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RESUMEN

Las celebraciones de los centenarios latinoamericanos fueron ocasiones fértiles para la construcción de identidades nacionales, y al mismo tiempo ofrecieron oportunidades clave para comunidades de inmigrantes de representarse dentro del tejido urbano de ciudades notables a través del patrocinio monumental. Este artículo examina el patrocinio público de la diáspora de habla árabe (también conocida como mahjar) en el cono sur, enfocando en el *Monumento a la amistad Sirio-Libanesa* en São Paulo, Brasil, como un caso de estudio. Proyectada en honor del centenario brasileño de 1922, esta estatua exhibe una iconografía innovadora que fusionó emblemas asociados a la región levantina, a la nación brasileña y a la ciudad de São Paulo simultáneamente. La estatua jugó un rol significativo en la elaboración de una nueva identidad moderna para la colectividad, estableciendo su visibilidad a nivel nacional a comienzos del siglo XX.

Palabras clave: *Monumentos centenarios, transnacionalismo, inmigración, Sirios,* mahjar.

ABSTRACT

The Centennial celebrations across Latin America were a fertile moment in which immigrant communities represented themselves within the urban fabric of major cities via monumental patronage. This paper examines the public patronage of the Arab-speaking diaspora (also known as *mahjar*) in the southern cone by conducting a case study of the *Monumento Amizade Sírio Libanesa* (The Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship) in São Paulo, Brazil. Designed in honor of the 1922 Brazilian Centennial, this public statue exhibits imaginative new iconography that merged key emblems associated with the Levant, São Paulo, and Brazil. The statue can be seen as playing a major role in the crafting of a modern, collective immigrant identity while also asserting the visibility of the mahjar community at the turn of the twentieth century.

Key words: *Centennial Monuments, Transnationalism, Immigration, Syrian, mahjar.*

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Migrant Monuments, Monumental Migrants

São Paulo's Sculptural Homage to Syrian-Lebanese Friendship and the Crafting of Transnational Identity in Centennial Brazil[1]

Caroline "Olivia" M. Wolf[2]

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Introduction

In 1922, the city of São Paulo witnessed two major public events that together served as the backdrop for the era of mass migration and development of modernism—the Centennial of Brazilian Independence and the landmark Semana da Arte Moderna (Modern Art Week). The powerful cultural forces of immigration and modernism would mesh and reconfigure to construct new notions of Brazilian national identity at the beginning of the twentieth century. Just as Brazil sought to construct an image of progress within public space via monumental sculpture, distinct immigrant communities sponsored their own public statues to honor the country, thereby reshaping the urban fabric of their adopted cities. A unique case study of such patronage can be seen in the *Monumento Amizade Sirio Libanesa* (Monument of Syrian Lebanese Friendship), in the heart of the *Paulista* megalopolis. Featuring an iconographic blend of ancient Levantine ships, colonizing visual narratives, and national allegories, the bronze and granite monument innovatively merged imagery tied to the nascent Phoenicianist movement with that of Brazilian nationalism. Sponsored by the Arabic-speaking diaspora community, the statue can be understood as playing a key role in the crafting of collective immigrant identity while asserting the visibility of its patron community during Brazil's 100-year anniversary of independence. The Centennial monument serves as the public expression of modern, transnational identities envisioned by its immigrant patrons as rooted in debates surrounding *brasilidade* (Brazilian-ness), ethnicity, and identity.

Figure 1. *Monumento Amizade Sírio Libanesa*, Ettore Ximenes, 1928. Photograph by the author, Caroline Olivia M. Wolf, 2016.

The term "transnational" has been applied to a myriad of social, economic and political processes that circulate, shape, and extend between and beyond the sanctioned boundaries of nation-states. This analysis draws upon the definition of the term as "the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement," established by anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Cristina Szanton-Blanc, and Linda Basch.[3] It also pulls from the idea advanced by Sharon A. Carstens that the making of cultural products and ideas can "produce transnational imageries capable of creating and sustaining new forms of transnational publics".[4] By analyzing the visual culture and historical processes linked to the Monument of Syrian Lebanese Friendship in the context of 1920s São Paulo, transnationalism emerges as a key element in the crafting of collective identities and multiple forms of Brazilian modernism.

