

Mortuary styles and modes of sociability in nineteenth-century Brazilian cemeteries

Antonio Motta

ABSTRACT

The analytical focus of this work is the social treatment meted out to the dead and burial forms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. How might one read and understand the attitudes and social meanings of a given time from its system of funerary objects, funerary practices and styles? When subjected to the reading, embodied in tombs, the devices and burial styles translate not only accommodations and balances, but also tensions and significant changes in the relationships that the living establish with their dead.

Keywords: mortuary styles; mortuary scenography, funeral architecture, mortuary scenography, forms of sociability in cemeteries.

RESUMO

O que mobiliza o foco de análise deste trabalho é o tratamento social dispensado ao morto e suas formas de enterramento, no final do século XIX e nos primeiros decênios do XX. De que maneira se pode ler e entender atitudes e significados sociais de uma determinada época a partir de um sistema de objetos funerários, de práticas e estilos mortuários? Quando submetidos à leitura, os dispositivos e estilos funerários, plasmados nos túmulos, permitem traduzir não só acomodações e equilíbrios, mas também tensões e mudanças significativas nas relações afetivas que os vivos estabelecem com os seus mortos.

Palavras-chave: arquitetura funerária, cenografias mortuárias, estilos mortuários, formas de sociabilidade nos cemitérios.

“... if you see a Constantinople complicated with baroque, gothic and operatic scenes. It's the cemetery”. João Cabral de Melo Neto

At the end of the eighteenth century when living familiarity with the dead no longer existed, when the dead were driven out of the cities and churches, and off to the cemeteries, graves began to share a function formerly occupied by the church. As is known, inside these “temples”, on a composted humus and cadaverous floor in the custody of a divine ceiling, laden painted clouds and suspended archangels, were shared collective moments of intense sociability, not only through beliefs and common devotions, but also through the rituals that were celebrated: baptisms, weddings, anniversaries of both life and death, confessions, communions, religious processions and funerals etc..

In the cemeteries, far from their homes, churches, and parishes, under the open sky, the dead find shelter in their graves. Grave scenarios of churches and chapels (on a smaller scale) were common, while others resembled the homes of their owners. It was not just to ensure the dead a place in heaven, but also ensure a place on earth, under the protection and the care of the family, to protect from the elements, and conserve the body image. In graves the corpses remain besides one another, so that each party retains its individuality, yet the common genealogical memory is always invoked, because the tomb is also a family dwelling.

In the nineteenth century, as modernized societies guided by the principle of streamlining production, the belief in death, previously identified as a sign of change in passing to another life, tended in many cases to be replaced by a feeling of “subjective immortality,” and with it the grave and the cemetery were understood by many to be the place where a man should communicate complete proof of his mortal status, but without completely abdicating immortality.

Of course this relative de-Christianization, marked by strong secular convictions, was compensated by the cult of memory and remembrance. From Diderot to Comte a new belief would arise: the perpetuation of the dead in the memory of the living. According to the positivist catechism, while considering human existence as temporary, and death as a concrete and indisputable fact, nothing prevents that the individual be revered and worshiped in memory, be it in the most intimate recollection, an idea that could be summarized in the formula of positivist social morality: "Vivre pour autrui tuning of survivre et dans autrui pair."¹

For some, the cult of the dead had transformed into ancestor worship, giving a memorial sense of celebration and tribute while highlighting aspects of social, civic and patriotic life more than the intimate or religious². From this perspective, "subjective immortality" can be understood as the

“eternalizing” of ancestors, and through the collective memory strengthening the sense of family continuity, as well as society and homeland.

Thus, cemeteries quickly adapted to the new civic rites (the ancestor cult) practiced by the living in the burial place. The cemeteries adapted, relying principally upon new investments in placing statues, busts, photographs, and lapidary inscriptions, and a multitude of insignias over the graves — what Michel Vovelle refers to as a true “statue mania”³.

Indeed, the process of secularization changed the way in which the dead were cared for. This can be viewed not only through changes in ritual, but also through the graveyard architecture, the system of funerary objects, mortuary styles, the modes of sociability and finally, the attitudes of the living in relation to their dead. This is the focus of our study.

