



João Barbosa Rodrigues: lore and practices Allegory of the *palma mater*: an invented tradition

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Abstract

Some actions made by the botanist João Barbosa Rodrigues, during his term as director of the Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro (1890-1909), indicate an exaltation of the Brazilian Monarchy. In the history of the institution published in *Hortus fluminensis* (1894), Rodrigues described a scene in which the regent prince John VI, when solemnly founding the garden in 1809, would have planted an imperial palm with his own hands, a specimen known as *palma mater*. The period was full of political tension, due to the sudden change of government with the Proclamation of the Republic, on November, 15, 1889. In this article we discuss whether the name of Rodrigues was a consensus for director of the garden. Although he was recognized in Brazil and abroad as an important Brazilian scientist, he was a steadfast Monarchist. In this context, we present a critical analysis of the discourse involving the *palma mater*. The results suggest this discourse is historically unlikely, leading us to believe it is the case of an 'invented tradition' by the new director, expressed as an allegory with political goal. Other studies are necessary to better understand his goals, his interlocutors and possible reactions provoked by such manifestation.

Key words: Brazilian monarchy, first Brazilian republic, imperial palm, João Barbosa Rodrigues, Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden.

Resumo

Algumas ações realizadas pelo botânico João Barbosa Rodrigues, durante sua gestão à frente do Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro (1890-1909), indicam uma exaltação à Monarquia brasileira. No histórico da instituição publicado no *Hortus Fluminensis* (1894), Rodrigues enunciou uma cena em que o príncipe regente D. João VI, ao fundar solenemente o Jardim em 1809, teria plantado com suas próprias mãos uma palmeira imperial, espécime conhecido como *palma mater*. O momento era cercado de tensões políticas, em decorrência da súbita mudança na forma de governo com a Proclamação da República em 15 de novembro de 1889. Discute-se aqui se Rodrigues teria sido um nome de consenso para o cargo. Embora reconhecido no país e no exterior como um cientista brasileiro de relevo, havia se declarado um convicto monarquista. Nesse contexto, apresenta-se uma análise crítica do discurso envolvendo a *palma mater*. Os resultados sugerem que ele é historicamente inverossímil, conduzindo-nos à percepção de que se trata de uma 'tradição inventada' pelo novo diretor, expressa na forma de uma alegoria e com fins políticos. Outros estudos são necessários para compreender melhor quais eram os seus objetivos, quem eram seus interlocutores e que reações teria provocado com tal manifesto.

Palavras-chave: monarquia brasileira, Primeira República, palmeira-imperial João Barbosa Rodrigues, Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro.

The Republic was proclaimed on October 15, 1889, ending the Monarchy in Brazil. Three months later, in January, 1890, the *Gazeta de Notícias* newspaper would report that the botanist João Barbosa Rodrigues had been designated by

the Provisional Government to lead the Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro¹ (JBRJ) an institution that was and still would be subject to the Ministry

¹ *Gazeta de Notícias*, ed. 15, Jan. 15, 1890, p.1.

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of Agriculture, Commerce and Public Works (MACPW) for quite some time. Nevertheless, the nomination would only be made effective on April, 25, by the hands of Francisco Glicério, the third minister in the office, and Rodrigues would only take charge of the JBRJ on June 1st, delayed by the need to move with his numerous family from Manaus to the contry's political center of Rio de Janeiro.

The trip on board of the packet boat *Alagoas* reached São Luís do Maranhão on May 19th, a stopover which Barbosa Rodrigues put on good use to visit the newsroom of the Pacotilha newspaper, where he left one of his books, the *Muyrakytã*². A week later, he would do the same thing in a stopover at Recife. The editors of the *Diário de Pernambuco* thanked the “gift and his complaisant visit” wishing him well in a “merry journey to the Nation’s capital”³.

The sequence above, involving the leaking of information regarding negotiations that would only be made official months after, as well as courtesies towards press institutions before taking office, leads us to speculate on the choice criteria of the candidate to lead the now Republican JBRJ.

According to Salgado (1945: 95), the government would have first invited the Baron of Capanema⁴ to lead the Garden, who declined the offer in favor of his friend and protégé⁵. Barbosa Rodrigues already was renown, at that moment, nationally and abroad as a prominent scientist in many areas of knowledge and was always treated as ‘illustrious’ and ‘wise’ by the press. In this sense,

his name added prestige to one of the few consensus of the First Republic, a kind of ‘progress ideology’, supported by the positivist philosophy, according to which Brazil would not become a civilized country without the support of the Science, a fundamental instrument to the progress of mankind (Gomes 2010; Neves 2018).

Born in 1842 and son of a Portuguese merchant, Barbosa Rodrigues ascended socially, becoming a scientist. In 1858, he finished his basic studies; in 1865 he was hired by the Pedro II school, working as a secretary while studying at the *Escola Central*. He graduated as an engineer in 1869. The year before, he started his first expeditions around the state of Rio de Janeiro up to Minas Gerais to become familiar with, draw and describe Brazilian plant species (Hoehne *et al.* 1941; Cribb & Toscano de Brito 1996). With his innate talent for drawing, he would look for personal ‘prestige’ as a botanist, a value that lies, according to Bourdieu (2004: 35), “almost exclusively on the little or badly institutionalized recognition of the group of peers or their most renown members”.

Fifteen years afterwards, we will find him as director of the Amazon Botanical Museum, in Manaus (1883-1890), a scientific institution that was created especially for him – in an arrangement involving his patron Capanema and Princes Isabel. The institution was closed, when he was transferred to the JBRJ (Sá 2001; Lopes & Sá 2016). When he was invited to lead the institution in Rio de Janeiro, Rodrigues had already reached another level of scientific capital. He had conquered an “institutional and institutionalized power”, linked to “important positions in scientific institutions, the direction of laboratories or departments, being part of commissions and evaluation committees, etc.”, and also linked to important powers over means of production and reproduction (nomination) ensured by it (Bourdieu 2004: 35).

This political ascension was not without turbulence. Pleasurable, maybe, as a personal achievement of a *pater familias*, but harsh and hard both physically and politically as he reports in the “Disclaimer” of many of his books and in letters to newspapers, as well as his biographers (Ferreira da Silva 1883; Cogniaux 1893; Stapf 1909; Salgado 1945; Guimarães 1952; Rodrigues 1970; Carauta 1974; Mori & Ferreira 1987) and historians (Cribb & Toscano de Brito 1996; Sá 2001; Domingues 2012; Sá 2012; Ximenes & Coelho 2018, among others) reveal.