Tracing Mobility: From the *Mashriq* to the *Mahjar*

Arab-speaking immigrants arrived from the Levantine provinces under Ottoman rule, known as the *mashriq*, as well as from the regions of North Africa as early as the mid-nineteenth century. These immigrants came to Brazil, and Latin America on the larger whole, to escape economic crisis and ethno-religious tensions in their home region. Between 1884 and 1939, approximately 107,000 immigrants from the Eastern Mediterranean arrived in the country.[5] Although immigration statistics remain incomplete, these new arrivals predominantly belonged to Eastern Christian rites, such as Maronites, Armenians, or the Orthodox Church of Antioch, but there was also a significant contingent of Arab-speaking Jewish and Muslim immigrants.[6]

Eastern Mediterranean migrants settled in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo around the 1860s, and placed roots in the region of Amazonas

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3 Nina Glick Schiller, Cristina Szanton-Blanc and Linda Basch. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States.* London, Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1994, p. 8. For a general overview of transnational theory, see Sophie Mamattah. "Migration and Transnationalism: the Complete Picture? A Case Study of Russians Living in Scotland", *eSharp:* Identity and Marginality, Issue 6:2, 2006.

4 Sharon A. Carstens. "Constructing Transnational Identities? Mass Media and the Malaysian Chinese Audience", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26 (2), 2003, p. 322.

5 Jeffrey Lesser. *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities and the struggle for ethnicity in Brazil*. Durham, Duke University Press, 1999, p. 48.

6 Registers at the port of Santos between 1908 and 1941 record 65% of Syrian and Lebanese immigrants as Catholic, 20% as Orthodox Greek or Melkite, and 15% as Muslim. Ibidem.

and Paraná in the 1880s.[7] Between 1904 and 1930, almost 91% of these immigrants came from the region then known as Greater Syria, which after the post-war partitioning of the French mandates and subsequent independence movements comprise Syria and Lebanon today.[8] Scholars such as Ignacio Klitch, Jeffrey Lesser, and John Tofik Karam have demonstrated that mass migration to Brazil transformed the nation into one of the largest epicenters of the *mahjar*—a term signifying diaspora in Arabic, connoting the movements of Arab-speakers from the Middle East.[9] Before World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, these immigrants were generically labeled *turcos* or Turks, as they technically remained passport-bearing Ottoman subjects at this time. Yet the term was problematic, in that it was applied to immigrants seeking to escape Ottoman powers who later redefined themselves within growing Armenian, Syrian, and Lebanese independence movements.

During this time, Arab-speaking immigrants became visible within Brazilian urban centers as *mascates,* or peddlers. They developed strong ambulant commerce networks, selling goods door-to-door to the workers of coffee *fazendas* (plantations) and the humblest sectors of the urban economy.[10] Picturesque photographs of immigrants, including *mascates turcos,* were featured in turn-of-the-century albums such as *Impressions of Brazil in the 20th Century*, illustrated by French-Brazilian photographer, Marc Ferrez.[11] The images presented portraits of individuals quaintly posing beside their trade goods, evoking the iconography of the popular *tipos y costumbres* (types and customs) genre that circulated prolifically in Latin America in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[12] The depictions of the *mascates turcos* besides the stacks of

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7 John Tofik Karam. "The Lebanese in the Brazilian National Market", *Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies*, North Carolina State University, January 28, 2015. http://lebanesestudies.news.chass.ncsu.edu/2015/01/28/lebanese-in-the-brazilian-national-market/.

8 Jeffrey Lesser. *Negotiating National..., op. cit*., pp. 45-50.

9 Key works in the historiography on Arab-speaking immigration to Latin America include: Ignacio Klitch. "Introduction to the Sources for the history of the Middle Easterners in Latin America," *Temas de Africa y Asia – Africanos y Mediorientales en América (Siglos XVIII-XX)* 2, Buenos Aires, 1993, pp. 205-233; Oswaldo Truzzi. *Sírios e Libaneses: Narrativas de História e Cultura*. São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional, 2005; and John Tofik Karam. *Another Arabesque: Syrian-Lebanese Ethnicity in Neoliberal Brazil*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2007.

10 Jeffrey Lesser. *Negotiating National..., op. cit*., p. 50.

11 *Impressões do Brazil no Seculo Vinte*. Great Britain, Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Company, Ltd, 1913, p. 107. Original photographs in Acervo Marc Ferrez, Instituto Moreira Salles. http://www.ims.com.br/ims/explore/artista/marc-ferrez/cronologia.

