REVISTA
PATRIMÔNIO E MEMÓRIA

Andrew Nunes
King's College London
andrew.nunes@kcl.ac.uk

DECOLONISING DIFFICULT HERITAGE THROUGH POLITICAL GRAFFITI: (RE)INTERPRETING THE COMMEMORATION OF PEDRO ÁLVARES CABRAL IN SANTARÉM, PORTUGAL

Abstract
This article examines the statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral in Santarém, Portugal, as a site of difficult heritage deeply embedded within a broader memory network celebrating Cabral's life and his so-called 'discovery' of Brazil. Centring on a 2019 incident in which the statue was graffitied with the political statement 'Colonialismo é Fascismo', I arrive at this intervention first by framing graffiti deployed against commemorative sites tied to colonialism and slavery, then turning to Cabral's life, his Santarém statue, and its surrounding spatial elements – arguing how the commemoration can provoke critical responses, particularly in light of historical controversies I go on to unpack as attributable to the figure. In assessing the intervention, I argue that it establishes a counter-celebratory narrative of Cabral and posit that the political text graffitied on the statue should not be dismissed as mere vandalism but rather understood as a reinscription and form of textual marginalia that is useful in exposing silences surrounding colonial and authoritarian legacies, thereby contributing to the decolonising of the statue.

Keywords: difficult heritage, colonial memory, political graffiti, Pedro Álvares Cabral.

DESCOLONIZAR O PATRIMÔNIO DIFÍCIL ATRAVÉS DO GRAFITE POLÍTICO: (RE)INTERPRETAR A COMEMORAÇÃO DE PEDRO ÁLVARES CABRAL EM SANTARÉM, PORTUGAL

Resumo
Este artigo examina a estátua de Pedro Álvares Cabral em Santarém, Portugal, enquanto um local de patrimônio difícil, profundamente enraizado numa rede mais ampla de memória que celebra a vida de Cabral e a sua chamada "descoberta" do Brasil. Centrando-se num incidente ocorrido em 2019, no qual a estátua foi grafitada com a declaração política "Colonialismo é Fascismo", abordo esta intervenção, em primeiro lugar, através do enquadramento do grafite dirigido contra locais comemorativos ligados ao colonialismo e à escravidão; depois, volto-me para a vida de Cabral, a sua estátua em Santarém, e os elementos espaciais que a rodeiam — argumentando de que modo a comemoração pode suscitar respostas críticas, particularmente à luz das controvérsias históricas que exponho como atribuíveis à figura. Ao avaliar a intervenção, sustento que esta estabelece uma narrativa contra-celebratória de Cabral e postulo que o texto político grafitado na estátua não deve ser descartado como mero vandalismo, mas sim compreendido como uma reinscrição e forma de *marginalia* textual útil para expor os silêncios em torno dos legados coloniais e autoritários, contribuindo assim para a descolonização da estátua.

Palavras-chave: patrimônio difícil, memória colonial, grafite político, Pedro Álvares Cabral.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5016/pem.v21.e3887

INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2020, the greater realisation of 'difficult heritage' – that is, histories inscribed and commemorated throughout urban spaces, recognised as meaningful to a nation yet also problematic and contested – was extraordinary in connection with anti-racist activism and other efforts to expose contemporary legacies of colonialism and slavery.[I] It was at this time, that an unprecedented wave of iconoclasm occurred against monuments dedicated to American Confederate generals, European imperialists and navigators. However, in the case of Portugal this was not true in terms of outright destruction despite Portugal's early imperial exploits ahead of other European powers, and a leading role in the transatlantic slave trade. Moreover, that difficult heritage in Portugal was already just as contested prior to the upsurge of efforts in 2020. This is illustrated in this article through the case of Pedro Alvares Cabral's statue in Santarém (Portugal), which, however, subject to a softer form of activism – that of graffitiing, its intervention represented a moment of critical reflection on the navigator and his 'discovery' of Brazil.

Before proceeding on to such a study, I wish to first frame the type of intervention in question, relevant to what I argue is its role in decolonising contemporary commemorations tied to difficult heritage that Cabral's statue epitomises: a commemorative site that embodies Portugal's respect for its past but is increasingly awkward for the country's positive identity, threatening to disrupt present and future social cohesion due to the divisions such recognition can provoke. This tension aligns with Sharon Macdonald's (2009) definition of difficult heritage – how elements of national heritage simultaneously evoke pride and contestation, reflecting unresolved pasts tied to a contemporary collective identity.

Beginning this framing, it is evident that graffiti is an old but continued interference to public surfaces; a visual form of expression that works to convey messages.[II] In its recent urban form, graffiti's use in communicating messages has been widely demonstrated in the Black Lives Matters (BLM) cycle of protests, where countless statues and monuments of historical figures with links to colonialism or slavery were graffitied with crude and quickly written texts that were explicitly political (see figure 1). These incidents represented 'political graffiti' that publicised current socio-political concerns for social change. This form of graffiti is not new but a long-deployed strategy by social movements and activists for collective action, political subversion and resistance against

authority and prevailing political systems (Awad and Wagoner, 2017; Ryan, 2018). Moreover, in taking the notion of urban spaces as palimpsests (Martin, 1968; reiterated by Sleight, 2018, pp. 127–9), political graffiti in producing messages within urban spaces creates additional layers to be read in an already dense legible memory environment. Here, this type of graffiti directed at commemorative sites, such as statues, evocative of colonialism or slavery furthers public discourse about the politics of representation – argued racist and colonial residues found in contemporary urban spaces. In this sense, the message-making process of graffiti provides a way for political texts to be written literally onto commemorative sites, and among their readable signs to display legible counter-narratives that contradict a site's original narrative celebrating imperial exploits, or historical figures that were pro-slavery. In this way, graffiti exposes these pasts in a relationship with present-day racial injustices, which are still being felt (Andrews, 2021). In 'writing the city' in these ways and at sites that can prompt controversial histories, marginalised actors can make claims on public spaces they inhabit, occupying them through political graffiti, producing visible concerns to be read in attempts to foster greater social inclusion and recognition (Zieleniec, 2016). Therefore, graffiti of this form provides public visibility to empower and make present other identities through materialising contentious political issues (Zaimakis, 2016).

Figura 1. Political graffiti visible in 2020 on the monument to Confederate General and pro-slavery advocate Robert E. Lee in Richmond, Virginia (United States). Political texts visible include BLM (Black Lives Matter) and ACAB (All Cops Are Bastards), reflecting discourse on racism, which activists perceive is reinforced by the public veneration of such historical figures.
Fonte: Photo reproduced from *The Progressive* (Rachleff, 2020).

Considering this power of political graffiti, I argue that this form of intervention at statues viewed as difficult and contested due to associated histories of colonialism or slavery, should be considered in the following ways.

Firstly, as with most graffiti, it is usually an activity that authorities approach negatively as a form of vandalism in connection with perceived criminal behaviour (Young, 2014; Vanderveen and Eijk, 2016). Therefore, with it generally being considered in legal terms through a frame of criminal vandalism, graffitiing contentious statues reflects what South African sociologist Stanley Cohen defined as 'ideological vandalism': acts to 'draw attention to specific grievance to gain publicity for a general cause' (Cohen, 1973, p. 39). I agree that an ideological component exists with political graffiti, however, I wish to separate this form of graffiti from the terminology of vandalism to, hypothetically, decriminalise this act. This is to emphasise this form of intervention as not being perceived as acts of vandalism to contentious sites, but instead, as an intervention expressing discontent and desire for meaningful social change without a criminal motive or intention. In this way, criminality is instead directed to the targeted embronzed historical figures using a legally perceived criminal act of graffitiing public property to expose crimes of colonialism or slavery from the past, that are still being directly and indirectly celebrated through present-day commemorative sites.