² Pacotilha (MA), ed. 133, May, 19, 1890, p. 4.

³ *Diario de Pernambuco*, ed. 118, May, 25, 1890, p. 2.

⁴ Guilherme Schüch, Baron of Capanema (1824-1908), born in Minas Gerais, was the son of the Austrian Roque (Rochus) Schüch, who had moved to Brazil with the entourage of Empress Leopoldina of Habsburg, acting as a librarian and custodian of her Cabinet of Natural History, living closely to Dom Peter II since early. An engineer passionate about botany, he graduated from the Imperial Polytechnic Institute of Vienna (1841-46) and back in Brazil he became a known figure of the elite of the 2nd Empire. He was around important institutional spaces, acted towards the strengthening of the engineering in Brazil, as well as the Geological and Natural Sciences. He directed the Section of Geology at the Science Committee for the Exploration of the Northern Provinces and he was director of the General Telegraphic Division, since half of the decade of 1850 until the beginning of the Republican regime in 1889 (Figueiróa 2005).

⁵ Magali Romero Sá (2001: 903) sums up the relationship between them: “The support of the Baron of Capanema to Barbosa Rodrigues until the end of his life had a defining influence on the career of the naturalist. Having believe in the talent of Barbosa Rodrigues and battling fiercely against those he considered enemies of his protégé, Capanema did not measure efforts to provide incentives to the career of Rodrigues as a professional botanist. For such, he provided him even with moral and financial support in difficult moments, as in the period in which the scientific community and the government itself did not give him much credit.”

A significant text, written after the death of Barbosa Rodrigues (1909), by a contemporary scientist, gives us a good overview of the controversies in which he was involved:

“In a time of compilations and rhetoric, the rarer the researchers that incessantly enrich Science by means of serious pieces of work [referring to Barbosa Rodrigues] the more numerous are the petty enemies and adversaries rising against such prominent figures to enhance their defects and to reach for unfounded conclusions, aiming at shadowing their uncontested merits. Barbosa Rodrigues fought against this difficulty since the beginning of his career. His valuable paper on orchids, was not published for this reason and, probably, the same would have happened with *Sertum Palmarum* without the intervention of my deeply missing friend Dr. A.G. de Miranda Azevedo, who, in the National Congress proposed and managed to bring about the impression of this work” (Ihering 1911: 23, original in Portuguese).

Thus, in spite of the accumulated capital, it is plausible to believe there was some resistance to his name in the scientific circles, or even outside, taking into account a piece of information not widely mentioned in the literature available: Barbosa Rodrigues was a steadfast Monarchist.

A few years before the establishment of the Republic, but at a time in which this form of government was already ostensibly claimed by many, Rodrigues declared – in his own handwriting, on a letter published in a newspaper that circulated widely in the Imperial Court – that he “was, is, and will be a Monarchist”⁶. According to another source⁷, his position remained the same right before the Proclamation (“I will never be Republican”) and it seems to not have changed even after the political rupture. Heizer (2012) located a letter to the former Emperor Dom Peter II, in which Rodrigues – “depressed by the deep distaste the military sedition caused in me”, referring to the coup of November 15th – deepens his “protests of love and fidelity” to

the fallen Emperor picturing himself “as grateful and loyal friend who, if needed will shed his blood for Your Majesty or Your August daughter”.

Let us speculate, thus, on the pressures and accommodations that supposedly took place in these months between November 15, 1889, and the day he took office as director of the JBRJ on June 1, 1890. Have questions such as the ‘behavior’ of Barbosa Rodrigues in charge of the JBRJ been discussed? Has any kind of censorship been suggested by the govern? Who gave in, and in which aspects?

A steadfast Monarchist nominated for a public office of the State now Republican: that tension is the object of this study. The Barbosa Rodrigues we meet in this situation dissipates his *persona* of “pure knowledgeable person” – which he, let us stress, made the effort to project – placing him in connection with another reality, external to Science. He becomes someone who acquired a culture, who was formed and modeled within a certain milieu, who was manufactured in contact with a group with which he shared activities (Pestre 1996: 16).

In this first article on the subject, we focus on a sequence of moves by means of which the new director develops the narrative of the JBRJ foundation. We aim at demonstrating from here on that Barbosa Rodrigues ‘invented a tradition’ according to the concept of Hobsbawm (1983). Lastly, we conclude that Rodrigues not only remained a Monarchist while leading the JBRJ but also acted deliberately for this cause. Or was it for its memory?

Tinkering with iconic objects, the new director of the JBRJ arrived at a foundational myth for the Garden, symbolized by the image of an imperial palm tree (*Roystonea oleracea* (Jacq.) O.F. Cook.) being planted in Rio de Janeiro, the new portuguese court, by John VI himself, the first king of Brazil (and of Portugal and Algarves). Rodrigues even dared to baptize this living specimen, that completed one century of life during his term as director, by giving him the suggestive name of *palma mater*. Its birth certificate is at the *Hortus Fluminensis* (Barbosa Rodrigues 1894), as a legend to the photograph of the plant: “The *palma mater*, planted in 1809 by John VI. It is 35 meters tall. From it came the seeds from all of the palm trees of the same species existing in Brazil”.

The article carries on with the research project on the ‘old’ Botanical Garden, started in 2016. The goal is to document, interpret and communicate

⁶ *Jornal do Commercio*, ed. 128, May, 9, 1885, p.2. The context of his declaration is the following: the *Gazeta da Tarde* had reproduced in the edition of March, 26, a “Republican Manifesto in São Gonçalo de Sapucaí”, signed by a certain “João Barbosa Rodrigues” from the city where the botanist had spent his childhood. Rodrigues wrote to the *Jornal do Commercio* to clarify that the person who signed the manifesto was actually his half-brother, João Batista Barbosa Rodrigues, son of his father and his second wife, Maria Horta Barbosa (Salgado 1945, p.21). “To quell any doubts”, the then director of the Amazonas Botanical Garden wrote that he “was, is and will be Monarchist as he has proved in many circumstances of his life”.