12 Many thanks to Carolina Vanegas Carrasco for sharing her thoughts on the costumbrist influences of these photographs. For more on the "types and customs" iconography in Latin America, see De la Maza, Josefina *et al*. "Art Collectors in Network and Identity Narratives:

Figure 2. Photograph by Marc Ferrez, 1895. Published in *Impressões do Brazil no Seculo Vinte*. Great Britain, Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Company, Ltd., 1913, p. 107. Public domain. Novo Milênio: Historia e Lendas de Santos. Also in the collections of the Instituto Moreira Salles (IMS).

folded textiles they were known for selling fomented their reputation as itinerant peddlers. Placed besides their portable trunks in mismatched, rumpled suits, these photos showed *turco* immigrants as transient, working class figures. Yet such images also suggest perceptions of Middle Eastern immigrants as industrious and somewhat upwardly mobile, selling their wares while striving for respectability in a buttoned-up vest and hat, paired with a soft smile.

Due to the remarkable economic success they garnered as ambulant peddlers, a common joke surfaced which highlighted the strength of these migrants in commerce and the ambiguity of their nationality as perceived by the Brazilian public. The jest mockingly explained that newly arrived Arab-speaking immigrants in the peddling business were *turcos*, but as soon as they secured their first job they became "Syrians", and that those that rose to the ranks of factory or store owners became "Lebanese".[13] Although the confusion surrounding the national identities of Arab-speaking migrants rendered them the target of ridicule, the use of the terms Syrian, Lebanese or Syrian-Lebanese in diaspora carried an important political charge tied to independence movements in the post-war regions of the *mashriq*. These labels were passionately debated in the *mahjar*, and the hyphenated term "Syrian-Lebanese" surfaced to signal a unifying vision that politically joined immigrants from these neighboring provinces while delineating their distinct identities.[14]

The efforts of the *mahjar* merchants in local and international commerce as well as politics would be recompensed, and their success ultimately inscribed within the urban fabric of Brazil's most powerful

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Contributions to a Cartography of the Genre of Types and Costumes in South America", *Artl@s Bulletin* 5, Nº 1, 2016: Article 6, pp. 62-71. The "Types and customs" genre has powerful roots in Latin American literature, and is the focus of an ample bibliography. Scholarly overviews include Stephen M. Hart. *A companion to Latin American literature*, Vol. 243, (Tamesis Books, 2007), and Jose Escobar. "Costumbrismo. Definición, cronología y su relación con la novela", *Siglo diecinueve (Literatura hispánica)* 1, 1995, pp. 7-25, among others.

13 Jeffrey Lesser. *Negotiating National..., op. cit*., p. 50.

14 Maria del Mar Logroño Narbona. "The Making of a Lebanese Pan-Arab Nationalist in the Argentine Mahjar", in: *Politics, Culture and the Lebanese Diaspora*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010, pp. 228-245.

cities. In Rio de Janeiro, the community established a powerful presence around the street intersections of Rua da Alfândega and Rua Buenos Aires, founding a commercial district in the city center known today as SAARA.[15] In São Paulo, Arab-speaking immigrants founded the prosperous commercial zone around Rua 25 de Março, initiated by the famed brothers Assad Abdalla and Nagib Salem. These entrepreneurs established their first business in 1890, rapidly followed by other members of the community particularly active in the textile trade.

In the outskirts of São Paulo, the Jafet family would find enormous success with their installation of textile factories in the neighborhood of Ipiranga, conducting business in the cities and rural provinces of Brazil as well as the international market. The wealth born from this family empire would lead the extended Jafet family to construct a stunning zone of twenty-two luxurious mansions in an impressive array of architectural styles.[16] These imposing private residences include the striking neo-Orientalist Palacete Rosa, an eclectic architectural fantasy with Moorish piebald window motifs, horseshoe arches and ornate *mashrabiyee*-inspired porches.[17] The Jafet family would build a district of mansions in the blocks flanking Ipiranga Park, around the same time and space in which the government constructed a zone of major monuments, including the *Monumento a Independência* (Monument to Independence). This colossal commission for the 1922 Centennial celebrations, bestowed to Italian sculptor Ettores Ximenes, was part of a greater plan that also included the Museu Paulista (Paulista Museum). Although built long before 1922, the grounds and structure of this museum were first dedicated to the natural sciences before later becoming a key site of the construction of Independence-inspired monuments during the Centennial.[18] The site of Ipiranga Park also included the Casa do Grito (House of the Cry of Independence), associated with the legendary proclamation of independence from Portugal