Secondly – and to further define graffiti of this article's concern – I disagree with the notion of graffiti representing *icons* proposed in 1997 by British typographer and expert in the study of handwriting Rosemary Sassoon, and Austrian historian of written communication Albertine Gaur. Instead, I take the notion they reject – graffiti representing forms of inscriptions (Sassoon and Gaur, 1997, p. 50). In so doing this reflects what I believe to be a more appropriate notion of recent graffiti for political means, since graffiti's message-making ability (or message production) in rewriting an authorised memory-history in public spaces, establishes another conceivable narrative to be read and thus an inscription of sorts that interferes with commemorative discourse. This is a resemblance that the notion of *icons* does not infer and is instead more relevant to something enduring, such as the statues themselves. Therefore, considering an intervention of graffiti as *icons* is a conflation best to be avoided.

Thirdly, thinking of graffiti away from a criminal framework and much more wholistically as inscriptions – a method of producing public messages through (re)inscribing statues – incidents of political graffiti directed at commemorations evocative of colonialism and slavery have, of late, repeatedly shown themselves as largely separate from street art, mural art, and other forms of graffiti that are heavily image-based or elaborate in design. Moreover, considering what

professor of sociology and criminology Jeff Ferrell (2016, pp. xxx–xxxi) notes, that 'street art and graffiti are today defined by the very impossibility of defining them', the focus in this article lays on a distinction of graffiti in its simplest 'non-art' form. Therefore, graffiti in terms of urban scrawls, fast-written texts and although produced by regular graffitiing tools, which are also used for creating graffiti art (aerosol spray paint, marker pens, and the painting of words by brushes), these types of graffiti produce results at commemorative sites that are not for artistic purposes, but are instead explicitly political – thus political texts (as exemplified in figure 1).

These considerations of graffiti I see relevant in response to commemorations of Pedro Álvares Cabral. However, before assessing graffiti at one of his statues, details of his life and assigned commemorative landscape should be mapped out to provide a greater understanding of the navigator as someone recognised as significant to a longstanding Portuguese (and even Brazilian) identity, despite being contested and thus an awkward personage tied to the national heritage of Portugal (and Brazil).

COMMEMORATING CABRAL AND THE 'DISCOVERY' OF BRAZIL

Born in Belmonte (c.1467–c.1520) to a minor noble family, Pedro Álvares Cabral is celebrated in Portugal and Brazil as a major figure of maritime exploration.[III] Principally, he is known for his 'discovery' of Brazil on 22 April 1500, having reached Brazil en route to India following on from Vasco da Gama's (1469–1524) first voyage there for the Portuguese Crown in 1497–1498.[IV] Opinion differs, however, on the 'discovery' of Brazil as to whether it was accidental or deliberate.[V] Nonetheless, it is generally accepted that Cabral was the first European of relative status (thus, on record) to disembark there (Disney, 2009, p. 204). Acknowledged as the discoverer of Brazil, Cabral married into higher nobility with D. Isabel de Castro (d. 1538), who bore him six children, retiring to Santarém where he later died (Greenlee, 2016 [1937], pp. xliv–xlv).

In recognition of Cabral's 'discovery', he is commemorated through numerous sites that frame this history as a great Portuguese accomplishment. Commemorative sites celebrating Cabral in Brazil include a monument installed in 1988 in São Paulo's Ibirapuera Park, located across from his eponymous road – the Avenida Pedro Álvares Cabral. In Porto Seguro (Bahia), a statue of Cabral undergoes a 'washing ritual' to signal the opening of the carnival parade in the city. A place that also includes a local samba school named after the

Portuguese navigator (*Jornal do Sol*, 2020). In Rio de Janeiro, a large monument to Cabral stands in the Largo da Glória and was sculpted by Rodolfo Bernardelli (1852–1931) and installed in 1900 to mark the fourth centenary of the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil. This monument was later replicated in Lisbon (Portugal) in 1940. The Lisbon copy is situated at the centre of a (traffic) roundabout, which begins (or ends, depending on the approach taken) from the road of his name – the Avenida Álvares Cabral.

Other commemorative sites in Portugal include those dedicated to Cabral in his hometown of Belmonte, where a road runs through the town named after him – the Rua Pedro Álvares Cabral – which leads northwards to the Museu dos Descobrimentos (Museum of Discoveries; opened in April 2009), focused on Cabral's life and Brazil.[VI] Further along this road, there is a public square featuring a statue of Cabral sculpted by Álvaro de Brée (1906–1962), which was inaugurated in 1963 by the then-former President of Brazil (from 1956 to 1961) Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira (1902–1976). Interestingly, although this is not an exhaustive list of sites dedicated to Cabral, almost all were created during the twentieth century. In Portugal, this period corresponded with the Estado Novo (New State): the Portuguese corporatist authoritarian regime, established in 1933, led by the *de facto* dictator António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970), and, from 1968, by Marcello Caetano (1906–1980), until its collapse – along with Portugal's Colonial Empire – in April 1974. It was during this time that the regime's promotion of nationalism and colonial propaganda elevated the Portuguese 'Discoveries' to a more prominent position than ever before, bringing into the public sphere a greater recognition of Portugal's maritime history and its navigators through commemorative practices (Acciaiuoli, 1998; João, 1999 & 2002). Among all the commemorations around this theme that featured Cabral, his statue in the Portuguese city of Santarém is highly significant, as it encompasses several commemorative elements beyond the statue itself, resulting in the most profound memory space dedicated to the navigator.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMEMORATIVE SITE

Following the death of Pedro Álvares Cabral around 1520, no adequate memorial site for the navigator existed in Santarém despite him being buried there (Greenlee, 2016 [1937], p. xlv). This changed in the city with the installation of a bronze statue dedicated to Cabral on 30 June 1968. First located

in the Largo Cândido dos Reis, the statue was commissioned to commemorate the fifth centenary of Cabral's birth and was inaugurated by the President of Portugal, Américo Tomás (1894–1987), together with the President of the Brazilian military government, Artur da Costa e Silva (1899–1969), accompanied by the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs, José de Magalhães Pinto (1909–1996). This 1968 ceremony marked a further coming together of Portugal and Brazil in recognition of Cabral, but now under two distinct dictatorships. While Portugal's was beginning to fracture, Brazil's military regime was intensifying, with, by the end of 1968 (13 December), the promulgation of the Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5), which resulted in the suspension of political rights, arbitrary arrests, and the abolition of *habeas corpus* (Memórias Reveladas, 2024).

Describing Cabral's 1968 statue, it was sculpted by Domingos de Castro Gentil Soares Branco (1925–2013) and depicts him standing with his right arm extended straight, firmly holding a cross of Christian significance around the height of his shoulders. In his left hand is a large sword positioned behind his left calf, with the tip of the sword resting beside his right foot. This right foot follows the same direction as Cabral's gaze with the outheld cross, while the rest of his body faces the side that correlates with the front-facing pedestal of the statue featuring two inscriptions. The first inscription of 'PEDRO ALVARES CABRAL' in small lettering, followed beneath some space which, thereafter, reads centimetres from the ground in larger lettering a second inscription of 'DESCOBRIDOR DO BRASIL' (see figure 2).

Figura 2. Statue dedicated to Pedro Álvares Cabral in Santarém.
Fonte: Photo courtesy of Dragstra (2016).

Figura 3. Rustic-stylised stone slab inscription that stands beside the statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral within the floral section of the praça of his namesake.
Fonte: Photo reproduced from Gonçalves (2016).

Relocated sometime after 1968, today the statue of Cabral stands just off-centre within a sloped boomerang-shaped public square (praça) in the Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral.[VII] Three-quarters of this praça features the calçada Portuguesa;[VIII] and a quarter section of bushes and trees behind and around the rear of Cabral's statue. Within this floral section is a large rustic-stylised stone slab inscribed with two texts on either side. The first text is a quote from Pero Vaz de Caminha's (1450–1500) famous letter to D. Manuel I (1469–1521) about Cabral's 'discovery'.[IX] It reads, '22 DE ABRIL DE 1500: "NESTE DIA, A HORAS DE VESPERA, HOUVEMOS VISTA DE TERRA! A TERRA DE VERA CRUZ" – Pero Vaz de Caminha' (see figure 3).[X] The second text notes the statue's inauguration, naming Portuguese and Brazilian officials at the ceremony and the statue's purpose to mark the fifth centenary of Cabral's birth. In total, the praça featuring this stone slab and statue are set within what is essentially a small road island (a roundabout), since it is surrounded by two roads – the Rua Júlio Araújo and the Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral (also the name of the praça). These roads follow the praça's design, identically formed by the traditional-styled calçada pavement. This is laid purposefully and further adds to the meaning of the site dedicated to Cabral.