⁷ O Homem do convem (União Federal Rio): *Jornal do Commercio*, ed. 87, Jun, 4, 1891, p.2.

geo-historiographical revisions on the first fifty years of the JBRJ as an institution, a research plan which has been described in Gonzalez *et al.* (2019). As we argued in this study, the project includes a survey of primary sources mentioning the institution within the period studied (1808-1858), as well as ministries reports, judicial ordinances on many levels and purposes (laws, decrees, royal letters, permits, warnings, offices, and resolutions), maps, inventories, reports of national or foreign travelers, newspaper articles and private or public communications. Around 350 documents have already been indexed and transcribed, while we already know of a few hundred more. With this database, we were able to undertake a critical review of the articulated movements of Barbosa Rodrigues that we perceive here as an allegory.

Building an allegory

On June 12, 1890, Barbosa Rodrigues presented to the Minister of MACPW Serzedelo Correa his Exposition on the State and the Needs of the Botanical Garden (Barbosa Rodrigues 1890 [1893]-a), with notes on the institution, obtained locally, and the measures he planned to take towards its development. Rodrigues begins by going around the “terrain of retaliations” – referring to the administration of the Imperial Institute of Fluminense Agriculture (IIFA, from now on) which came before the JBRJ (Bediaga 2014) – but declared “with utmost frankness” that the institution was “very far from being a botanical garden” if compared to similar institutions abroad. According to his perception, at that moment the JBRJ was just a “mere recreation park” destined to “gatherings called *pic-nic* (sic)”, which would be forbidden under the new regulation he would propose “because in no botanical garden in the world these gatherings are permitted” (Barbosa Rodrigues 1890 [1893]-b: 6-7).

The circumstances, then, called for two “radical reforms”: one moral, the other scientific (Barbosa Rodrigues 1908: 28-29). Regarding the first, Rodrigues had delivered the project for the Garden’s Regulation where he aimed at organizing the internal police, with the goal of inhibiting “interviews and *pic-nics* [sic], for the perfect conservation of the vegetables”. Beyond that, “the tables that dishonored the garden would be taken off, increasing the number of benches.” The project was approved by the ministry in a few days.⁸

The scientific reform aimed at turning the JBRJ into a true “practical school for natural history” and, towards this, there was “everything to be done, everything to be achieved” (Barbosa Rodrigues 1890 [1893]-a: 7). The goal of Rodrigues was to change the JBRJ conceptually, by dividing it in sections “limited by the current streets”, in which all the living specimens would be numbered, classified according to the “natural method”, and would receive a sign with the name of its botanical family, genus, species, the common name and the geographical origin of the species. Beyond that, the streets (called *aleias* in the garden), the groups and the flowerbeds would be named in order to facilitate the access of the visitor to the desired plant.

Barbosa Rodrigues proceeds with the presentation of his plans for the institution, asking for the development of a considerable research structure (herbarium, library, museum), and demanding the employment of specialized personnel in benefit of advancement in the campus administration, in the curatorship and in the collections exhibits. “Only then” he concludes, would be possible to “make the Botanical Garden known for what it can provide for the Science, which should be held in the highest esteem by the Republic”.

For such a “palely sketched” transformation, it was necessary, first, to raise the floor plan of the area occupied by the JBRJ at the time. This plan, printed out, would accompany “a catalog or guide for the visitor or naturalist” with “very precise observations and explanations on the plants cultivated and on everything related to the place” as well as a “history of the Garden”.

A lot can be said regarding those plans, but in this article we will focus on the historiographical project proposed by Rodrigues. One must remember that the Republicans were attentive to the writing of History and the usage of the monarchical symbols (Gomes 2010; Almeida 2012; Jurt 2012) and, in this dispute, the case of the bust of John VI in the National Library is exemplary.

Sculpted in Rome in 1814 by Leandro Biglioschi, the statue was exhibited since 1858 between the stairs that access the second floor of the National Library. It was removed after the Proclamation of the Republic and sent to the School of Fine Arts. In its place, a statue of Gutenberg was chosen by the new government. The inventor of the press was a character considered more appropriate for a Republican institution, since he was more at befitting between

⁸ Decree n° 518, Jun, 23, 1890

men and books than John VI, who represented “a specific collection of books and a specific community of men” (Silva 2008). The bust was only returned to the Library in 1899, after much insistence from the librarians, under the allegation that John VI deserved the homage for being “the organizer of the Library that he had brought from Portugal and had increased in size in Brazil under his sight to the point of reaching more than 60 thousand volumes when he returned to the kingdom [of Portugal]” (Teixeira de Mello 1900).

According to the second report presented by Barbosa Rodrigues, four months after taking office (Barbosa Rodrigues 1890 [1893]-b), the catalog of the living collection had just started but that the plan of the JBRJ and the “history of the place, since its foundation” had been concluded.

Although the institution did not have “an archive to study its history, with regular personnel or a library (Barbosa Rodrigues 1894, Advertência), his grand work was complete: *Hortus Fluminensis* or a Brief Overview on the Plants Cultivated in the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden as a Guide to the Visitors⁹, with the first version of the history of the institution, including the ‘allegory of the *palma mater*’, as mentioned in the introduction.

Fifteen years later, Barbosa Rodrigues would reaffirm the allegory, so that it would not be forgotten. On June 13, 1908, a hundred years after the date suggested in 1894, Barbosa Rodrigues would reinforce it in a significant celebration in the JBRJ (Fig. 1). In a year when many institutions of the city were commemorating a century of existence, the proud Rodrigues would not let the institution led by him fall behind. We know from the newspapers that his first intent was to coin a medal, but he “thought, and thought well, that a medal would not register well the Garden’s past”¹⁰. Thus, he decided building a huge bust of John VI, registering the allegory in monumental stone.

The ministry was involved in the celebration with the proper advance. The *Report*, written, it seems, before the inauguration of the bust and presented in 1908 by the Minister of Industry, Traffic and Public Works¹¹, Miguel Calmon du Pin e Almeida, justified the celebration to the President

Afonso Pena on the following terms: John VI was “the creator of the establishment, which he named *Real Horto Botânico*, thus we pay a fair homage to the first protector of the agriculture in Brazil”. To the event it would also be associated, Almeida continues, the commemoration of “the centenary of the Antillean palm tree, the *Oreodoxa oleracea* planted by the hands of that prince, from whence came the name of royal palm or *palma mater*, since it was the origin of all the others from the same species that spread throughout the country” (Almeida 1908: 17).