Social distinction in the tombs

By the second half of the nineteenth century, visits to cemeteries had become increasingly frequent, and with them the cult of the dead became family practice, while affective and reputedly of good moral character, it became popularized in local chronicles and other literary genres, as illustrated in an article titled *The Cemeteries* published in December of 1837, in *O Panorama*, a Portuguese journal:

"If we had to choose a friend, before permitting the friendship, we would look to see whether the cemetery remains of his father lay forgotten, and if they did, so would the remains of our new “friend”. The grave is the only lasting memory that we leave to the earth, a distinguished name less indeed. ⁴"

Such was the expectation of reverence and loyalty to the dead, many times forcing the family members to forgo other forms of subjective remembrance in favor of material evidences: namely constant visits to the cemetery, and the special care that should be dispensed to the tombs. In literature it’s not difficult to find this anxious obligation. As expressed by Machado de Assis, in the *Memorial de Aires*:

"The dead stop at the cemetery, yet there they will have the affection of the living, with its flowers and souvenirs. (...) The point is that there is virtually no break in the tie, and the law of life does not destroy that which had been of life and now death. ⁵"

In the same romantic intrigue, the opening scene is very suggestive and enlightening about the pact of loyalty that exists between living and dead, and more than that, of the complicity and continuity of family relationships after death. The main narrator and author of the diary, one Counselor Aires exactly one year after his arrival in Brazil having retired from diplomatic life in Europe, in Rio de Janeiro receives a note from his sister who practically convokes him to visit to the family tomb: she writes, "Just now I remembered that a year ago you returned from Europe, retired. It's too late today to go to the family vault at St. John the Baptist cemetery, and give thanks for your return, But I will go tomorrow, and I ask that you wait for me, so we can go together"

Promptly, the next morning they were there before the family plot. What for his sister was still a cause of suffering, her husband buried with father and mother — for him, also widowed, (he could care less about relocating the remains of his wife, buried in Vienna) — in the end it was the insistence of his sister that the whole family should gather in a single grave. For him, "the dead are fine where they fall." But what caught his attention that morning was not the prospect of someday seeing order restored to the family *post mortem*, nor the tenacity and loyalty to his sister, but rather the stubbornness with which she kept the grave, without any marks that could compromise the new look, without any trace of the passage of time, as suggested by the narrator: an important legacy of dignity and of social distinction.

"It is not ugly our tomb, it could be a little simpler, an inscription and a cross — but it is well done. It looks too new, yes. Rita maintains it washed always, to prevent aging. Yet I believe that an old tomb gives a better impression, you have the darkness of time, all-consuming. Being the opposite seems to give it a vespertine halo. ⁶"

With customary wit, Machado de Assis draws a fictional scenario, and a suggestive picture of what is usually called the Second Empire of Brazil (1840-1889), in which a transition from the old society, made up of the estates, to the class society which is delineated in bold strokes during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Using different situations, his characters reflect this ambiguity in an exemplary way, especially when they are garnering respect and esteem, drawn on the acquisition of titles of nobility; the only

generally recognized and accepted form. Those who could not acquire them, or the family background with reference to an illustrious ancestor, simply reinvented or created a genealogical memory as a legitimating element. This was to justify their positions as successful individuals on the social scale, having a lifestyle compatible with the acquired status of the times, enriched with the activities of financial capital.

Although money walked hand in hand with the new and much pursued social status, everything was measured by the prestige of wealth; it was still not enough to impose itself as the sole, exclusive value capable of promoting the individual to the glittering world of chivalry. With a watchful eye on the web of relationships and interests that moved in turn of the century Rio society, Machado notes ironically that "history is good to all families," but "(...) not all families are good to history"⁷. Certainly this was one of the reasons for narrator/character of Memorial de Aires to always find fault with the new appearance of the family plot, attributing it to the excessive zeal of his sister who, in having it washed every month, always created the same impression of a new construction. For him, "the old grave gives a better impression of its function if it shows the blackness of the time"⁸.

The dilemma of the "blackness of time" was probably experienced by many of the tombs owners, and as such, the aspiration for a genealogical inscription to the public recognition of social status. Depending on the case, often, little was made of their true social origins when creating in the funerary inscription a new personal narrative, which would be as far as possible, familiar.

On the whole, the names collected on the tombstones repeatedly appealed to the simple family tree, both to invigorate the blood relations, and to recall the social prestige of the given family. However, one should not forget that genealogical memory has its own convenience, and may also reveal itself in other ways, through lapses, forgetfulness, even restrictions, and selectivity. After all, we tend to forget, except for that which is interesting, and therefore, with ancestors, we find the lure of choosing one with whom we want to identify, and now and again, that choice is determined by the prestige of the name.