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15 SAARA is an acronym for Sociedade de Amigos das Adjacências da Rua da Alfândega (Society of Friends and Neighbors of the Customs House street), established by the community and its neighbors in 1962 to protect the area from governmental urbanization projects. Tofik Karam. "The Lebanese in the Brazilian National Market", *op. cit.*

16 Six of the twenty-two original mansions are currently protected by preservation laws, registered as cultural patrimony by the Conselho Municipal de Preservação do Patrimônio Histórico, Cultural e Ambiental da Cidade de São Paulo, as of "inestimable architectural, environmental, historic and landscape value". See Resolution Nº 5/ 2005, Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo Secretaria Municipal de Cultura Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico, 2005.

17 Jorge Eduardo Rubies. "Palacete Rosa", *Portal do Ipiranga,* http://www.independenciaoumorte.com.br/acontece/item/92-palacete-rosa.html. Consulted April 27, 2017. *Mashrabiyee* refers to lattice-work window constructions associated with Middle Eastern architecture.

18 There is an ample bibliography on the history of the Museu Paulista. For an overview of the museum as a key site in the construction of historical memory, see Cecilia Helena De Salles Oliveira. "O Museu Paulista Da USP e a Memória Da Independência", *Cad. Cedes*, Campinas, Vol. 22, Nº 58, pp. 65-80, dezembro/2002. Available online at http://www.cedes.unicamp.br.

Figure 3. Neo-Orientalist Palacete Rosa Jafet mansion in Ipiranga Photograph by the author, Caroline Olivia M. Wolf, 2016.

decried by Emperor Dom Pedro I. In fact, the *mahjar* community would ultimately hire the same Ettore Ximenes to build the *Monumen to Amizade Sirio Libanesa*—their own collective sculpture in honor of the Centennial at the same historic moment. The government-sponsored independence monument and park, along with the nearby mansions of the *mahjar* community and their commission of Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship by the same artist, synthesized to highlight the upward mobility of its immigrant patrons while leaving a strong imprint within the urban fabric.

During the time the *mahjar* monument was built, anti-*turco* discourses were prominently circulating in Brazil, despite the undeniable economic success of these immigrants. Discriminatory discourses were promoted by leading scientific figures, such as the ethnographer Edgar Roquette-Pinto. As late as 1917, Roquette-Pinto published a blatantly racist depiction of Arab immigrants in Brazil in his book, *Rôndonia,* declaring:

> Arabs, Syrians, and Turks are peddling all over the place… The two thousand "Turks" that Brazil receives annually do not even yield, say, one hundred productive workers. There are no Turkish rural workers. Yet there is no foreign element more diffused throughout the country. In the heart of Mato-Grosso, the Amazon, Minas Gerais, and the capital of the Republic live large masses of "Turkish" merchants. Although they are obliged to enter into relations with the Brazilians because of their habits, they in fact live perfectly segregated in their race, norms, and character. No one knows for sure what they call themselves, where are they from, what religion do they profess. They live there among themselves, ignored in their lives by the Brazilians. Where there is one richer, more intelligent, or more learned, the others crowd around him; and when this "leader" acquires a certain influence in the country, he begins to direct the entire core of compatriots. It would be unfair to deny the elementary services provided by these peddlers to the populations of the interior. It is an immigration that fills a necessity at the present time, but it has no seed of progress. Winning people, tenacious, even laborious. Sordid, ignored, unproductive in industry, in art and science, and even in commerce, which it practices in a creeping way.[19]

19 Edgar Roquette-Pinto. *Rôndonia.* Archivos do Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Volume XX, Rio de Janeiro, Imprensa Nacional, 1917, pp. 47-48. Translation is my own. Cited in Paul Gabriel Hilu da Rocha Pinto. "A Labyrinth of Mirrors: Orientalisms, Immigration and discourses on the nation in Brazil," *Journal of mediterráneos internacionales studios* 21, 2016, pp. 50-51.