Figure 1 – Fon-fon! magazine, ed. 2, n^o 11, of June 20, 1908, p.27: photographic coverage of the events commemorating the first centenary of the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden, which took place on June 13: (1) Dr. Barbosa Rodrigues gives his speech in the presence of the President of the Republic of Brazil, of Dr. Calmon and distinguished persons; (2) the gardeners stand in line with their Flora insignia; (3) the bust of Dom João VI; (4) another angle of the bust, guarded by four sentinels of the Navy Infantry Corps; (5) the President of the Republic, Dr. Calmon, Dr. Barbosa Rodrigues and other guests stroll around the Garden; (6) the students of the Gymnasio Nacional, parading across the Palm Tree Promenade.

⁹ In Portuguese: *Hortus Fluminensis* ou Breve notícia sobre as plantas cultivadas no Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro para servir de guia aos visitantes.

¹⁰ *Gazeta de Notícias*, ed. 146, May 25, 1908, p.1-2

¹¹ Created by the Legislative Decree n. 1.606 of 12/29/1906, this ministry received, among others institutions, the Botanical Garden.

With the JBRJ open to the public, Barbosa Rodrigues' "garden party" (sic) was supposed to start at 2 pm, in the main pathways of the garden with the presence of student in uniform from the public schools of the city. The President of the Republic, Afonso Penna would come to the party and it would be him who would unveil the bust. Afterwards, the students would sing the *Hymn of the Trees*, with lyrics based on a poem by Olavo Bilac. At the end, Barbosa Rodrigues would open his house offering a "lunch" (sic) to the President, high authorities and other guests¹².

Despite that, the newspaper from the next day tell us that it rain through the whole day of the party. "Heavy rain poured down" when the President Afonso Penna arrived in an automobile accompanied by the minister Almeida and other authorities. They all had to wait at the entrance hall until the rain stopped. After that, they headed to the place where the bust of John VI would be inaugurated, being received by naval soldiers that saluted the President.

The monument for the king was some meters away from the imperial palm, and, in the words of a journalist, it was "simple and imponent, in front of the *palma mater*: above a green leaf base is the granite pedestal, in a square shape 4 meters high, and above it rests the bust of John VI, in bronze, with a height of one meter and twenty centimeters, a piece of work by Mr. Rodolpho Bernardelli, director of the School of Fine Arts"¹³.

In the main face of the pedestal, there was (and still is) a black marble shield, topped by the royal crown with the words: "To John VI, founder of this garden", and in the ribbons of the shield the dates "June 13, 1808 to June 13, 1908)". The *palma mater* was also glorified "with the inauguration of the elegant balustrade of reinforced concrete around it, isolating it completely from the other plants in the garden", as a journalist from the *Jornal do Brasil* observes¹⁴.

The ceremony started with the speech of Barbosa Rodrigues, who, after thanking the presence of the chief of the nation and other guests, told a piece of the history of the institution (perhaps the allegory of the *palma mater*?) Afterwards, the President of the Republic and the Minister of the Industry pulled the cords of

the piece of fabric which covered the bust, thus unveiling it. The music groups played the national anthem and the inauguration was finished. A visit to the arboretum was planned, but it was frustrated by another rainfall, which made Afonso Penna and others to look for cover under a tree. From there, they watched the parade of the students of the Gymnasio Nacional.

Since the rain was not stopping, the President and his entourage got back into the automobile which took them back to the Palace (current Museum of the Republic, in the Catete neighborhood). The lunch was held, but only with the presence of news reporters and guests of Barbosa Rodrigues. According to one of the reporters¹⁵, the Director offered to all a copy of the *Lembrança do 1º Centenário* (Barbosa Rodrigues 1908), a work with an extended version of the history published in 1894.

The rain may have taken "a huge part of the expected gleam" of the party, as the reported lamented. For Rodrigues, nevertheless, the important part was to make the allegory go around, and in fact, its strength can be felt in the inspiration of different witnesses at the time.

"One century" – thus begins the article of *Jornal do Brasil* – "A hundred years have passed since a Prince, John VI, planted the first palm tree, a legendary mark in remembrance to the foundation of the Botanical Garden". For this journalist, John VI not only planted the *palma mater* with his own hands, but also "[...] looking for a distraction, a means of passing time, [the Prince] started to build the garden denominated Real Horto. He traced it with his own hands: It was no more a small square of fifteen or twenty metres and the drawing of the Prince is still there, religiously conserved"¹⁶.

In another version, John VI was "surrounded by some of the most eminent characters of the court" when "to give his subjects the example of care for the institution and of love for trees", he planted the seed of the imperial palm¹⁷. After such act, the article in the *Jornal do Brasil* adds "the Horto progressed an its progresses were watched closely by the prince, who dedicated a special care towards it, covering its length daily and demanding improvements, changes and enlargements".

¹² *O Século*, ed. 550, Jun. 13, 1908, p.2

¹³ *Jornal do Brasil*, ed. 165, Jun, 13, 1908, p.5

¹⁴ *Jornal do Brasil*, ed. 165, Jun, 13, 1908, p.5

¹⁵ *Gazeta de Notícias*, ed. 166, Jun, 14, 1908, p.5

¹⁶ *Jornal do Brasil*, ed. 165, Jun, 13, 1908, p.5

¹⁷ *Gazeta de Notícias*, ed. 146, May, 25, 1908, p.1-2

Ever since its publication, the book has become a must read for those who study the history of the institution, as well as many connected fields, such as the History of the Monarchy or the History of Sciences in Brazil. The mental image of the *palma mater* being planted by John VI himself was absorbed by the society with such strength that it is reproduced on virtually every publication after the *Hortus* dealing, even tangentially, with the history of the JBRJ. That mnemonic image helped, also, to build the “institutional memory itself, even if not properly dealt with, based on the historiographical point of view” (Sanjad 2001: 13-14). The allegory was accepted as truth.