The place of ancestors in the genealogical chain, for obvious reasons, has always played an important role among the French aristocracy, while for some bourgeois segments the exercise of pedigree in many cases was of no interest or use. Still as already noted by French historian André Burguière (1991), some of the bourgeois families of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sought to repair, or in a sense, reinvent their genealogical roots, manipulating their origins according to

their purposes and needs in order to create new identities to match a newly acquired socioeconomic status. To do so, highlighting the supposed signs of nobility was chosen over the view of money gained by the effort of work - since the latter had become a prerogative for the bourgeoisie of the time.

Depending on the circumstances, the living relatives often sought to see in the tombs a membership inscribed in a chain of generations, carriers of the same family name. Thus, they tended to consider the patronymic as a symbolic asset that actually unites the living and the dead to the same group, ensuring the continuity all.

Thus, the taste for the family tomb came to be an important reference for Brazilian urban elites, who quickly adapted to the new pattern of cemetery space use and ownership, as well as the new burial logic. With the passage of time, the first secularized Brazilian burial cemeteries began to compete among themselves for the grandeur and luxury that was being displayed in the construction of their tombs and graves. Each tried to attract to itself the most fortunate layers of the connected and patronymic grand families who enjoyed the economic and political prerogative of trade, the slave production, landownership, and key positions in power. Years later, it would be the turn of the new fortunes, coming from speculative financial capital, industry, the professions, as well as other sectors of the urban strata that appeared in the major capitals of the country.

In some European cities, for instance Lisbon, it were even journals published about cemeteries and their tombs, as was the case of the *Revista dos Monumentos Sepulcrais* (Journal of the Sepulchral Monuments) in 1868, whose editorial project joined cemetery chronicles, family genealogies, death announcements, transfers, mass invitations, thanksgivings, epitaph transcriptions, poems about death, marble trade news, photographic studios, grave sales and transfers, burial statistics etc. In addition, an iconic/graphic part of the magazine was devoted to grave patterns, which included the names of the respective owners, along with a description and artistic origin of the funeral pieces.

Within the memorial evocation of ancestors were included the collection rituals, and tears inside the tomb, and in its chapel, as well as the renewed deposition of flowers, testimony of both love and loyalty to the dead person. As noted by the main narrator of *Memorial de Ayres*, when placing his eyes on the old tomb of a friend while visiting St. John the Baptist:

"Tomb serious and beautiful, well maintained, with vases of fresh flowers, not planted there, but cut and brought that same morning. The circumstance made me believe that the flowers were from

Fidelia herself, and a gravedigger responding to my question answered: "They're from a lady who brings them here from time to time ...⁹".

Mortuary scenes

By this time, the assimilation of the foreign taste for tomb artifacts was felt strongly in the first Brazilian cemeteries, even if the aesthetic models adopted no longer corresponded to the canons of funerary art in vogue in Europe. In addition to the eschatological and macabre repertoire, *memento mori* on the tombs, the sacred and the religious were still a dominant presence in the scenery of the Brazilian graveyard, not yet innovating. This presence was only surpassed in the early twentieth century, when tomb morphology began to acquire the secularized allegorical dimension that included special emphasis on female figures. Interestingly, in the tropical (and late) version of the *belle époque* the angels, faithful tomb guardians, came to be represented in more human forms, the volume increasing under the pretext of enhancing the curves of the female body.

Angels and archangels, mediators between heaven and earth, occupied a privileged position in tomb decoration; their faces altering to communicate sadness or joy: sometimes in proclamation, or taken by ecstasy, the exultant soul, or full of hope, the liberated soul, the beaten down with desolation, and other moments of the romantic soul. These expressions were often enhanced by their wings; open or at rest, closed, or inclined by flight, half-open or about to take off.

There are many female figures but transmuted into angels, and without losing their implicitly suggested or clearly highlighted sensuality. The metamorphosis of the angel into the figure of the woman was another feature of the funerary art of this period. One of the more conventional forms representing this genre is the woman who mourns the missing spouse. We find women prone, or kneeling, fainting, or in a state of melancholy where dramatic aspects are highlighted: contorted hands, slightly swaying in the air, bare feet, disheveled hair sometimes strewn over the grave, the languid or sometimes corpulent body, sometimes with noticeably large breasts, sometimes quickly delineated.

Another variation on the same theme is the nostalgic, also represented by female figures.