Detailing this paved (calçada) design, it emanates from the base of the pedestal and floor of Cabral's statue in what appears to be a beam of light rays comprised of five lines of dark granite stone (see figures 6 and 8). These lines all lead to five different doorways belonging to the buildings across from the praça and on the Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral (see figure 6). Four of these lines of 'light rays'

all lead to the main entrance and other doors belonging to a vocational training school specialising in tourism, multimedia, cuisine and business called the Escola Professional do Vale do Tejo (EPVT). Opened in 2001, the building of this school is that of a former convent (EPVT, n.d.a & b). A final and single line of these 'light rays' leads to a Portuguese Gothic church, the Igreja da Graça. This church was constructed, in part, initially in 1380 and later completed in c.1420 (CMS, n.d.a). The Igreja da Graça is highly significant in connection with Cabral because his remains lay inside the church within an engraved floored tomb, accompanied by a small altar and often the national flags of Portugal and Brazil. The church also contains the tomb of D. Pedro de Meneses (1370–1437); one of the conquerors of Ceuta in 1415 and later the city's first governor (Turismo de Portugal, 2013). These burial sites represent a commemorative space of Portugal's former imperial exploits and a second memory site of Cabral.

Dedications to Cabral are further expanded by neighbouring sites to the Igreja da Graça. One of these is the building, the Casa do Brasil – Casa Pedro Álvares Cabral at the intersection of the roads that reference Cabral by his name (the Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral) and hometown (Rua Vila de Belmonte). Although no line from the 'light rays' leads to this building from Cabral's statue, it is a significant structure dating from the seventeenth century and was constructed from materials belonging to Cabral's family (CMS, n.d.b). In the twentieth century, the building was acquired by the Câmara Municipal de Santarém (CMS) and now serves as a space for 'cultural diffusion' – a site of memory reflecting the city of Santarém's relationship with Cabral and the 'discovery' of Brazil (Ibid.).

Another dedication to Cabral is the azulejo artwork on a wall facing (but between) the Igreja da Graça and the Casa of Brasil. This art commemorates the fifth centenary of Cabral's birth and was unveiled in 1968 around the same time as the statue of Cabral nearby, although at the time when the statue was not yet located in the Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral. The azulejo artwork depicts Nossa Senhora da Esperança (Our Lady of Hope), where she stands superimposed over an urban landscape and between two municipality emblems, that of the city of Santarém and the town of Belmonte (see figure 7). As with the Casa do Brasil, these azulejos represent another memory site for Cabral in the immediate area of the statue, meaning that this site and others in combination constitute a wide but concentrated memory network in celebration

of Cabral's life and his perceived achievements. Overall, Cabral's statue is clearly at the centre of this memory network due to its accessibility (something that can be visited twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week) rather than the place of his burial, and since the statue seems to direct visitors to other significant commemorations through its adjoining calçada design.

Figura 4. Side view of the praça and the statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral on the junction between the roads Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral and the Rua Júlio Araújo.
Fonte: Screen capture from Google Maps (2024 [2019]a).

Figura 5. Rear view of the praça road island and its statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral from the Rua Júlio Araújo. The statue is mostly obscured by this flora section from this rear approach when it is not the winter season.
Fonte: Screen capture from Google Maps (2024 [2014]a).

Figura 6. View of the road Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral, showing the dark stone calçada motif that spreads from the statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral (left) in the praça across and onto the road (centre) ending at five doorways (right). Forward at the end of the road, the Casa do Brasil is visible. Between the Casa do Brasil and the school (EPVT) centre-right, is the Igreja da Graça.
Fonte: Screen capture from Google Maps (2024 [2014]b).

Figura 7. Azulejo artwork commemorating Pedro Álvares Cabral's fifth centenary, installed in 1968. Since 2014, the azulejos have been surrounded by a maritime mural by Mariana Dias Coutinho.
Fonte: Screen capture from Google Maps (2024 [2019]b).

ASSESSING THE COMMEMORATIVE SITE

The overview of the statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral illustrates that it is not an isolated commemoration but also works with other spatial elements and sites of interest to the navigator in joint ways. Therefore, considering this memory network that celebrates Cabral, it is a commemorative site that encompasses a larger space beyond the statue and goes as far as – and inside – the nearby buildings of the Igreja da Graça and the Casa do Brasil. Determining a celebratory narrative present therein reveals two primary concerns.

The first may be determined through an imagined reversal of the statue's position within the praça, forming a visual narrative of Cabral's arrival in Brazil in 1500, and of the Portuguese first encounter with the Amerindians. This image is evoked firstly through the curvature and inclusion of a flora section to the statue's rear that belongs to the praça road island. This works in replicating a forested coastline of Brazil as it may have existed in 1500 during Cabral's landing, and by the sculpted depiction of Cabral, what it communicates to viewing audiences. The latter is interpretable through the cross held up in ways that imply Cabral is instructing and directing this cross at an audience, and in its historical context, what can be assumed was an audience of Amerindian people that Cabral and the Portuguese encountered. This type of image produced by the site of Cabral's landing in Brazil is not new and has been widely (re)created in art and film.

Examples in art include those by Brazilian artists, notably Francisco Aurélio de Figueiredo e Mello's (1854–1916) *O Descobrimento do Brasil* which was completed in 1887 (see figure 8), and Oscar Pereira da Silva's (1867–1939) *Desembarque de Pedro Álvares Cabral em Porto Seguro em 1500*, finished in

1900 for the fourth centenary of Brazil's 'discovery' (see figure 9). Among films, Humberto Mauro's *O Descobrimento do Brasil* (1937) perhaps best illustrates the display of Cabral and the Portuguese arrival in Brazil (see figure 10). Overall, these artistic references to the Portuguese landings on a forested coastline representing Brazil resonate with the image produced at the praça and statue of Cabral in Santarém (especially when the statue is reversed; see figure 11).

Surveying the site further and returning to the symbol of the cross held by Cabral, its relevance is important as it was the original name given to the land to which the Portuguese arrived in 1500, first named by D. Manuel I as Vera Cruz (True Cross), then Santa Cruz (Holy Cross), before 'Brazil', from around 1503, taking its name from the brazilwood extracted there (Fausto and Fausto, 2014 [1999], p. 9). The symbol signifies further a crusading symbol for Christ and thus, Brazil as a tribute to God, along with its native inhabitants through their subsequent conversion to the Christian faith. This narrative is clear at Cabral's commemoration, where Christianity is shown as a characteristic feature of the navigator and with the discovery of Brazil.

Taking the symbol of the cross present at the statue and the Igreja da Graça only yards away, the religious meaning involved with the commemoration is then rather strong. Add to this the visual image produced by the spatial elements of the site – the flora section emblematic of the land of Brazil – and what is then portrayed is an arrival in Brazil with a religious impetus. An image produced by the site where Cabral shows his cross not to visitors of the praça in the present, but to the Amerindians of the past at the time of his arrival. This considers the cross held by Cabral as a means of communication to an Amerindian audience unable to speak his language and not as a sign of divine compassion from God, but instead one of godly suffering – an enforced catechisation of the Amerindians to the Portuguese faith. This is evident in the sternness and conviction of Cabral's facial expression and body language, directing the cross to his audience, where a narrative of a benign arrival in Brazil is undermined further by the other object Cabral is holding – his unsheathed sword. In other words, the history traceable at the statue reflects a religious moment accompanied by great suffering.