Critical analysis of the allegory

Let us begin our analysis of what we call the ‘allegory of the *palma mater*’ isolating the excerpts from the work that brought the allegory into light, the *Hortus Fluminensis* (Barbosa Rodrigues 1894):

[Excerpt 1] On May 13, 1808, to celebrate his birthday [of John VI], the regent promulgated a decree with the goal of establishing a ‘gunpowder factory for the service of His Majesty and private usage, under the administration of the Finance Board of the Arsenal, Factories and Foundries of the Kingdom’. The first director of the new factory was Carlos Antônio Napion, brigadier, inspector of artillery and foundries, acquiring the title of inspector of the Gunpowder Factory (p.ii)

[Excerpt 2] Not happy with this beginning and seduced by the beauty of the place [the Rodrigo de Freitas lagoon] the regent prince, through a decree from June 13th in the same year [1808], he sent to prepare, close to the house of the inspector of the Gunpowder Factory, a terrain needed to establish an acclimation garden, destined to introduce in Brazil the culture and the spices of Eastern India. On October 11th, according to the mentioned decree, an intendent was nominated for the new garden which was then called Real Horto (p.iii)

[Excerpt 3] At the time of the foundation of the garden of the Gunpowder Factory [1808], the frigate Princesa do Brazil shipwrecked in Goa. Luiz de Abreu Vieira e Silva, chief of division and some of the crew officers of the shipwrecked frigate boarded the brig Conceição, and headed towards the Cape of Good Hope with Brazil as its destination. During the travel, they were imprisoned by the French and sent

to Ile-de-France¹⁸. In the island, there was the Gabrielle garden, with a huge copy [quantity] of spices introduced by [the directors] Poivre and Menouvilles. (p.iii-iv)

According to Barbosa Rodrigues “among the rare survivors of the parcel of Luiz de Abreu from the plants cultivated in Cayenne, in 1809” (Barbosa Rodrigues 1894, p.xxii), there was a living specimen of a palm tree during his time known as *Areca* which was no more than the *Oreodoxa oleracea* Mart.” (pp.iv, nota 1; xi, xxv). About this plant, Rodrigues says the following:

[Excerpt 4] The *Oreodoxa oleracea* Mart. [was] brought from the Ile-de-France in 1809 by the chief of division Abreu and planted on the place found to this day by the hands of John VI himself. Due to this fact, it was named *royal palm*, later changed to *imperial palm*, with no good reason. (p.xi)

Further ahead, Rodrigues reinforces the act of the regent planting the *palma mater*, adding the information that John VI’s intent was to “open the institution in a more solemn manner” (p.xxv). Lastly, there is one more excerpt where Rodrigues mentions the change of name of the institution between 1815 and 1819 – suggesting a periodization:

[Excerpt 5] Just after being crowned king of the United Kingdom of Portugal and Brazil [and Algarves, end of 1815]¹⁹, to improve the extension of useful crop raising in the country increased the size of the Real Horto [1819]²⁰, making it public under the denomination Real Jardim Botânico. It was then annexed to the National Museum (p.v)

Ahead, we present data and arguments leading us to believe that the royalty of the *palma mater*; as told by Barbosa Rodrigues, is historically unlikely – from there we understand it as an ‘invented tradition’, which will be discussed at the end.

Decrees

In 1808, the main interest of the Portuguese crown was to build, close to the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon, the gunpowder factory mentioned in a

¹⁸ Mauritius Island under control of the French, not to be confused with the administrative region of Paris, also called Ile-de-France.

¹⁹ Law of Dec. 16, 1815

²⁰ Rodrigues makes a reference to the Decree of May, 11, 1819, in which John VI demands “a place in the Garden of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon to plant spices, [and] annexes this establishment to the Royal Museum”, currently the National Museum (Portugal 1819).

decree of May 13th, as Barbosa Rodrigues states [Excerpt 1]. It became necessary to fulfill the huge demand of explosives in the Portuguese overseas domains, since the factory of Barcarena in Lisbon was occupied by the army of Napoleon under the leadership of General Junot (Quintela *et al.* 1999-2000; Sá & Silva 2016).

On the [Excerpt 2] above, Rodrigues states that the Prince Regent created the JBRJ by means of a decree published a month after the one of the factory. There are three known decrees from June 13, 1808 related to the appropriation and use of the lands around the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon. Two of them deal with the incorporation to the National Assets (Real Fazenda) and the possession of those lands and installation of an old sugar mill that existed there for many centuries (Portugal 1808b,c). Through the third decree published in the same date, John VI demanded to “make a loan to establish the gunpowder factory (Portugal 1808d).

None of these decrees suggest any intent of creating a botanical garden in the region, contrarily to what Barbosa Rodrigues writes [Excerpt 2]. After also consulting some compilations of the ordinations regarding the year 1808 (Portugal 1808-1810; Araujo 1837; Veiga 1865), we did not find any law, permit, decree or royal letter ordering the designation of an intendant for the JBRJ on October 11, 1808, or that, after this date, the institution came to be known as Real Horto – as Barbosa writes in the same excerpt.

Perhaps Rodrigues referred to the first official mention to a botanical garden by the Lagoon, the decree of October 12, 1808, create the post of ‘feitor’ (foreman) of the National Finances (would this be the ‘intendant’?) and listed, among his many responsibilities to conserve “in the best way possible all of the unleased lands, growing the crops that yield the most benefit and interest of the Royal Finances or in any other plantation determined by higher order (Portugal 1808a). Nevertheless, it sounds strange to have a position filled one day before (October 11th) its creation (October 12th).

Real Horto? Real Garden (*Jardim*)?

In the version of Barbosa Rodrigues, the JBRJ was created on June 13, 1808 as an ‘acclimation garden’, but allegedly had its name changed to ‘Real Horto’ on October 11, 1808 [Excerpt 2] and, again, to ‘Real Jardim Botânico’ between 1815 and 1819 [Excerpt 5].

The data compiled on the old ‘names’ associated to the old JBRJ, nevertheless, do not follow this periodization. Table 1 shows 25 mentions to the institution between 1808 and 1819. We do not intend to cover all the mention in the given period, but the list is significant enough (with many types of document, authors of various nationalities, in different occupations and positions) to attest that the institution has never been called ‘Real Horto’ at those times, and beyond that, we can suppose the name may have been invented by Barbosa Rodrigues himself, since we could not find any document from before 1893 naming the JBRJ as ‘Real Horto’, while the term ‘Real Jardim’ started to be used in 1812 – before Rodrigues’ supposition.

Cayenne or Île-de-France?

Barbosa recovers the story of the delivery of plants by Luiz de Abreu (Excerpts 3 and 4) chief-of-division of the Portuguese navy, having the same source of us: the heroic act told by Abreu himself in a letter published by his own request in the newspaper O Patriota of 1813 (Abreu *et al.* 1813).