With contemplative faces, they usually oscillate between the deep grieving hopelessness of those who do not believe in the return of that which is gone, and the serenity of one who invests in death

with convictions awaiting hope, and passage. In these allegorical genres female figures can occupy many and varied positions, depending on the feeling that wished to communicate about the person's dead. Sometimes they appear to be kneeling on the graves, yet gathering together the meaning of the deceased's life, and then writing it down on the tombstone, or they lean on a parted or ruined column, and sometimes they appear embracing a cross.

A similar version, known as desolation, is usually represented by more introspective female figures, in a state of meditation, head slightly tilted down, implying the act of walking the path. In other situations, crouching, resting her arms on the urn of the deceased to whom her affliction is devoted.

As opposed to a melancholic atmosphere, the allegory of hope can be seen when female figures, some of them metamorphosed into angels, are cast holding up an anchor, a symbol of Christian hope. The Resurrection is also represented by the female figure, usually in the form of an angel with a star on her forehead and her right hand extended toward infinity, a symbol of eternal life, while the other hand extended downwards and indicative of earthly life holds a simple wreath, an ancient scroll or trumpet, instrument with the meaning of calling the dead to resurrection and to the day of final judgment.

Both the funeral decor and the marble statuary usually came from specialized marble houses, and in particular the free stone workshops, which in the late nineteenth century expanded and conquered a profitable market in major Brazilian cities. As a rule, the more reputable shops concentrated in Rio de Janeiro, and especially in São Paulo due to the presence of a strong Italian immigration flow. The pieces were chosen by catalog, especially when it came to angels, religiously iconographic female figures, or decorations (wreaths, pyres, amphorae, cornucopias, hourglasses, low relief coats of arms, plates in high and low relief with mythic themes, arabesques, crosses, columns, obelisks, etc.). Many of them were copies or reinterpretations of models already established in Staglieno, in the Milan Monument, or in Père-Lachaise, in central Vienna, or others. Due to the frequency with which certain themes recur, although differing in the quality of the work, most of the funerary artifacts were made in series, unless it was a piece signed by a master sculptor, or which became more frequent during the early twentieth century, a renowned sculptor.

The decorative elements were the most often to be commercially produced in scale. This was probably due to their versatility in highlighting the tomb architecture. Thus, embossed plates were mounted onto the surfaces of the tombs, in the obelisks, on the title plates of the funeral home chapels, or as coating to the main facade. Small and large urns, or alternating combinations of

decorative details and fittings were prominently placed on the staggered bases of the tombs or on the tops of columns.

However, not all came down to choosing from the catalogs. Many statues and busts to decorate the graves came by order, and some were even sought out personally in Europe. The use of the tomb decoration, as well as sculpture, constituted a significant mark of different tastes dividing the fortunate from the average. Wealthier families sought more individualized graves. When not importing the funerary chapel by ship, to be assembled on site, these families often ordered their statues, not from local workshops, but from recognized sculptors of the time, be they domestic or foreign.

In the early twentieth century, this preference appeared with much greater frequency in the cemeteries of Rio and Sao Paulo. Many pieces were being sculpted in bronze, while interest in marble stone work was slowly being replaced by granite. Bronze dominated as a decorative element in the work of sculptors of Italian origin who settled in Sao Paulo in the first half of the twentieth century. This of course was true for the cemeteries of Sao Paulo, especially in the second phase of “the Consolation”, in Araçá, and later in the St. Paul Cemetery, built in Pinheiros during the 1930s, and accommodating the emerging business elite of the 40s, 50s, and 60s. Among the most valued and who eventually formed a school are: Eugenio Prati, Nicola Rollo, master of Alfredo Oliani, who himself authored important funerary sculptures, there was Amadeo Zani (disciple of Rudolf Bernadelli), Elio de Giusto, Enrico Bianchi, Galileo Emendabili, G. Starace, and Ottoni Zorlini. Most of them produced pieces inspired by various motives, either by the charge of their own imaginations, or to order for representations of grave owners or their family members.

Fortunate families, especially of immigrant origins preferred to import lavish mausoleums, as did the Matarazzo family for (Count Francisco Matarazzo 1854-1937), in the “Cemitério da Consolação”, this sculpted by the Italian sculptor Luigi Brizzolara, and it was followed by many others. Sensibilities more attuned to the aesthetic avant-garde trends of the time preferred to quietly innovate in the use of funerary art, such is the case for the well known tomb of Olivia Guedes Penteado (1872-1934), where the group of on site sculptures is signed by Victor Brecheret. These avant-garde trends appear more and more frequently, and more purely, up until the end of the first half of the twentieth century.