The racist tones of Roquette-Pinto's so-called ethnographic analysis reveals the prevailing prejudice faced by the community well into the twentieth century. As if these depictions—along with Orientalist notions that Arabs were fatalist dreamers and polygamists—were not harsh enough, a malicious rumor surfaced in certain sectors of Brazilian society that "Turks eat people".[20] Anthropologists today believe these cannibalistic allegations had their roots in the misperception of exotic Levantine foods, such as the traditional raw meat dish known as *kibbe*, yet such horrific stereotypes caused *turco* immigrants to remain decidedly outside of the immigrant groups perceived as "desirable," like Northern Europeans.[21] The detrimental effects of these negative representations led the *mahjar* immigrant community to fervently counter-act such ideas via the collective commission of their first public monument.

The Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship: Context & Iconography

In 1917, a commission of representatives from the Syrian-Lebanese colony of São Paulo, led by Basilio Jafet, decided to offer a monument to the city in honor of the Centennial celebrations of 1922.[22] As with the commission of various monuments for the historic moment, press publications recorded the Syrian-Lebanese commission organized a competition for artists to submit proposals for the project.[23] On June 7, 1920, the local periodical *Correio Paulistano* noted both the renowned Italian sculptor Ettore Ximenes, as well as a Syrian artist named Salim Maluff participated in the competition.[24] The newspaper presented Maluff as a distinguished stranger who nonetheless had "good fame" with him at the time. The competition announcement detailed:

> The well-known Syrian sculptor, whose "model" we visited yesterday, conceived a beautiful monument, whose significant details recall the facts and key figures of the history of Brazil and Syria, interpreting the sentiments of their patricians in a beautiful homage to our homeland in the Centennial of its independence. It is a grandiose monument, at 14 meters tall and 8 meters granite base, with its bronze figures and decorative medallions.[25]

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20 Ibidem, pp. 51-52.

21 Ibidem.

22 Jeffrey Lesser. *Negotiating National..., op. cit*., p. 55.

23 Fabrício Reiner de Andrade. *Ettore Ximenes: Monumentos e Encomendas (1855-1926),* Master' Thesis, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros da Universidade de São Paulo, p. 96.

24 "Homenagem da colonia syrio da Brasil", *Correio Paulistano*, São Paulo, June 7, 1920.

25 Reiner de Andrade. *Ettore Ximenes, op. cit.,* pp. 96.

The article goes on to describe Ettore Ximenes' project succinctly, as "a fine piece of work, worthy of the prestige of our artistic milieu". Yet the community would ultimately choose the Italian sculptor to execute the final project, most likely due to his international profile. As historian Fabrício Reiner de Andrade notes in his overview of the sculptural production of Ximenes, the Italian sculptor's final design appears strikingly similar to the published description of Maluff's creative proposal. The work was made of precisely the same materials and scale, and features historicizing subject matter.

While there is a lack of further documentation on Maluff's project, various elements suggest that the conceptual design of the monument may have been handed over to the higher-profile artist. Reiner de Andrade points out that there are several precedents for such practices, including the first monument erected in honor of Dom Pedro I. Completed by the established sculptor, Louis Rochet, the work was conceived by the more inexperienced artist, João Maximiano Mafra.[26] There are alternate explanations for the striking parallels between Ximenes' final project as Maluff's documented proposal. It is possible that the committee may have stipulated guidelines for the work, or Ximenes may have ended up as the final sculptor by default in the event Maluff rescinded the commission. Yet it is difficult to support these possibilities without further documentation. In contrast, the history of such competitions favoring more experienced sculptors in this case and the attractive prestige they bring with them points to the most probable cause. Already by the 1920s, Ximenes had an international reputation, creating key monuments in Italy and across the Americas, including the Mausoleum of Belgrano in Buenos Aires and projects in New York and Washington.[27] Ximenes also emerged as the winner of the Monument to Independence competition at the onset of the decade. Yet the enormous size of the Monument to Independence that Ximenes personally supervised at the same time as the Syrian-Lebanese Friendship monument, along with the death of the sculptor in 1926, delayed the inauguration of the monument by six years. The work was ultimately completed by students from the local Liceu de Artes Oficios (School of the Arts and Crafts) and inaugurated on May 3, 1928.[28]

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26 Mayra Laudanna and Emanoel Araujo. *De Valentim a Valentim: a escultura brasileira: século XVIII ao XX*. São Paulo, Imprensa Oficial/Museu AfroBrasil, 2010. pp. 30-31. Cited in ibidem, p. 96.

