionário* and expressed his wish that those inter-institutional connections be strengthened. At the end of the letter, he blessed his "dear son" and the entire Portuguese nation. The circular is available on the Vatican's website, (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_13061940_saeculo-xeunte-octavo_po.html). Both the letter and the circular were published in the special issue of the *BGC*, dedicated to the "double centenary" (no 187, January 1941, pp. 87-104).

Centennial celebrations, the concordat, the missionary accord, and the encyclical: it is impossible to imagine a situation better adapted to the happy confluence of interests between the Catholic Church and the *Estado Novo*. Cardinal Cerejeira himself demonstrated this clearly when he officially declared on Portuguese radio that “the Concordat and the Missionary Agreement constitute the best ‘doorway’ to the centennial celebrations” (Acciaiuoli, 1998, p. 211). In a meeting of priests on April 20, 1940, the Portuguese episcopacy ordered that priests “from all over the Portuguese Empire [...] say a *pro gratiarum actione* prayer during Holy Mass” between the 2nd of June and the 8th of December, so as to “officially become partners” of the centennial commemorations. As had occurred during the Porto exhibition, it was recommended to priests that “in harmony with the authorities” they lend their “patriotic collaboration” in any way necessary²⁹. The ecclesiastical hierarchy overflowed with enthusiasm: missions, Catholic community, Salazar, motherland, Church, Vatican, and God were indelibly united. The collaboration was profitable on all sides. It was inevitable that the Catholic Church would assume a protagonist role of the first order in the principal official acts of the “double centenary”, much more intense than in the two previous exhibitions.

As in 1937, the celebrations were opened with a solemn *Te Deum*, officiated by the Cardinal Patriarch, which took place in Lisbon’s cathedral on June 2. At the ceremony’s end there occurred perhaps one of the most telling scenes of all the commemorative extravagances: the Cardinal went out to the terrace in front of the cathedral’s great rose window and there, accompanied by figures clad in medieval clothing and encircled by various historical relics, gave an inflamed message on the “birth of the Portuguese State” that concluded in the old, anti-Spanish and patriotic cry of “*Arraial, arraial, arraial, por Portugal*”³⁰. There is more: before the month was out, on June 27, the official exhibition program announced the celebration of a “Pontifical Mass and Imperial Ceremony” in the Jerónimos Monastery, officiated again by the Cardinal³¹. Additionally, the program provided information on the patriotic content of the sermon: the “exaltation of the Portuguese civilizing effort in the world” (Comissão, 1940, p. 12).

The official rhetoric of the religious orders and missionaries themselves about the exhibition (also indeed, on all the centennial celebrations) followed a similar Imperial-Catholic orientation. The goal seems to have been a public demonstration of the political subordination of the Church and its congregations to the State, a subordination that was more or less servile but never

²⁹ *BGC*, no. 187, p. 135.

³⁰ The speech and the photographs appear in the *BGC* (no 187, pp. 105-108).

³¹ The mass and the imperial ceremony took place, indeed. The “imperial prayer” was published in the *BCG* (no. 187, pp. 109-118).

without an angle. At the same time it made possible the preservation of a certain autonomy on the part of the religious orders in a strictly colonial atmosphere, and perhaps (though not overtly) in domestic settings, as well. All of this was made explicit in the commentary on different religious rituals in the special issue of the *OMC*, celebrating the Centennial Festivities of the Foundation and Restoration (of Portugal), the famous “double centenary”³². Sharing the title page were two photographs, one of Pius XII and the other of President Carmona. On the next page was an extensive and weighty patriotic-imperial-missionary poem by one of the Regime’s official poets, António Correia de Oliveira. Only one text provided a general commentary on the exhibition, but without specific information about the missionary project. The author, a missionary, declared his “pride to be Portuguese” praised the “venerated figures of Carmona and Salazar” and confirmed that in the exhibition “one could breathe in one’s Faith in God and Homeland”, concluding with a patriotic invocation to “saints, missionaries, soldiers, settlers, artists, merchants, industrialists, countrymen, and all the Portuguese people”, who must fight for the great twentieth-century colonial and missionary enterprise of Portugal (Santo Tirso, 1941, p. 3).

CONCLUSIONS

The consequences derived from the ultranationalist articulation of religion as seen in these three exhibitions are evident: missions and the Catholic Church were mere instruments for patriotic indoctrination at the hands of the State. In contrast to what occurred in the other great contemporary colonial exhibitions in the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Italy, and even in Spain (Seville, in 1929), the authoritarian Portuguese State inexorably dictated (at least in theory) the structure of the Catholic Church’s participation, its missions, and above all, its public and propagandistic presentations. The result was that the Portuguese events (although in 1937 it is less evident) presented the world of the Catholic missions in a style similar to that seen in the colonial exhibitions organized in Catholic countries in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. During the 1880s and 1890s, there had been no autonomous space to publicize the missionary task in the context of the colonial enterprise, contrary to what would happen in the major European exhibitions of the 1930s. Moreover, State manipulation increased in each exhibition; in Porto one glimpsed a nominal ability to maneuver on the part of the religious orders, which was no longer present in the exhibition

of 1937, and less still in that of 1940³³. The State absolutely controlled the influence of religion in the latter. Concurrently, in 1940 the administration was able to inflate the solemn religious ceremonies in order to buttress the Church's shiny public image. This situation favored the interests of the administration; with such rituals it was able to consecrate the exhibition, the centennial commemorations, and the State itself.