Further readings of the site may consider the deliberate calçada design of what appears to be 'light rays' belonging to the praça floor. These lines that lead from the statue and across the road (the Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral) to the former

convent and school (EPVT) and the church (the Igreja da Graça) signal these buildings as being connected with the mnemonic landscape dedicated to Cabral, thus contributing to the statue's commemoration but more significantly an underlying religious value concerning the 'discovery' of Brazil. For example, if we take these 'light rays' that meet with past and present buildings of religious purpose and then consider these lines symbolising something profound or divine imbued by the buildings they join, placing them on the opposite side of Cabral's statue so they would now lead from it and towards the flora section of the praça, would establish a vision of some interest – one of colonisation again with the Christian faith. This is insofar as the 'discovery' of Brazil by the Portuguese is inferred as not an exploitative history but rather the enlightenment of the 'uncivilised' peoples therein.[XI] In this way of interpreting the meaning of the 'light rays', additional facets of a commemorative narrative of Cabral's statue become apparent.

Interestingly, the inclusion at the site of the cross, the sword and the 'light rays' should disrupt the benign narrative of Cabral's arrival in Brazil and undermine a celebration of the navigator within this space. However, due to a larger memory network of Cabral that the statue stands at the centre of, a damaging history of colonialism is largely obscured but can be traced and considered through the means I have illustrated (see figure 11), by reversing the position of the statue of Cabral (and the calçada design of 'light rays') in facing the flora section of the site which figuratively represents the land of Brazil.

Figura 8. Pedro Álvares Cabral, onboard a ship, points towards land later named Brazil. The Santarém statue of Cabral, among others in existence, resembles the posture of the navigator shown in this painting by Mello (1887).

Figura 9. Pedro Álvares Cabral and the Portuguese disembark on a shore near the present-day city of Porto Seguro, Southern Bahia, in 1500.
Fonte: Painting by Silva (1900).

Figura 10. Scene from the film (*The Discovery of Brazil*) *O Descobrimento do Brasil* (1937), depicting Pedro Álvares Cabral's arrival in Brazil in 1500.

Figura 11. Transposed photo by author (Andrew Nunes) of the photo by Paulo Gomes Nunes (2012) illustrating the argued visual image of Pedro Álvares Cabral's arrival in Brazil. Here, the statue and pedestal are rotated 180 degrees, thus now reversed from its previous position. Blurred evidence shows the original position – albeit flipped – of the statue. Not modified in this photo is the calçada motif 'light rays'. However, if they were also reversed towards 'Brazil' (the flora sections) in relationship with the held-out cross, the calçada design would further accentuate a notion of a 'civilising' mission in the commemorative display.

The second concern of a celebratory narrative can be determined through considering how the statue of Cabral serves a political and cultural purpose.

Inaugurated during the Estado Novo era, it is inseparable from the regime's ideology that extensively venerated maritime heroes and their achievements, where these 'heroes' are still part of a contemporary commemorative landscape in Portugal. In the case of this statue, this political component is significant because the original (and relocated) statue in Santarém served to sanctify Portugal's political and cultural relationship with Brazil. This is exemplified in the earlier (1963) Belmonte statue of Cabral and his later (1968) Santarém statue, as both were unveiled by Brazilian (former and ruling) Presidents. This suggests that statues such as the one in Santarém were present to remind the Brazilian state, first and foremost, of the Portuguese 'discovery' of Brazil, facilitating the recognition of this history to ensue and to garner reverence from the former colony of Portugal's role thus far in the world. In addition, to further consolidate a 'special relationship' with Brazil due to Portugal's founding involvement with the country and its shared consequences – cultural, linguistic, and religious.

Recent examples that attest to the maintenance of this relationship between Portugal and Brazil were evident in 2019 when a delegation from the Military College of Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) visited the Igreja da Graça and then the Casa do Brasil to pay tribute to Cabral on the morning of the 23 July 2019 (*Mundo Português*, 2019; *Ribatejo News*, 2019). The following year (2020), on the five-hundredth anniversary of Cabral's death, the CMS brought together (in-person and online) a four-day conference from October 8–11, which was held inside the Igreja da Graça.[XII] The live online video recording of the event showed Cabral's floored tomb frequently as it featured in the background where the host and invited speakers were seated. The conference aimed at strengthening the relationship of Santarém (but ultimately Portugal) with Brazil through Cabral and his recognition. However, conversations at the event avoided critical reflections on Brazil's colonial period and the negative impacts the Portuguese brought to the country. Instead, there was an overall politeness among the guests who chose to focus on a prescribed agenda set by the organisers of a shared culture between Portugal and Brazil, namely that of language and music. As such, colonialism was effectively erased from discussions or at minimum, it was a topic glossed over to express only later points of the Portuguese implanting their culture and its infusions with African traditions. In this way, the event similarly reflected the Brazilian state and military

visits to Portugal to Cabral's commemorations in Santarém as a reciprocal and continued friendship between Portugal and Brazil, where Cabral represents a positive history for both nations.

These contemporary events demonstrate that Cabral and his memory remain a valuable political and cultural asset to the city of Santarém, which gives the city international significance despite its peripheral position in contrast to larger cities such as Lisbon and Porto. However, these events also reaffirm *Lusotropicalism* and a sanitised myth of Cabral's 'discovery' of Brazil,[XIII] where today, commemorations by military youth and other organised events at the statue and the wider site demonstrate that the navigator is not forgotten but is someone well remembered, serving seemingly an identical commemorative role since the Estado Novo period.

These two considerations – (1) the statue and the surrounding spatial elements of the commemorative site combined in forming a visual image (reversed) of Cabral's arrival in Brazil, and what this signifies about the Portuguese arrival; and (2) the political and cultural significance of Cabral's commemoration, built and installed during the Estado Novo era, along with the ongoing relationship the site maintains with Brazil – all contributes to establishing a celebratory narrative about Cabral within the public space. I take these considerations as part of an official narrative: how Cabral's remembrance has been determined by the Portuguese state from the time of his statue's inauguration and relocation, and continues in the present through the CMS, that maintains Cabral's commemoration in the city. However, this narrative of Cabral does not communicate much about his life other than that he is venerated for 'discovering' Brazil. Therefore, this narrative by the commemorative site with evident omissions begins to illustrate why the commemoration has come to elicit a critical response, such as an intervention of graffiti, to expose different narratives.

CONTROVERSY AND CONTESTING THE COMMEMORATIVE SITE

Although the commemoration of Cabral in Santarém can be critically read to expose silences within its presented narrative (as I have shown), controversy attributed to Cabral is still not straightforward regarding his so-called 'discovery'. The reason for this is that, although he was in what became known as Brazil, he never had any further involvement with this territory; he had left for India only after spending some eight to ten days (Disney, 2009, p. 205; Jakub Basista in

Stein, 2017, p. 400). Therefore, the subsequent events of colonialism in Brazil, being attributed entirely to Cabral alone, should be closely evaluated. This is especially true considering how controversial Cabral's time was in India.[XIV] Nonetheless, it remains interesting that subsequent events in Brazil are generally viewed as more controversial and are attributed to Cabral, rather than events that occurred in India under his command. This reflects a rationale that argues that Cabral, as the 'discoverer' of Brazil and thus the country's 'founder', is also, consequently, the destroyer of Brazil's native civilisation(s) and natural environment. This type of perspective leads Cabral to become highly emblematic as a major proponent of Portuguese colonialism, whereby postcolonial criticism can be easily levelled at him through this rationale that shifts him from a navigator (and diplomat) to an offending colonialist. In following such a perspective, it then points to Cabral's arrival in Brazil as an apocalyptic catastrophe for the Amerindians (Fausto and Fausto, 2014 [1999], p. 8). That, with the Portuguese presence in Brazil, tensions rose into violent conflicts with the native population (Disney, 2009, pp. 216–7). And considering that Amerindians who could not escape into the Brazilian interior and remained in the coastal regions were de facto slaves (Ibid., p. 217). Moreover, natives who cooperated with the Portuguese incurred significant cultural and spiritual costs, as cooperation led to a catechisation and 'civilising', ending pre-existing ways of Amerindian life (Schwarcz and Starling, 2018, p. 25). Considering further, that it is estimated that an Amerindian population of several millions existed in Brazil when Cabral arrived at the turn of the sixteenth century, that by the twenty-first century, this number had been reduced to 200,000 at worst, and 800,000 at best (Ibid.; Fausto and Fausto, 2014 [1999], p. 9).