Picnics, Sunday tours and civic pilgrimage to the cemeteries

The picture of urbanity that is outlined in the cemeteries, strictly following the schedule of living, and evidencing itself with greater intensity on birthdays, death anniversaries, and the day of the dead, reflected the new values and *modus vivendi* of Rio's society of the time.

As Rio de Janeiro at the time was the country's capital and therefore the pivotal center of power and political decisions, it was privileged to host the largest number of cemeteries, especially because the other cities were but provincial towns, including Sao Paulo, who by 1900 had only 239,820 inhabitants. This does not mean however, that in other cities the cemeteries were not also prioritized to reflect the important health policies that were adopted and widely disseminated in the second half of the nineteenth century, as such, they were part of the modernization and transformation of the urban fabric.

But the effervescent sociability in the cemeteries, also occurred in other urban centers in the country, which were regarded by many as civic spaces, and inspired writers of different sensitivities. Arthur Azevedo, in 1877 published the *The Day of the Dead*, a satirical play that narrates a cemetery visit, probably at Catumbi, being full of unusual scenes, and described in an ironic and irreverent tone. In one scene, the visitors take the opportunity to make the picnic fun with lots of food and alcohol, and without discarding the flirtations, laughter and noise. In another scene, the narrative focus turns to the fake and imitating character, (trying to copy the French) found in the cemeteries of the Rio:

"I look at the mausoleums and I imagine myself in France!", "Yet a Brazilian sleeps in that grave.", A young man that prefers the language of Rousseau, on yet another crown exclaims, "A mon bon père.", And when the sign is in Portuguese, yet sculpted by the hand of a foreigner, so poor is the spelling of such simple words, that one must either laugh or simply smile."¹⁰

Olavo Bilac, poet and chronicler of life in Rio shared these perceptions. In his daily notes and through a female character, he vehemently underlines the atmosphere of intense worldliness, and very little piety during the day consecrated to the dead in cemeteries Rio de Janeiro:

"Today is the day of the dead And of course, you will go to the cemetery, whichever or any ... (...) You will go to the cemetery, my love, because of the living, you will join to the funeral procession as if it were your last picnic, — to see and to show these people your big blue eyes, equally beautiful between the lights of Lyric, between the windows of the street Ouvidor and the

willows of S. João Batista or of Caju. But do not wear clear silks between the mausoleums loaded with flowers and lighted candles, dressed in black you must go, because framed by the blackness of mourning, your white skin will look even whiter ... (...) It is fashion now to remember the dead today ... (...) I, for one, have no need to go to the cemetery to remind me of my dead. I have them here, close to me, lying all in my heart, like a lonely grave. Alone, while outside the people go to S. João, Caju, or Carmo, to visit those who are no longer here, I will look into the heart of where you walked by, killing hopes ... (...) Go, my love! There will be so many people are in the cemeteries! ... so many living eyes will see you, pale and smiling, within the frame of black clothing!... (...) go visit the dead as a gift to the living! "¹¹.

On some occasions, writers insisted on describing such behaviors with irony and skepticism, which in a sense already reflected the secular climate surrounding death, visits to cemeteries, funerals, and the day of the dead. They are portrayed more as a result of personal interests and fancies, than as an unequivocal demonstration of faith and feeling. Machado de Assis, narrates a situation in which one of his characters, when returning from the funeral of an old friend, in 1864, commented, being impressed with the economic positions of those that held the coffin, exclaiming with great enthusiasm: " they have in their hands a coffin worth at least three thousand!"¹²

It should be noted that at the end of the second half of the nineteenth century with the growing process of secularization, the funeral ceremony was increasingly entrusted to families, yet nothing, if they were fervent Catholics, blocked the ecclesiastical presence,. As noted by Michel Vovelle, the pious clauses, (device in which Catholics witnessed their faith, with teaching about the steps to be taken after death, and signed into written wills), gave way to material interests, and bequests to the family of the deceased, they were executed by notaries, and reduced spending on the apparatus of the funeral ritual. But, depending on the position and prestige of the family, the funeral could become a civil or religious ceremony concluded with opulence, yet driven by other codes of etiquette not necessarily religious. In these cases, the decision to have a funeral that represented the greatness of the dead depended solely on family, that is, the interests and desires of the children, wife or husband, since the desire of the deceased was no longer the mandatory testamentary guide.