Despite Salazar's (1959, p. 239) assurance in a famous speech on May 27, 1940 that "the State will abstain from engaging in politics with the Church, confident that the Church will abstain from engaging in politics with the State", in practice the Portuguese State created more political relationships with the Church than the other way around, at least during the period addressed here. We can therefore subscribe to Reis's (2006, p. 333) affirmation that "for Salazar catholicism was autonomous from the Estado Novo, but could never be allowed to become a vehicle for an alternative to it or its regime". We also agree with Rosas (2001, p. 1052) when he notes that "between the Estado Novo and the Catholic hierarchy there is no [...] conflict of paradigm, of ideological orientation", and that "the State turns the Catholic Church into a fundamental part of the regime's ideological affirmation". However, in the complex historical debate about the relationships between both powers, there might be space for provisional analysis of questions and junctures such as those that interest us here. They are junctures at that, if ideological debates are not documented as such, partially divergent interests between the Church and State will manifest themselves. Those interests will be divergent despite attempts by both parties to ground themselves in the same fundamental legitimizer, the Catholic faith. In reality, this ideological discord was not produced so much *despite*, but rather *precisely because of* the fact that both powers appealed to the same legitimizing argument, which each interpreted differently. I argue that, through the three exhibitions and the commemorative ceremonies of 1940, the *Estado Novo* consecrated both itself and the Portuguese nation in the Catholic faith, but the Catholic Church as an institution was clearly subjugated to the power of the State. As such, a truly "imperial faith" appeared, in which empire and traditional Catholic religiosity bore more weight than the ecclesiastical institution itself and official Catholic credo. This transfer of holiness and devotion from the altar to the political

³³ Another circumstance that clearly illustrates the opinion expressed herein is the above-mentioned periodical that came to light with the festivities of 1940, the *Revista dos Centenários*. Twenty-four issues were published between January 1939 and December 1940. Here, the presence of the missions and the Church was limited to commentary on the religious contents of the exhibition and reproduction of the speeches and of the images taken of the liturgical ceremonies, all of this in line with the consecration of Portuguese history and the *Estado Novo*. The complete content of the magazine is available on the website of Lisbon's Municipal Archive (<http://hemerotecadigital.cm-pt>).

regime (through the ‘consecration’ of the Portuguese community) was clearly defined by Augusto de Castro (exhibition commissioner), when he concluded his *Casa de Santo António* inauguration speech (on June 13, 1940, in the presence of Cardinal Cerejeira) with this impassioned invocation: “Glory to Saint Anthony, saint among the saints in Heaven! Glory to Saint-Portugal, saint among the peoples of the Earth!” (Castro, 1940, p. 141).

In the middle of this asphyxiating political environment, the Portuguese Catholic Church did not appear to feel too overwhelmed, nor did it show any interest in updating its practices of colonial expansion and consolidation. In this sense, the image of missions projected in the three exhibitions did not evolve much: in reality, it was barely modified from that of previous periods. As Portuguese anthropologist Paulo Valverde (1997) noted in a magnificent article about the reflections of the Portuguese missionaries with respect to the body (one’s own, and the body of the converts), the framework of primitivism persisted in the work and thinking of Portuguese missionary work throughout most of the *Estado Novo*.³⁴ Characterizing natives as ‘primitive’ (conceiving of the convert as a defenseless lamb, albeit one with a few redeeming factors) allowed for both brutal savagery and infantilism.

This is evidenced by another look at the *OMC*, in an issue that uses captivating images of primitive exoticism juxtaposed with photographs of black children, crying in solitude, or laughing and enjoying themselves in the company of the missionaries³⁵. Finally, in contrast to the primitive and devalued position of the converts, the missionary project grounded itself (as did all Catholic evangelizing missions) in a discourse of missionary sacrifice and martyrdom³⁶. The missionary’s duty was an act of giving oneself completely to God and to the homeland—the salvation of the natives was almost secondary to the eternal spiritual salvation of the missionary himself. For its own part, the Portuguese State seemed to be interested in only the immediate political profitability (without obviating future possibilities, of course) obtained through its elaborate and manipulative iconographic approach to the Catholic faith and the missionary task, a profitability that was amplified by the indubitable success of powerful events such as the great national exhibitions of this “prodigious decade” of Salazarism.

³⁴ In reality, there are few Catholic missionary congregations which leave behind that burden during those years. The Belgians have undertaken perhaps the most notable of “modernization” projects.

³⁵ This is not exclusive to the Portuguese missions, and can be found in all Catholic magazines of the time.

³⁶ We must recognize, however, that in none of the Portuguese exhibitions was displayed such a gruesome series of images of martyrdom as those which were observed in the autonomous missionary competitions of the Vatican and Barcelona, from 1925 to 1929, respectively. The reason seems evident: the Portuguese exhibitions had been designed by the administration and the State did not obtain any profit from the exaltation of religious martyrs. Regarding the cited exhibitions, see Sánchez Gómez (2006 and 2007).

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