In short, Cabral's controversy in connection with Brazil is an acknowledgement of what his 'discovery' meant for the future of the Amerindians rather than his direct involvement in the territory. It is this perspective, which appears to be the most pertinent held, demonstrated by the critical responses public commemorations of Cabral have received in recent years,[XV] where, among them, was the graffitiing of his statue in Santarém.

DECOLONISING THROUGH POLITICAL GRAFFITI

Figura 12. Close-up of the graffiti on the statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral.
Fonte: Photo reproduced from *Correio do Ribatejo* (2019).

During the weekend of 22–23 June 2019, the statue of Pedro Álvares Cabral in Santarém was graffitied by unknown actor(s). In total, three words were spray-painted in green onto the statue's pedestal, within the space between the inscriptions of Cabral's name and his 'achievement' ('DESCOBRIDOR DO BRASIL'). It read, 'COLONIALISMO É FASCiSMO' ('COLONIALISM IS FASCiSM').[XVI]

At the time of this intervention, the letter 'R' from the statue's inscription reading '…BRASIL' was also missing. However, this did not appear to be an alteration made by those who graffitied the statue, but rather an existing issue with the inscription itself.[XVII] In response to the graffitiing of the statue, the CMS denounced the act as vandalism and called upon the public to respect the city's heritage (*Correio do Ribatejo*, 2019). Deployed by unknown actor(s), the presence of graffiti on the statue of Cabral communicated a succinct political statement. Understood as political graffiti, its close reading uncovers a critique of three intersecting periods. The first, 1500 (the statue's presented history); the second, 1968 (the authors of the statue's narrative); and the third, 2019 (the statue's preservers). This is apparent through the word 'FASCiSM' graffitied on the pedestal of Cabral's statue, which links all three periods together. Illuminating such a reading, beginning with the first period (1500), we must

consider how fascism is not fully removed from Cabral's lifetime despite the political ideology only being imagined as late as the 1890s (Paxton, 2005 [2004], p. 3). Therefore, it is seemingly misplaced in any relationship with Cabral and his 'discovery' of Brazil. However, it may connect with this period and him in a broader conceptual sense. This is possible when considering fascism, defined by American political scientist Robert Paxton, as an 'obsessive preoccupation with […] purity […] pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical […] restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion' (Ibid., p. 218). This is a definition resembling Portuguese sixteenth-century exploits of colonialism, where, like fascism, it can be characterised as external expansion and even a preoccupation with purity (*limpeza de sangue*), and where excesses of organised violence conducted by absolute monarchies were the totalitarian regimes of their time.[XVIII] In this sense, Cabral's exploits may be linked to notions of fascism. What is more, the word fascism on the statue in connection with the next period (1968), furthers a political message that the intervention produced around this term in connection with a colonial past of the first period (1500). For instance, the text 'FASCiSM' graffitied on the statue is a direct reference to the regime that installed Cabral's bronze representation in Santarém, prompting a reminder of this past of 1968, when the Estado Novo – an authoritarian regime marked by fascist characteristics – possessed and prolonged a colonial empire right up until 1974.[XIX] In this way, the full political text written by an intervention of graffiti appears to argue (vice versa) that *fascism is colonialism* as colonialism was a feature of the Portuguese Estado Novo. Moreover, 'FASCiSM' graffitied was a pejorative, seemingly directed at the current Portuguese ruling regime in preserving the statue and its commemorative function in ways indistinguishable from the former regime, thereby deeming the present ruling order to be fascist.

This close reading illustrates how the political statement produced by unknown actor(s) directed attention to an ideology of fascism despite it having no direct relationship with Cabral's lifetime or the subsequent colonisation of Brazil. In addition, how it accused and tied together three time periods for its argued wrongs, representing an anti-fascist and anti-colonial critique of a long and unresolved historical thread involving Cabral and his public commemoration. In this way, the 2019 graffitiing of Cabral's statue formed a three-pronged critical recognition of Brazil's 'discovery' and the ongoing commemoration of this achievement. One that spoke not only of Cabral's presence in Santarém but also his presence throughout Portugal, where sites in his memory inaugurated

by the Estado Novo are provocative of both memories of colonialism and fascism, and as having been uncritically inherited and preserved by contemporary administrations. As such, the intervention produced a clear counter-celebration of the historical figure that confronted his contemporary veneration. This exposed three main controversies.

The first controversy concerns Brazil and its native inhabitants; the second, the Estado Novo regime's commemorative practices; and the third, the current Portuguese regime that maintains the site today. Through graffitiing the statue, thus reinscribing it with a political text, a different narrative was produced, one aimed at facilitating a discussion on the three controversies, ultimately condemning Cabral as someone unworthy of public commemoration.

In addition to the graffitiing of Cabral's statue, it is worth noting another sort of intervention that should not be overlooked at the statue that appears to have pre-dated its 2019 graffitiing. Coincidentally, working in tandem with the political graffiti, the letter 'R' from the word 'BRASIL' was missing on the inscription of the statue's pedestal that reads 'DESCOBRIDOR DO BRASIL'. Absent at the time of the intervention, it provided another literal counter-narrative. Its effect as a new narrative at the statue was that Cabral's 'discovery' was not of Brazil but instead of the herb basil (in its English spelling). The alteration of the original inscription of the statue produced a humorous reconfiguration of Cabral's public commemoration, where the new reading of the statue's inscription equated Cabral's major accomplishment to something much more banal. Furthermore, the missing letter 'R' represents a continuation of the contention that the statue of Cabral appears to provoke, because prior to it being graffitied, the statue's inscription had been repeatedly subjected to damage.[xx] Interestingly, these small acts have never been directed at the name of Cabral inscribed, but only to his celebrated 'achievement' of Brazil. Overall, this other disruption to the statue – just as the larger intervention of graffitiing it – indicates further subversion of Cabral's commemoration in Santarém, thus reflecting the navigator as a personage contested and associated with a difficult Portuguese heritage.

Returning to the graffitiing of Cabral's statue, the political text produced by this intervention showed its value in exposing three controversies, thus positioning itself as an informative piece enough that it should be considered separate from perceptions that such an act was simply vandalism. Moreover, it was apparent

through the appearance and message produced that the intervention was not conducted for artistic purposes. Rather, it was a remonstration to provide an immediate political commentary for public reading, serving only to vocalise current concerns over Cabral's public commemoration and to enact discussions that may lead to change. However, discussions about the statue in the aftermath of the intervention did not progress significantly beyond official denunciations, with authorities asserting (as mentioned earlier, however, to reiterate here in other words) that 'Santarém has to be respected' and that this act was not art, thus a work of vandalism (*Correio do Ribatejo*, 2019; *O Mirante*, 2019).

Today, the statue of Cabral remains largely undisturbed in Santarém as it has since the 1960s. Even during BLM protests in Portugal during the summer of 2020, the statue stood without incident. Therefore, contention over the statue of Cabral in 2019 – through an intervention of graffitiing – is not only unresolved but seemingly dormant since during the global upsurge in anti-racism activism, it was expected that further interventions to Cabral's commemoration in Santarém would have occurred but did not. However, since the commemorative network of Cabral is sustained in Santarém, future interventions may be provoked and directed at his statue there.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Through the deployment of graffiti at Cabral's statue, argued as producing a political text, which expressed anti-fascist sentiments of relevance to prevailing legacies of Portugal's former authoritarian regime, this intervention also reflected other controversies associated with a history the sites signified explicitly in connection with colonialism. Thereby, despite the statements of anti-fascism graffitied, the political text applied to the statue's pedestal was also concerned with a decolonising agenda, which sought to rectify the disseminated narratives in commemorating Cabral through a public critique that questions the history associated with him. In this way, the intervention served as a method of decolonising through reinscription: the reinscribing of the statue with a new text that rewrites an authorised celebratory narrative of Portuguese colonialism found at the commemoration, exposing different memories and histories. This, in turn, publicised aspects that the statue usually silences as a form of counter-celebration, thus protesting the site's existence. In this sense, the presence of a political text graffitied onto the statue formed a kind of textual *marginalia*,

subverting its original narrative due to the applied text being placed in juxtaposition (literally at the margins) of the statue's original readable signs.[XXI]

Furthermore, although unknown, the actor(s) who deployed political graffiti at the statue of Cabral reflect the known strategy and motives of anti-racist activists and associated movements seeking to expose contemporary legacies of colonialism (and slavery). Of particular interest is their choice of this type of intervention, as it shows a desire for the permanence of their political statements as long-lasting text. This is clear in their use of spray paint, which can only be removed from surfaces with specialised cleaning agents. However, in creating awareness about Cabral's statue through political graffiti, remonstrating the commemoration as disseminating problematic memories of Portugal's colonial and authoritarian past, the intervention was also shown as being negatively responded to by authorities as a form of vandalism. Therefore, the political text deployed were soon removed due to a perceived criminal intent. Nonetheless, it was an act that I argue should be viewed contrary to its dominantly held perception, for the presence of applied texts at difficult and contested statues demonstrates veritable tensions that these structures are capable of provoking, which has uses in understanding the past more thoroughly than commemorations usually allow. Moreover, the failure of authorities to comprehend the problematic nature of Cabral's statue is largely typical of wider failures by the state in coming to terms critically with Portugal's colonial past.