To sum the story up, in the year 1808-1809, Abreu was captain of the Portuguese frigate Princeza do Brazil, which got lost in the shallows at the entrance of Go [India], becoming shipwrecked. The more or less 200 survivors boarded the brig Conceição, which was headed to Brazil, but during the travel, they were imprisoned by French enemies and taken to Île-de-France (currently Mauritius, one of the ‘Mascarene Islands’ at the Eastern coast of Africa), famous for its grapefruit botanical garden (‘Jardin des Pamplemousses’²¹).

²¹ In the half of the 18th century, Île-de-France became the basis of the French action in the Indic Ocean, where different methods of colonization were tested. The Garden of Pamplemousses starts as a private garden of the governor Mahé de la Bourdonnais, responsible for the first plantations around his house, which he named ‘Mon Plaisir’. In the following year, the property was acquired by the Compagnie des Indes de l’Orient, investing in the creation of silk moths, covering it with mulberry trees. The experience and the garden were abandoned until 1753, when it was given to the botanist Fusée Aublet, to install a garden of medicinal plants to serve the apothecary in the capital Port Louis (François 1936). It was Aublet who named the garden Pamplemousses, by the proximity to the village of same name, immortalized in Paul et Virginie, by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1789). The writer visited the island in 1768 and strolled through the Jardin des Pamplemousses with the new intendant, Pierre Poivre, whose administration (1767-1772) completely changed the garden. Poivre and his horticulturist Menonville gave the garden plants from four continents, in the context of a broader socioeconomic policy aiming at stalling the steep deforestation of the insular forests (Grove 1995; Ly-Tio-Fane 1996).

Table 1 – Former names attributed to the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro. In the first column is the year of the mention or observation; the second, the name used by the author and the last, sources.

Year	Name	Reference
1808	Mention of an unnamed garden: “It will be of your particular incumbency [the foreman of the farm of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon] to conserve all the lands in the best way [...], cultivating the most beneficial crops”	(Portugal 1808a)
1808	Mention of an unnamed garden: “it would be convenient to use the large area of the Freitas Lagoon, now part of the territories of thee crown, it occurred to me to try to plant several trees from Asia”	(Coutinho 1808)
1808	Mention of an unnamed garden: “seeds [...] to be used at the Freitas Lagoon”	(Castro 1808)
1809	Mention of an unnamed garden: “seeds of several plant species [...] for Your Excellency to use according to your wish at the Freitas Lagoon”	(Castro 1809a)
1809	Mention of an unnamed garden: “the seed[...] was distributed to many places [...] not counting the ones I sent to Your Excellency for the Freitas Lagoon”	(Castro 1809b)
1811	Mention of an unnamed garden: “[...] a botanical garden to raise exotic plants in the farm of the Lagoon”	(Portugal 1811)
1811	Mention of an unnamed garden: “two boxes of sugarcane from Caienne [...] for the farm of the regent prince and another for the Freitas Lagoon”	(Melo 1811)
1811	“Garden of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon”	(Rio de Janeiro 1811)
1812	“Garden of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon”: afterwards “the referred <i>horto</i> ”	(Montenegro 1812 [1890])
1812	“Royal Garden of the Freitas Lagoon”	(Mendonça 1812)
1812	Mention of an unnamed garden: “some small living plants to be raised at the Real Quinta da Boa Vista and Freitas Lagoon”	(Mendonça 1812 [1961])
1813	“Botanical Garden” [sic]	(Luccock 1820 [1975])
1813	Mention of an unnamed garden “ <i>horto</i> that currently serves as nursery and seminary of such plants [at the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon]”	(Portugal 1813 [1837]) para mais de duas mil peças ineditas (Coleção Nabuco
1815	“Botanical Garden of the Royal Gunpowder Factory at the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon”	(Figueiredo 1815a)
1815	“Royal Botanical Garden”	(Figueiredo 1815b)
1816	“Botanic Garden” [sic]	(Clarke 1818)
1816	“Royal Garden, or whatever name it had in the past”	(Ellis 2013)
1817	“Garden of exotic plants and trees”	(Aires de Casal 1817)
1817	“ <i>Jardin Royal</i> of the Freitas Lagoon”	(Gestas 1817?)
1817	“a nursery for foreign vegetables called Botanical Garden”	(Spix & Martius 1981)
1818	“ <i>Jardin Botanique</i> ” (Botanical Garden); “ <i>Jardin des plantes</i> ” (Plant garden)	(Freycinet 1827)
1818	“Royal Garden of the Freitas Lagoons”	(Castilho 1818)
1819	“botanical garden close to the Freitas Lagoon”	(Caldcleugh 1825)
1819	“Royal Garden of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon”	(Castilho 1819)
1819	“Garden of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon”	(Portugal 1819)

As a captain, Abreu says he negotiated with the governor, General Charles Decaen, a license to take all the prisoners in the French ship *La Ville de Autum*, which was headed to Rio de Janeiro with a ‘parliamentary’ flag, guaranteed that the Portuguese crown would fund all its costs. During the negotiation, Luiz de Abreu decided to “rob that colony to enrich this State [Portugal] with part of the precious pieces with which Mrs. De Poivre and Menonville had illustrated in 1770”, referring to the creators of the garden of the Île-de-France and its coveted collections of spices imported directly from the Orient.

The *La Ville de Autum* arrived in Rio de Janeiro in June, 1809. Luiz de Abreu soon after notified John VI about its acquisition, and the Prince ordered, by means of a warning from the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and War, to distribute the plants, “giving a portion to the Royal Board of Commerce and the rest to the Illustrious Excellence Lieutenant General Carlos Antonio Napion”, referring to the General Intendant of the Royal Gunpowder Factory and, by extension, of the JBRJ.

Barbosa Rodrigues is faithful to this source, except for a slip, at the third excerpt, even though he mentions the botanical garden of the Île-de-France (Africa), which is according to the sources, he calls it Gabrielle Garden, and not Pamplemousses. Simple lack of attention?