As in the city of the living, revealed in the renewal of urban fabric, the widening of streets, the of building parks, monuments, public buildings and stately mansions, private cemeteries also became privileged scenarios, which must unfold the great spectacle of the final destination.

But in addition to being burial and memorial settings, the cemeteries were also places of power and

prestige in which the living often displayed luxurious villas, built especially for their missing relatives. As noted by Arthur Azevedo; "Instead of a cemetery, a family portrait"¹³. Soon the new mortuary equipment's became an attraction for visits, especially by the lower classes who on Sundays and public holidays devoted part of their free time to travel the streets and alleys to see the novelties displayed at the tombs.

However, it was on the days of the dead, that the cemeteries and other local outskirts of the country received the higher turnout. Some major newspapers of Rio de Janeiro in the early twentieth century were occupied on a regular basis, on this day and the next with describing the huge buzz being established, emphasizing tombs of illustrious owners, highlighting the decoration, appreciation and care of relatives and friends for their missing. In addition, they highlighted the taste for civic pilgrimage, which by this time began to impose itself as a standard practice in the cemeteries, especially on civic dates. As an example there is the 1st of May, and other commemorations, like the festival of the dead, which rendered homage, and restored political life to corpses.

"It was at S. Francisco Xavier cemetery of Cajú, as it is best known, that gas factory workers, (paying homage to the engineer Cornelius W. Suetienbrand by organizing a civic procession which parted from the foot of Republic square and preceded by the Music Band of the 10th Infantry Battalion of the Army), arrived at 10 o'clock in the morning. In the litter they could see the flags of Brazil, France, and Holland. Four workers took a very rich crown with a portrait of the late engineer and placed it in his tomb No. 107 in the Protestant's block, and where already had been placed another *biscuit* wreath. On behalf of the Workers Commission spoke Mr. Francis Serpa, his speech being matched by The Consul from Holland, a certain Mr. Gregory Barroso Mendes in a salute on behalf of the Gas Company employees ¹⁴".

Also in the first decade of the twentieth century, João do Rio, in his way, also confirmed the new trend of the cemetery as a place for sociability and relaxation: as the mirror through which the living recognized themselves in the dead, reflected in "the large and printed book of epitaphs". Referring to the tomb inscriptions, the chronicler added: "Ah! How they speak well as to what are the living ¹⁵, see how they reveal their vanities, for in the very marble of their missing they record their own desires and fantasies, beliefs, opinions, judgments, complaints, jokes, spiritualist legends, whether Catholic, positivist, etc.. — and often under the pretext of affirming the "fleeting nostalgia that only in this way can last a little longer. ¹⁶"

Following this picture of contrasts and double reflections, lapidary inscriptions in many cases, also

translated the desire of the living to ensure their permanent place on earth, in a prominent position, or, indeed, to assert their own presence as a person, even after death, to be read and remembered by someone:

"... Seeing epitaphs, I feel a great cold and great fear when I walk among the unnamed, forgotten, anonymous tombs, for us just a number, an appeal from the fetter of oblivion to the pleasure of continued assertion by at least one epitaph the passage through life ...¹⁷ ".

The dead in the mirror of the living

Aligned with the new standards of moral conduct and the accelerated pace of city transformation, the funeral rites, (including the wakes, funerals and processions, depending on each case), came to represent not only a crucial part of the ritualistic sequence for the development of mourning, but also to constitute an important indicator for definition of the degree of the dead's prestige and, by extension, the social, political and economic conditions of his relatives.

When it came to big names linked to the country's public life or political and recognized humanitarian activities, the preparations for the wake and funeral were given, sometimes double care. The concern with the details of the corpse's appearance and the decoration of the event cannot go unnoticed. Costumes played an important role in the funeral home drama at this time, becoming essential social inscriptions and codes of etiquette. For Catholics, the Mass celebrated on the seventh day after the death and repeated in subsequent months also became a social competition, at which times they strengthened the condolences, taking family members as to distribute gifts of remembrance of the deceased, in the form of "little saints ".

The rules of mourning were not necessarily measured by affection for the deceased, but by the degree of kinship by which it was connected⁴⁰. Therefore, the heavier, longer grieving, was reserved for widows, lasting two years, the first year being very strict, with mandatory use of black, and the second year, a little less strict. According to the closeness or distance of the bonds, the elaboration of mourning required longer, medium, or shorter periods of time, to be regulated by the certain codes of etiquette funeral, usually published in manuals of civility. The use of black, suit, tie and hat for men, and for women, headdress or veil, jewelry being banned, but allowing props appropriate to the occasion. As for the young, it was advised to use a black band on the lapel or the right arm.