Following these considerations, and with what I outlined when introducing this intervention at the start of this article, when deployed at commemorative sites, political graffiti should be understood not as a form of vandalism but as an expression beneficial for their discussion and perhaps even resolution. It is ostensibly not the intention of this intervention to ever seriously damage statues, but only to write onto them new inscriptions, which reveal valuable historical contexts targeted commemorations' silence.[XXII] In this sense, leaving political texts to remain at statues is perhaps one of the ways that authorities could begin to deal with difficult heritage without any effort. As commemorations in this state could become greater discussion points, where a permanent textual *marginalia* would work to inform audiences of the fuller histories attributable to targeted statues. However, this is not something that has thus far been permitted and is unlikely to be an accepted practice in the future. Therefore, despite the lack of freedom to graffiti statues, it is not likely that such an intervention will cease occurring in Portugal, considering the controversy they generate. As such, since

authorities fail to understand the core impetus driving an intervention of graffitiing statues that commemorate imperial-colonial pasts, future deployments of political graffiti will continue to conflict with its official response, which views it as a form of vandalism. Hence, political texts produced will likely always be ephemeral, for as soon as they are applied, they are removed, which, in turn, prevents former statements from being able to counter an original celebratory narrative of the commemoration targeted. Audiences then are unable to reflect on a new text introduced and to consider it, as what is lost is an opportunity to publicly engage with statues anew – to evaluate the place of Cabral within Portugal's commemorative landscape. This raises the question of how much impact an intervention of graffitiing statues has in creating meaningful change, when the counter-narrative it produces mostly lives on only in the photos that record it. This is something that must be recognised as a drawback of this type of intervention, despite it being no fault of its own, but rather that of the actions taken by authorities concerning it. Nonetheless, the act of deploying political graffiti onto the Santarém statue of Cabral still provides evidence of unresolved tensions over difficult heritage – particularly regarding whom Portugal has long chosen to commemorate within its urban centres: figures commonly associated with imperial exploits that should be increasingly at odds with present-day post-colonial values.

At this point, I hope it is evident that political graffiti deployed against a commemoration can play a critical role in enabling historical reflection – not only by raising public awareness of difficult heritage tied to colonialism, as exemplified by Cabral's statue, but also by contributing to the ongoing debate about the colonial past and its enduring legacies.

NOTES

[I] My use of 'difficult heritage' throughout this article is in accordance with Sharon Macdonald's (2009) conceptualisation of the term, recognising her theoretical framework as applicable to commemorative sites – particularly statues dedicated to contested historical figures associated with colonialism – which simultaneously serve to remember and to forget selected (hi)stories, and are deeply entwined with constructions of national identity.

[II] A history of graffiti is beyond the scope of this article, however, long since ancient civilisation have people marked messages on walls (Casino, 2019, p. 224). As a modern urban phenomenon with aerosol spray paint, it emerged in the 1970s alongside hip-hop subculture (Campos et al., 2021, p. 7). For an extensive history of graffiti from the prehistoric to the present, see McDonald (2013).

[III] The date of Cabral's birth and death are unknown (João, 1999, p. 31 & 2002, p. 102). However, a letter from his eldest son Fernão Álvares Cabral (1514–1571) suggests that he died sometime before November 1520 (Greenlee, 2016 [1937], p. xlv). I note Cabral's place of birth and family's social standing from Disney (2009, p. 204) and Greenlee (2016 [1937], pp. xxxix–xl).

[IV] Cabral was appointed by D. Manuel I (1469–1521) as a naval fleet commander in 1499, tasked with leading a second Portuguese expedition to India to improve commercial relations with the Zamorin of Calicut (Greenlee, 2016 [1937], pp. xxxix–xli). This was because Portugal's first negotiations with the Zamorin through Vasco da Gama were more than difficult (Disney, 2009, pp. 123–4). Cabral left Portugal on 9 March 1500, where later – redirected by contrary winds and currents southwest beyond the Canary Islands – the Portuguese spotted land (the Brazilian coast near the present-day city of Porto Seguro in Southern Bahia) on 22 April 1500, that would later be known as 'Brazil' (Schwarcz and Starling, 2018, pp. 8–9; Disney, 2009, p. 205).

[V] Scholars who argue the discovery of Brazil as accidental include Saraiva (1997, p. 199) and Jakub Basista in Stein (2017, p. 400). Of the opinion that the discovery of Brazil was deliberate (pre-planned), see Disney (2009, p. 205).

[VI] This museum is set within the former home of the Cabral family (Aldeias Históricas de Portugal, n.d.). Thereby, it exists as an additional memory site for Cabral, beyond the museum's function, which is already a memory site of this figure. The date I note of the museum's opening is according to *Jornal do Fundão* (2018 [2012]).

[VII] To avoid confusion, from now on I use the Portuguese word for public square 'praça' as the irregular shape of where Cabral's commemoration stands in Santarém is not a space that the English word suggests. Thereby, I take into consideration for purposes of clarity here, and without going into etymology, that the English wording of '(public) square' may be confusing regarding this site, for it evokes a different shape that is not present.

[VIII] The calçada is a traditional-style pavement laid down throughout Portugal and consists of two different coloured stones – light sandstone and dark granite. These designs are said to have been first laid in Portugal in 1842, with a school dedicated to its art and preservation established in 1986, see Beckett (2019).

[IX] In his fifties, Caminha accompanied Cabral from Portugal to Brazil and then India to record events for the Portuguese Crown (Schwarcz and Starling, 2018, p. 10). He was the first Portuguese author of first-hand accounts of Cabral's arrival in Brazil in his famous letter to D. Manuel I (Greenlee, 2016 [1937], pp. 3–33). This letter (unpublished until 1773) is regarded as the 'birth certificate' of Brazil (Schwarcz and Starling, 2018, p. 10).

[X] This quote from Caminha's letter also accompanies the statue of Cabral in Belmonte, where it is inscribed on a similar rustic-stylised stone slab that also stands aside from a statue of the man.

[XI] Figure 11 provides a little more on this conceptual idea.

[XII] The event featured several Portuguese and Brazilian authors, journalists, comedians and musicians. Most notable speakers were the scholar and author Onésimo Teotónio Almeida and the musician and former Brazilian Minster of Culture Gilberto Gil, for more, see CMS (2021).

[XIII] *Lusotropicalism* is a theory coined in 1951 by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, emerging from his writings that portrayed Portuguese colonialism as exceptionally humane and racially harmonious. Embraced by Portugal's Estado Novo regime and incorporated into state doctrine in the 1960s, it was employed to justify continued colonial rule by framing Portugal as a unique, multicultural empire free of racism (Bastos and Castelo, 2024).

[XIV] In short, ordered to India for diplomatic purposes, Cabral's ultimate objective was in fact to wage war on Arab shipping vessels, so the Portuguese could gain control over trade in the Indian Ocean (Crowley, 2016 [2015], pp. 106–7). Furthermore, he was to deliver a message to all pagans and Muslims in the region, that they either convert to Christianity or die! (Cliff, 2013 [2011], p. 282). During this time, Cabral responded to a massacre of his men with unequalled violence, which concluded with a massive naval bombardment of Calicut (Ibid., pp. 285–6). Therefore, controversy attributed to Cabral appears better placed on what transpired in India by Cabral's command rather than events in Brazil, where he was absent and held no authority after leaving this territory for India.