The garden *La Gabrielle* was in Cayenne, in the French Guyana, north of South America. It was another French colonial garden, with another history, other plant collections, other characters and from which many parcels of plants were sent to the JBRJ by direct order of John VI, during the whole time (1809-1817) in which the French colony was under Portuguese occupation (Pereira 2016). Rodrigues also mentioned these parcels as the origin of the institutional arboretum, even reminding that Étienne Paul Germain, the “skillful gardener” who came from Cayenne with the first plants, was responsible to give life to two botanical gardens in Brazil, one in Rio de Janeiro and the other in Olinda:

[Excerpt 1] On May 1, 1811, the agronomist Paul Germain arrives in Pernambuco, attending the call of John. With him, he brought, in the galley Princesa Maria Thereza many plant from Asia cultivated in the gardens of Cayenne, and that the same Counsellor Maciel da Costa, by then general-intendant, sent to the Garden of ‘Aclimação’ in Olinda. The king, to spread the plants even more,

sent to establish other gardens in Pernambuco, Bahia, Minas Gerais and São Paulo.

The distinction between those two colonial French gardens is useful on the next section, where we question the security with which Barbosa Rodrigues attests that the seeds of *Areca* brought by Luiz de Abreu from Île-de-France was, in fact, an imperial palm, *Oreodoxa oleracea* (Jacq.) Martius in the time of Rodrigues, nowadays *Roystonea oleracea* (Jacq.) O.F. Cook.

The imperial palm in the JBRJ

Before getting on the topic of knowing when the imperial palm was introduced in the JBRJ, one must be reminded that it was very common that seedlings transported across long distances not to survive the travel due to the mechanical conditions of the trip and the adaptation to the new environment (Kury 2013; Pataca 2016). Barbosa Rodrigues himself wrote practical instructions for the sending of parcels to the JBRJ of plants from other states of the Federation (Barbosa Rodrigues 1891: 3).

The *Areca* of Luiz de Abreu may have not survived the travel. In a report published in response to the letter of Chief of Division Abreu, João Gomes da Silveira Mendonça, vice-intendant of the gunpowder factory designated as responsible for the garden, informs that none of the “sago, soapberry, breadfruit and *Areca* seeds” had sprouted (Mendonça 1812). Nevertheless, soon after, Mendonça mentions exceptions, in clear contradiction: “a beautiful treeing sixteen palms tall and an already rooted layered plant”, which he could not identify at the time since they had not flowered yet.

In benefit of the doubt, let us concede to Barbosa Rodrigues that one of the surviving specimens was the imperial palm and that it was planted by the Prince Regent. In this case, it sounds strange, once more, the fact that this symbolic treeing was not deserving of comment by Mendonça – the first to name the institution as a ‘Royal Garden’ (see Tab. 1). Let us suppose, then, that having been planted or not by the king, the *Areca* of Île-de-France had survived. Was it an *Areca oleracea* Jacquin, a taxon that, after several reviews is now settled as *Roystonea oleracea*?

This species is distributed in the Lesser Antilles, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, the north of Venezuela and the northeast region of Colombia. It was naturalized in Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana. One of the few characteristics that help

the experts to distinguish it from the *R. regia* (Kunth) O. F. Cook (Cuban palm, royal palm) is the widespread distribution of the latter throughout the valleys and foothills of Cuba (Zona 1996).

For centuries, the European pre-Linnean names with which these plants were named reflected the cultural values of visitors and colonizers since the 16th century – *Royal palm*, *Palma nobilis*, *Palma maxima* – or they highlighted the properties of the species used in the visited or colonized regions. The Frenchmen called them ‘chou-palmiste’ (or, simply ‘chou’, meaning ‘cabbage’ or simply ‘palmiste’), similarly to the Englishmen (cabbage-tree). It is a clear metonymy, the name steals from the whole (the *palmiste*, ‘palm tree’) the edible part, the ‘cabbage’ – the tip of the palm tree, formed, just as the cabbage, by a concentric entwine of leaves which, in the case of the *Areca*s can reach over 12 m in height when completely ripe (Piccin 2011: 138). On the comparison with the cabbage, a cultivar originally from the Mediterranean, it was also quite common: settlers, sailors and slave traffickers attributed to unknown plants from distant lands terms that were well-known to them (Baudry 1989: 783).

The history of the scientific taxonomy of the genus *Roystonea* starts with Jacquin (1763: 278) who applied, for the first time, the binomial system of Linnaeus in a Caribbean plant herbarium (Martinica, Jamaica, Santo Domingo and part of the mainland) to describe the *Areca oleracea*. This was the name with which the contemporaries of Luiz de Abreu identified the species. From that moment, the systematization of the genus in Europe follows a winding path until the 20th century, when the first major taxonomic reviews would be made (Zona 1996; Reis 2009).

The genus *Areca*, described by Linnaeus, held the *Areca catechu* L., a species widespread in East Africa, South Asia and Pacific Islands. Its uses are documented since the 1st century BCE in Sanskrit, Greek and Chinese literatures, a knowledge that reached the Europeans only when they arrived at the ‘Indies’ in the beginning of the 16th Century and were able to observe those plants in their own natural and cultural environment.

The species is used in rituals for Hindus for millennia, in religious and medicinal practices. Since they chewed on *Areca* seeds covered in the leaves of a pepper vine (*Piper betel* L., betre or faufel) that grew on the *Areca* palm, the *A. catechu* was commonly known as betel-nut (Staples &

Bevacqua 2006; Madaleno 2015; Rashid *et al.* 2015). In India, from where the word ‘areca’ comes from, the fruit was used as a tonic for the belly and to correct bad breath. It was written that “men, women, children, everyone in India chew on the betel nut. It is offered when greeting on another; it is given as a friendly gift, with a huge variety of aromatic spices when away for a short period of time. This usage is even more frequent in India than the tobacco in Europe” (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 1812).

To make the story more complicated, there were *Areca* species native to the Mascarene Islands (Bory de Saint-Vincent 1804). Just as other species of the genus, they were consumed by means of an agriculture related mainly to dietary practices of the local population, and the French, who would colonize the archipelago in the 18th century gave them the same name they were used to give to other types of *Areca*: chou-palmiste.

So, which of those *Areca* species did Luiz de Abreu bring in 1809?

D’Elboux (2006) supposes that, being originated from the Antilles, the species *Roystonea oleracea* would have been acclimatized by the French in the botanical garden La Gabrielle, in French Guyana, being transferred later to the Jardin des Pamplemousses. Nevertheless a Catalog of Exotic Plants cultivated in the Mauritius Island, published soon after the theft of plants by Luiz de Abreu, only mentions one type of *Areca* cultivated in the botanical garden of Pamplemousse, the eastern *A. catechu* (Farquhar 1816: 27). This species had been imported from India by the French botanist Fusée-Aublett who lived in Île-de-France between 1752 and 1761 (Piat 2010: 109). Meyer *et al.* (2008) confirm that the *Roystonea oleracea* would only be introduced in 1825 in the neighboring Reunion Island, and in 1837 in Mauritius.