The procession to the grave mobilized popular urban attention, in some cases promoting the dead to "civic hero" of the nation, and when this occurred, it established the pedagogical fixation of collective memory, a value that the positivists so craved⁴². The prestige of the dead was evaluated not only by the grandeur of the tombs, noble forms of nomination, by surnames passed down through generations or by curiosities contained in the epitaphs, but it was also measured by the number of people who gathered at the funeral religious or civil, and even more by the degree of importance they held in society and politics.

This aspect at the time, certainly would have motivated the writer from Rio, Lima Barreto, to write in an ironic way, in a story called *Charter of a Deceased Rich Man*, that "my purpose was to tell you that the funeral was beautiful. I can say this without vanity, the pleasure of its magnificence, and its luxury, is not really mine, but yours, and it is not bad that the living has a bit of vanity, even if he is a president of some sort, or an immortal of the Academy of Letters. Burial funerals and other ceremonies are of no interest to the deceased, they are made by the living and for the living."¹⁸

Interestingly, the posthumous desire of this writer seemed to contradict some of the principles touted by himself in life, especially since he was a staunch critic of the bourgeoisie of Rio in his time, one of the first to notice the process of urban social stratification and the expulsion of the poor from the city center to the suburbs and hills, the "*favelas*", under the aegis of the great urban reform undertaken by Pereira Passos, with strong Haussmannian inspiration.

After all, Lima Barreto preferred Saint John the Baptist to the Inhaúma cemetery of the poor, the suburb where he lived and died by seeing it as unappealing, as "lacking the air of remembrances and resigned sadness, of that elusive poetry of the beyond" — that he readily identified in St. John the Baptist.

"I think it ugly, without compunction, the warm air of a government office, but if the cemetery seems such, I do not care, the burials that are to be, all of them, sharpen my attention when I see them pass, poor or not, on foot, or in a car coach. Yet, the majority of the poor inhabitants of the suburbs still maintain the rural custom of carrying their loved ones, arms loaded on foot"¹⁹.

St. John the Baptist was located in a neighborhood of the very rich people he had so criticized, but ironically, it was there where he chose to be buried. It is true that he would die early, even for those times at 43, after a lifetime of failures and frequent hospital admissions for detoxification. As

described by Eneas Ferraz, on the first of November 1922, during his funeral were present only a few friends, people of the neighborhood, who prayed in front of the poor coffin in the narrow room of the house. The next day, the thin passage up to the train station that would lead to central and soon after, to his final destination, the lovely John the Baptist:

"In the afternoon, the funeral came, slowly driven by the hands of the few friends who were there. But along the suburban streets, from within the modest gardens, in the corners, and bars, appeared at every moment, all the anonymous that would incorporate behind the coffin, silently. Blacks in shirtsleeves, schoolboys, a band of neighborhood kids (many were protégés of the writer), the neighborhood merchants, shippers in clogs, road workers, bartenders and even drunks, their faces bathed in tears, screaming, (with the sentimentality of frightened children), the name of their vice companion, and also of so many silent hours at the tables of the taverns (...) the coffin placed in a 3rd class hearse, two or three bunches of flowers in the corners , and the car left, followed by their small procession, on route to S. John the Baptist, where Lima Barreto wanted his grave, his vanity. He had never lived in the aristocratic neighborhoods, never had been received into its halls, but wanted to sleep his immortal sleep in the cemetery of marble, so beautiful, among the sad lords of the high cypresses. And there just next to the mountainside, he lies. ²⁰"

Depending on the importance of the dead person, the funeral and burial became attractive of great public interest. But what is not seen in the death of Lima Barreto, happened some years before with his counterpart, Machado de Assis. In fact, he had come to know glory while still alive and when at dawn on September 29, 1908 he died in his comfortable residence in the Cosme Velho , he was already considered a national institution. His body was moved to the headquarters of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, which he founded, where public figures flocked to immediately. The funeral spectacle, commissioned by the Baron of Rio Branco, followed in procession through the main and crowded downtown streets, packed with people, although many did not know nor understand exactly what was going on. He was buried with pomp in an individual grave in St. John the Baptist, in the presence of prominent names from the government, politicians, scientific and trade associations, students, and other important segments of the population, including Rui Barbosa, who was entrusted with the eulogy .