[XV] For instance, in Brazil the (1900) Rio de Janeiro monument to Cabral standing in the Largo da Glória was graffitied and set on fire in 2021 (Ferreira and Lusa, 2021); along with a statue of Cabral in the same year being covered up with black material in Porto Seguro (*A Gazeta Bahia*, 2021).

[XVI] I retain the style choice of the intervention's author here and in later instances that discuss the graffitied text. Thus, I capitalise all letters aside from the 'i' in the word 'FASCiSMO' as they have done.

[XVII] A review of photos from different years shows this inscription has been continually damaged. The statue seen in 2012, shows two letters missing from the inscription, see figure 11. Another photo shows the 'R' in 'BRASIL' already faded and only just about visible in 2016, see figure 2.

[XVIII] *Limpeza de sangue* (purity of blood) was a preoccupation at its height in the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries in the Iberian Peninsula of *conversos* (Catholics of original Jewish origin), *moriscos* (Catholics of Muslim ancestry) and (in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies) Amerindian and African slave converts to Catholicism. A prime concern revolved around these communities being unfaithful to Christianity although having been converted because they were of 'tainted' blood lineage due to their ancestral origins and former religion meaning they were still conceived as impure and not morally suitable to be upstanding members of the Catholic community. This obsession in Portugal led by Old Christians of 'pure blood' resulted in racist and social exclusionary laws (Olival, 2015). For a debate on the purity of blood in the context of the Inquisition 1478–1834, see Bethencourt (2009, pp. 326–29). Conversely, it is a history of discrimination that resonates in part with fascism of the twentieth century and asserted theories of the Aryan race as those with the purest 'blood' and 'spirit' (Staudenmaier, 2020).

[XIX] Relevant here, I wish to draw attention to the debate on whether the Estado Novo was a fascist regime. Among contrary opinions against the regime as being fascist were, firstly, by its premier Salazar. However dubious, Salazar did not view his regime as fascist, arguing it was an Italian phenomenon and thus, not possibly Portuguese (Derrick, 1939, pp. 135–6). This stance is reinforced since political formations of overt pro-fascists in Portugal were expelled by Salazar, namely, Roland Preto's National Syndicalists (Pinto, 2000). Moreover, given French historian Jacuqes Georgel's view of the Estado Novo as conceivably a fascist regime, he still argued it was empty of fascist attributes reflecting the complexity in defining the regime (Georgel, 1981, p. 302). As such, Portugal's experiment with fascism in the early twentieth century is somewhat opaque or at least considered modest in comparison to other European fascist regimes, with its most overt signs largely recognised as being diluted post-1945 following the fall of European fascism. Nonetheless, the reason why the Estado Novo is generally considered a fascist regime is that in spite of the regime's exaltation of the bucolic rather than a neoclassical modern aesthetic that characterised Italian and German fascism, it featured likewise a secret police force (the PIDE: Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado) and a stylised paramilitary youth movement known as the Mocidade Portuguesa, that was largely identical to fascist Italy's Opera Nazionale Balilla and Germany's Hitler Youth. These in addition to other fascist elements exercised in Portugal of a single-party political system and state censorship.

[xx] This is clear in various photos of the statue's pedestal when its inscription has had letters removed at different times, see figures 13 and 14.

[xxi] This is similar to image-based marginalia found in medieval manuscripts but is far more decipherable due to it being word-based. However, unlike this medieval form that often served as a mnemonic device, even reinforcing the original message of texts through the use of surrounding images, it is my interest of a marginalia of political texts that are written instead, that works to explicitly interfere with such a device (the word-based source or commemorative site) in which it has been deployed onto – to effect its function (a remembrance). This is something then, which is perhaps more similar to other written marginalia, such as annotations in the margins of borrowed library textbooks scrawled by anonymous students. This is to the extent that, it is also an act of disobedience – since it is prohibited to write in borrowed textbooks the same as on commemorative sites, such as statues. Moreover, these writings in textbooks can also be subversive, presenting expressions of disagreement with a source and its author, or even other opinions found in other students' annotations. However, these annotations, much like image marginalia in medieval manuscripts as previously stated, are generally unlike political texts applied on statues, for they mostly work to emphasise points of the word-based source to which they are applied. Thereby, they reinforce its original meaning in addition to being a tangible *loci* where others can similarly see an additional perspective in favour of the source's value and use. In all, this contrasts with a marginalia in the form of political texts at statues, as this political form is nearly always of expressions of disdain and criticism. Thereby, it differentiates from the two other forms, however, it is still comparable due to their materialised positioning as another form of communication concerning a source. Overall, I make a comparison of text-based political graffiti as marginalia to statues here, through an understanding of other marginalia such as its image-based form in medieval contexts, and what they served in doing, illuminated by Camille (1992) and Green (2020); and its (deviant) academic form in the context of the university library textbook by Attenborough (2011).

[xxii] The idea that those deploying an intervention of graffiti would not have chosen this method if they sought to directly destroy a statue or monument; it is insufficient for such a task in immediate ways. However, as paint that is sprayed into legible texts and thus language, it subsequently calls upon others to do so, or for authorities to legally remove such sites.

REFERENCES

A GAZETA BAHIA. Índios Protestam em Porto Seguro, por Marco Temporal e Enrolam Estátua de Cabral. 8 September 2021. Available at: <https://agazetabahia.com/noticias/geral/31431/indios-protestam-em-porto-seguro-por-marco-temporal-e-enrolam-estatua-de-cabral-08-09-2021>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

ACCIAIUOLI, Margarida. *Exposições do Estado Novo: 1934–1940*. Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1998.

ALDEIAS HISTÓRICAS DE PORTUGAL, Museum of the Discoveries Belmonte, n.d.; Available at: <https://aldeiashistoricasdeportugal.com/en/local/museu-dos-descobrimentos>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

ANDREWS, Kehinde. *The New Age of Empire: How Racism and Colonialism Still Rule the World*. London: Allen Lane, 2021.

ATTENBOROUGH, Frederick Thomas, 'I Don't F***ing Care!' Marginalia and the (Textual) Negotiation of an Academic Identity by University Students. *Discourse & Communication*, v. 5, n. 2, pp. 99–121, 2011.

AWAD, Sarah H.; WAGONER, Brady (eds.). *Street Art of Resistance*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

BASTOS, Cristiana; CASTELO, Cláudia. Lusotropicalism. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. 21 August 2024. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.1486>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

BECKETT, Kathleen. In Lisbon, a Carpet of Stone Beneath Their Feet. *New York Times*. 30 March 2019. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/30/fashion/pavements-limestone-lisbon-portugal.html>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

BETHENCOURT, Francisco. *The Inquisition: A Global History, 1478–1834*. Trans. Jean Birrell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

CAMILLE, Michael. *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*. London: Reaktion Books, 1992.

CAMPOS, Ricardo; PAVONI, Andrea; ZAIMAKIS, Yiannis. *Political Graffiti in Critical Times: The Aesthetics of Street Politics*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2021.

CASINO, Kylie I.; Graffiti as Art as Language: The Logic of a Modern Language. *Philosophy Study*, v. 9, n. 5, pp. 223–32, 2019.

CLIFF, Nigel. *The Last Crusade: The Epic Voyages of Vasco da Gama*. London: Atlantic Books, 2013 [2011].

CMS (Câmara Municipal de Santarém). Casa do Brasil / Casa Pedro Álvares Cabral, n.d.b. Available at: <https://www.cm-santarem.pt/descobrir-santarem/o-que-visitar/item/1177-casa-do-brasil>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

———, Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Graça. N.d.a. Available at: <https://www.cm-santarem.pt/descobrir-santarem/o-que-visitar/item/1188-igreja-de-nossa-senhora-da-graca>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

———, Por Terras de Cabral – Santarém. 2021. Available at: <https://www.cm-santarem.pt/?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=3871&Itemid=1347>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

COHEN, Stanley. Property Destruction: Motives and Meanings. In Colin Ward (ed.). *Vandalism*. London: Architectural Press, 1973.