Even in search of synonyms (*Euterpe caribaea* Sprengel, *Oreodoxa caribaea* (Sprengel) Dammer) which, in the times of Abreu were also accepted names for the imperial palm, the result is the same: until the beginning of the 19th century, when Luiz de Abreu was imprisoned in Mauritius, there are no evidences of the existence of specimens of *Roystonea oleracea* in Île-de-France. The most probable is that the seed of *Areca* brought by Luiz de Abreu was an *A. catechu*.

As for the introduction of imperial palm on the JBRJ, the first known mention seems to be of Ernst Ebel, a Latvian merchant who lived in Rio

de Janeiro during the year of 1824 and visited the institution on April, 30 accompanied by the director, the botanist Friar Leandro do Sacramento. Between “hedges of cardamom” that worked as fences, lush specimens of breadfruit trees and “vast plantations of Chinese tea”, Ebel admired with an “extraordinary but still unknown [...] palm tree that was just seven years old, but so dense that two men barely could hug it, measuring between 40 and 50 feet tall”. His description of the stipe and the treetop is akin to the plant’s physiognomy: “Its smooth trunk presents well-marked circles and gave fruits for the first time this year under its splendid palm crown” (Ebel 1824 [1972]: 131-132). Ebel would not mistake it for other palm species, since later he adds that “among the other species of palm [of the JBRJ] there is the excellent sago and the palmetto”.

Well, if the palm tree observed by Ebel in 1824 was really the imperial palm, and it was seven years old, as Friar Leandro informed him, then the *palma mater* would have been planted around 1817 – not 1809. To reconcile Ebel’s text with Rodrigues’, the Ambassador Leão Filho, who translated the German original into Portuguese, ‘corrects’ the author in a footnote: “[The *palma mater*] was starting to grow fruits at the age of 14 years, not 7 as Ebel, ill-informed, writes’.

On the question of when was the imperial palm introduced on the JBRJ, until now our best answer is related to its introduction in Olinda, which seems to have happened between 1814 and 1817, by the hands of the gardener from Cayenne Étienne Paul Germain. In 1814, he sent a report to his protector, the chevalier Antonio Araujo de Azevedo, Count of Barca, on the state of the ‘Royal Garden of plants and spices to Olinda’. Among the 43 species imported from Cayenne introduced on the extinct garden of Pernambuco by Germain there was the “Palmiste de la Martinique”, which would have had come in the ‘3rd parcel’ of plants from Cayenne (Germain 1814a). There were four specimens of this “Grand palmier de la Martinique” cultivated in Olinda, two were “huge and good” and two were “mediocre” (Germain 1815). They were in a pathway dedicated to the foreign palms among which he had planted cardamom (Germain pós-1816).

On this species in the JBRJ, the documents we have had access to until now do not register its arrival. A list of species planted by Germain in the institution, discovered on the National Archive of the Torre do Tombo in Portugal (Germain 1811), had improved our hope, but

among the 23 mentioned species, there is no palm tree. Nevertheless, we know that, during the time Germain spent in Brazil (he passed away in 1817), there was an intense exchange of plants between the gardens of Olinda and Rio de Janeiro (Germain 1814b; Freitas 1814 [1961]), which was executed by ‘the Frenchman’ himself (Germain *ca.* 1817).

No matter the reason behind the story of the *palma mater*, it is possible that the first years of the JBRJ sounded unattractive to the purposes of Barbosa Rodrigues. The garden was, as the other botanical gardens of the beginning of the 19th century “a shelter of plants” by definition, “a place whose investigations were necessarily directed towards plant acclimation and reproduction, not being exclusive to the garden in Rio de Janeiro” (Sanjad 2001: 14). Thus, Rodrigues acted upon this uninteresting reality. Supported by old public documents, he added data, established new relations between them and associated them to facts published in news papers, such as the *Areca* brought by Luiz de Abreu. He must have known that there had never been a solemn foundation of the Real Horto, and he was certainly aware that the La Gabrielle and Pamplmouse garden were two different establishments.

We shun the idea of a purported naivety of his acts or that they lacked motivation. We work with the hypothesis that Barbosa Rodrigues aimed at ‘inventing a tradition’, probably since being invited to run the JBRJ.

Eric Hobsbawm (1983: 1-2) defines ‘invented traditions’ as a group of practices of ritual or symbolic nature aiming at establishing, artificially, a continuity with a referential historic past, trying “to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past”. Those are more frequent in history than we tend to suppose: “There is probably no time and place with which historians are concerned which has not seen the ‘invention’ of tradition in this sense” (Hobsbawm 1983: 4). But they must not be mistaken with ancestral customs and memories, they generally occur as “responses to novel situations”, “when a rapid transformation of society [occurs, that] weakens or destroys the social patterns for which ‘old’ traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated” (Hobsbawm 1983: 4).

In the case study, we hope to have demonstration that the establishment of the Republic was a sufficiently adverse event to provoke a reaction in the Monarchist Barbosa Rodrigues. A reaction which, according to Hobsbawm, may have been individual or collective. We argue that it was a deliberate political manifestation that glorified the royalty in a disruptive moment of deposition of the monarch.

In this sense, the invention of Rodrigues can be read as an artistic form, the 'allegory' defined by Burke (1997: 339) as "historical representations which conceal or imply comments on the present, whether to flatter, justify, warn or criticize a particular individual or group". Rodrigues turns the allegory of the *palma mater* eternal by tying it to the anniversary of the JBRJ, an event celebrated to this day on the date he 'invented'. He had the intuition, as one can see, that the invariability of an 'invented tradition' must be guaranteed by its inventor for it to prosper, with the repetition being the best means to achieve it (Hobsbawm 1983: 2)

There is still much to understand. What Barbosa Rodrigues intended with his allegory? Who were his interlocutors at the time? Who were his antagonists? New studies are needed to unravel the context and the conditions of this manifesto, what were his motivations, find out if he acted alone or collectively and what reactions it produced, if any, especially among Republicans.

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