Machado de Assis and Lima Barreto probably never met in life. Except for Cosme Velho the neighborhood where he lived and died, Machado de Assis only attended the main streets of downtown Rio, including in his daily route, the Academy, the Garnier, the ministries, and on special days, the Opera House. Lima Barreto, saw only the poor suburb where he lived, and of course the

taverns of ill repute that he frequented. After death, they finally met for the first time in the noble neighborhood of São João Batista, although remaining separate as in life. While one had purchased a well located grave in the central, aristocratic area of the cemetery where everyone could see and revere, the other was buried in the most secluded and elevated the slopes, in the company of the modest, today close to a *favela*.

But the continuity of the city, according to positivism, was made through the reproduction of family memories, bowing to the heroes and "great men" in a continuous chain of generations whose inevitable fate would be grave. It was there that individuals should be recognized because it was the dead that inscribed them in the lineages of time. Such a claim did not go unnoticed by readers on Memorial Day, as evidenced by a remark published in 1903 in the *Gazeta de Notícias*: "Each time, say the positivists, the living are more governed by the dead. Every day, indeed, our debt to the past is heavier. Each time, the men who appear are linked to a larger number of generations and all the agencies re-sense the experiences of the past, created through the countless centuries ...²¹".

That is why segments of urban elites sought in the past to legitimize the present, creating bonds that allowed reconstruction, a reuniting and at the same time, perpetuation of the memory of their ancestors⁴⁹. And it is no coincidence that in those times the family tombs in the form of houses or chapels, cemeteries had already conquered the Brazilian cemeteries, often forcing the individual to abdicate their own romantic expression of individuality, to integrate with the family group, under the pretension of solidarity and cohesion, anchoring in the patronymic recorded prominently on front of the tomb; it was no longer the soul that was indestructible, but rather the family, and the surname.

Notes:

1 See COMTE, A. *Cours de philosophie positive*, t. IV, leçon 48, p. 68. Op. Cit.

2 See BESSEDE, R. *La Crise de la Conscience catholique dans la littérature et la pensée françaises a la fin du XIXe. Siècle*, Université de Paris IV, 1972.

3 See VOVELLE, M. *La Mort et l'Occident*. pp. 642-646.

4 See "Os cemitérios", in *O Panorama (Jornal Literário e instrutivo da Sociedade Propagadora dos Conhecimentos Úteis)* V. I, Lisboa, Imprensa da Sociedade Propagadora dos Conhecimentos Úteis, 1837, p. 269.

5 See ASSIS, M. *Memorial de Aires*, in *Obra Completa*. V.I., Rio de Janeiro, José Aguilar Ltda, 1959, p. 1.121.

6 See Idem, ibidem, p. 1.030.

7 See ASSIS, M. de. "As bodas de Luís Duarte", in *Obras Completas*, Rio de Janeiro, José Aguilar Ltda., 1959, pp. 190-201.

8 See Idem, *Memorial de Aires*, Op. Cit. p. 1.030.

9 ASSIS, M. Op. Cit. p 1.115-1.116.]

10 AZEVEDO, A. *O Dia de Finados. Sátira*. Rio de Janeiro, Tipografia Acadêmica, 1877, p. 4.

11 BILAC, Olavo. "Notas Diárias", in *Crítica e Fantasia*, Lisboa, Livraria Clássica Editora de A. M. Teixeira, 1904, pp. 350-352.

12 See ASSIS, M. de. "Anedota Pecuniária", in *Histórias sem data, Obra Completa*, idem, V. II, p.423.

13 See AZEVEDO, A. Idem, p. 5.

14 See *Gazeta de Notícias*, 03, 11, 1908

15 RIO, J. do. "Epitáfios", in *Gazeta de Notícias*, 03, 11, 1908.

16 *Gazeta de Notícias*, 03, 11, 1908.

17 Idem, ibidem.

18 See BARRETO, L. *Vida e morte de M. J. Gonzaga de Sá*. Rio de Janeiro, Editora Brasiliense, 1956, p. 287.

19 See BARRETO, L. *Feiras e Mafuás*. São Paulo, Ed. Brasiliense, 1956, p. 287-292.

20 See FERRAZ, E. "A morte do mestre", in *O País*, Rio de Janeiro, 20.11.1922, p. 4.

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Translated by Mónica Lourdes Franch Gutiérrez

Translated from **Horizontes Antropológicos**, Porto Alegre, v.16, n.33, p. 55-80, jun. 2010.