CORREIO DO RIBATEJO. Estátua de Pedro Alvares Cabral Alvo de Vandalismo. 24 June 2019. Available at: <https://correiodoribatejo.pt/estatua-de-pedro-alvares-cabral-vandalizada>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

CROWLEY, Roger. *Conquerors: How Portugal Forged the First Global Empire*. London: Faber and Faber, 2016 [2015].

DERRICK, Michael. *The Portugal of Salazar*. New York: Campion Books, 1939.

DISNEY, Anthony R.; *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire: From Beginnings to 1807, v. 2: The Portuguese Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

EPVT (Escola Professional do Vale do Tejo). Instalações e Recursos. N.d.a. Available at: <http://www.epvt.pt/escola/instalacoes-e-recursos.html>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

———, Quem Somos. N.d.b. Available at: <http://www.epvt.pt/escola/quem-somos.html>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

FAUSTO, Boris; FAUSTO, Sergio. *A Concise History of Brazil*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014 [1999].

FERREIRA, Beatriz; LUSA – Agência de Notícias de Portugal. Estátua do Navegador Português Pedro Álvares Cabral Incendiada no Brasil por Grupo Indígena. *Observador*. 25 August 2021. Available at: <https://observador.pt/2021/08/25/estatua-do-navegador-

portugues-pedro-alvares-cabral-incendiada-no-brasil-por-grupo-indigena>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

FERRELL, Jeff. Foreword: Graffiti, Street Art and the Politics of Complexity. In Jeffrey Ian Ross (ed.). *Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016. Pp. xxx–xxxviii.

GEORGEL, Jacques. *Le Salazarisme : Histoire et Bilan 1926–1974*. Paris : Éditions Cujas, 1981.

GREEN, Johanna. Medieval Marginalia: Exploring 'Doodle' From the Middle Ages. *History Extra*. 24 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/medieval-marginalia-doodles-scribes-books>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

GREENLEE, William Brooks (ed.). *The Voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral to Brazil and India: From Contemporary Documents and Narratives*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016 [1937].

JOÃO, Maria Isabel. Memória e Império: Comemorações em Portugal (1880–1960). Doctoral thesis. Aberta University Lisbon, 1999.

———, Public Memory and Power in Portugal (1880–1960). Trans. Landeg White. *Portuguese Studies*, v. 18, pp. 96–120, 2002.

JORNAL DO FUNDÃO. Museu dos Descobrimentos 'À Descoberta do Novo Mundo'. *E-Cultura*. 4 July 2018 (6 December 2012). Available at: <https://www.e-cultura.pt/patrimonio_item/13804>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

JORNAL DO SOL. Suvaco do Cabral Encerra Folia dos Blocos no Carnaval 2020 de Porto Seguro. 6 March 2020. Available at: <https://www.jornaldosol.com.br/index.php/component/content/article/104-carnaval-2020/4403-suvaco-do-cabral-encerra-folia-dos-blocos-no-carnaval-2020-de-porto-seguro?Itemid=101> [article no longer available, view it archived on Wayback Machine, 2 December 2020: https://web.archive.org/web/20201202155911/https://www.jornaldosol.com.br/index.php/component/content/article/104-carnaval-2020/4403-suvaco-do-cabral-encerra-folia-dos-blocos-no-carnaval-2020-de-porto-seguro?Itemid=101]. Accessed 4 June 2025.

MACDONALD, Sharon. *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2009.

MARTIN, Geoffrey Haward. The Town as Palimpsest. In Harold James Dyos (ed.). *The Study of Urban History*. London: Edward Arnold, 1968.

MCDONALD, Fiona. *The Popular History of Graffiti: From the Ancient World to the Present*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013.

MEMÓRIAS REVELADAS. AI-5: Nunca Mais. 17 December 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/memoriasreveladas/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/destaques/ai-5-nunca-mais>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

MUNDO PORTUGUÊS. Comitiva do Brasil Homenageou Pedro Álvares Cabral em Santarém. 25 May 2019. Available at: <https://www.mundoportugues.pt/comitiva-do-brasil-homenageou-pedro-alvares-cabral-em-santarem>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

O MIRANTE. Vandalismo no Centro Histórico de Santarém. 24 June 2019. Available at: <https://omirante.pt/sociedade/2019-06-24-Vandalismo-no-centro-historico-de-Santarem>. Accessed 4 June 2025.

OLIVAL, Fernanda. Questões Raciais? Questões Étnico-Religiosas? A Limpeza de Sangue e a Exclusão Social (Portugal e Conquistas) nos Séculos XVI a XVIII. In Isabel Corrêa da Silva, Simone Frangella, Sofia Aboim and Susana de Matos Viegas (eds.). *Ciências Sociais Cruzadas Entre Portugal e o Brasil: Trajetos e Investigações no ICS*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2015, pp. 339–59.

PAXTON, Robert O.; *The Anatomy of Fascism*. London: Penguin Books, 2005 [2004].

PINTO, António Costa. *The Blue Shirts: Portuguese Fascists and The New State*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

RIBATEJO NEWS. Santarém: Militares Brasileiros Homenagearam Pedro Álvares Cabral. 24 May 2019. Available at: <https://ribatejonews.net/2019/05/24/santarem-militares-brasileiros-homenagearam-pedro-alvares-cabral>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

RYAN, Holly Eva. *Political Street Art: Communication, Culture and Resistance in Latin America*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.

SARAIVA, José Hermano. *Portugal: A Companion History*. Eds. Ian Robertson and L. C. Taylor. Manchester: Carcanet, 1997.

SASSOON, Rosemary; GAUR, Albertine. *Signs, Symbols and Icons: Pre-history to the Computer-Age*. Exeter: Intellect, 1997.

SCHWARCZ, Lilia Moritz; STARLING, Heloisa Maria Murgel. *Brazil: A Biography*. London: Allen Lane, 2018.

SLEIGHT, Simon. Memory and the City. In Anna Maerker, Simon Sleight and Adam Sutcliffe (eds.). *History, Memory and Public Life: The Past in the Present*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, pp. 126–58.

STAUDENMAIER, Peter. Racial Ideology Between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Julius Evola and the Aryan Myth, 1933–43. *Journal of Contemporary History*, v. 55, n. 3, pp. 473–91, 2020.

STEIN, Stephen K. (ed.). *The Sea in World History: Exploration, Travel, and Trade, v. I: Ancient Egypt Through the First Global Age*. California: ABC-CLIO, 2017.

TURISMO DE PORTUGAL. Igreja da Graça – Santarém. Visit Portugal. 2013. Available at: <https://www.visitportugal.com/en/content/igreja-da-graca-santarem>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

VANDERVEEN, Gabry; EIJK, Gwen van. Criminal but Beautiful: A Study on Graffiti and the Role of Value Judgements and Context in Perceiving Disorder. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, v. 22, pp. 107–25, 2016.

YOUNG, Alison. *Street Art, Public City: Law, Crime and the Urban Imagination*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2014.

ZAIMAKIS, Yiannis. Youth Precariat Worlds and Protest Graffiti in the Dystopia of the Greek Economic Crisis: A Cross-Disciplinary Perspective. *Punctum*, v. 2, n. 2, pp. 66–84, 2016.

ZIELENIEC, Andrzej. The Right to Write the City: Lefebvre and Graffiti, *Environnement Urbain*, v. 10, 2016. Available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/eue/1421>. Accessed on: 4 June 2025.

Andrew Nunes: is a doctoral candidate (award pending) in Portuguese Studies at King's College London. His completed thesis examines commemoration culture in Portugal, focused on the relationships between monuments, places, and their critical reception by actors pursuing anti-racist and decolonising agendas. He holds both a Master of Research and Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies from Birkbeck College, University of London. As a teacher, he has led undergraduate seminars on pertinent contemporary issues, ranging from the present state of museums and heritage to debates on culture and activism. More recently, he has guided students through select literary and cultural productions that address historical and current socio-political issues across the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds.

Text received on: June 5th, 2025

Text approved on: August 16th, 2025