27 Michelli Christine Scapol Monteiro. "O Mausoléu a Belgrano, de Ettore Ximenes, e a presença artística italiana na Argentina." *Caiana* 8, 2016, pp. 1- 16.

28 "Uma homenagem dos syrio-libaneses ao Brasil", *Correio Paulistano*, May 4, 1928. See also the *Inventário de Obras de Arte e Monumentos em Espaços Públicos da Cidade de São Paulo*, "Amizade Sirio-Libanesa", Divisão de Preservação, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico,

Speeches from the monument's inauguration demonstrate that its patrons were well informed of the Italian sculptor's portfolio and international prestige.[29] Vibrant accounts of the grandiose inauguration of the Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship were published in national and local newspapers, including the *Diario Nacional*, *Correio Paulistano* and *O Estado de São Paulo*, featuring photographs and excerpts of the speeches pronounced by patrons and public functionaries in attendance. The monument was originally installed in front of the Palace of Industry of São Paulo, which housed the Legislative Assembly of the state of São Paulo. The press related the ceremony in detail, which involved a parade of over 2,000 soldiers, accompanied by a military band playing songs to honor Brazil, Syria, and Lebanon. Journalists described the work as reflecting a "Syrian character" in its figures and architectonic lines.[30] Echoing the description of Maluff's original proposal, the impressive 14 meters oeuvre bears elaborate bronze figures arranged in four distinct scenes on each side. Its red marble pedestal is decorated throughout with acanthus leaf motifs and crenellations. At its base, two dedicatory bronze plaques—one in Portuguese and one in Arabic—read: "To the Brazilian nation in its first Centennial of Independence, an homage of admiration and recognition from the Syrian-Lebanese colony – 7 September 1922".


ESTREITANDO OS ELOS QUE UNEM DUAS RAÇAS AMIGAS

Figure 4. "Uma homenagem dos syrio-libaneses ao Brasil", *Correo Paulistano*, 4 de mayo de 1928.

Despite its declared intention in honor of the hundred-year anniversary of Brazil's independence from Portugal, the monument's visual program strategically constructs a historicizing narrative of Syrian and Lebanese cultural contributions to the Americas. The sculpted figures of the final monument were first introduced to the public two years prior

Cidade de São Paulo (Inventory of Artworks and Monuments in Public Spaces in the City of São Paulo, Division of Preservation, Department of Historic Patrimony, City of São Paulo).

29 "Uma homenagem dos syrio-libaneses ao Brasil", *op. cit.*, p. 2.

30 Ibidem.

to its inauguration by the *Correio Paulistano* on March 8, 1926. Titled "The Gratitude of the Syrians," the article featured a description and photographs of the newly modeled figures by Ximenes, detailing the concept behind each sculptural group.[31] The article confirms Ugo Fleres documentation of the titles of these sculptural groups, respectively: *The Phoenicians*, *The Inventors of the Alphabet*, *Hiram I* and *The Penetration of the Phoenicians*.[32] The crowning composition of the monument, baptized *A Liberdade* (To Liberty), is featured in a large-format reproduction with each panel described as follows:

> The central face of the great relief reminds the artist that the Phoenicians were the first ship-builders, an element linking its people and its vehicle of emigration… The artist [also] recalls the creation of the alphabet by the Phoenicians, an essential element of civilization; at the back, the King of Tyre, Hiram I, initiator of the colonization of the Canary Islands, is represented. Finally, on the left, the penetration of the Syrians with the native societies of Brazil, soon after the arrival of the Portuguese. On the whole of this relief, an obelisk appears, whose capital recalls the Cypriate capital of the Louvre Museum, and in turn recalls the colonization of the Isle of Cyprus by the Phoenicians. Atop this capital, the group *A Liberdade* (To Liberty) joins Syria to Brazil… The sculptor chiseled there, to represent Brazil, an Indian in the expression of his strength and imposing beauty, with his forehead and body adorned with trophies, which lend the nude a superb and dazzling character. On his back, there is a harmoniously placed a crest of feathers, evoking the red skin from which the Americans are proud to descend.[33]

As will be discussed, each of these panels was conceptually designed to legitimize Syrian and Lebanese culture via real and imagined historical ties to Brazil.

At eye-level on the frontal base of the monument, *The Phoenicians* panel casts the ancient Levantine civilization as pioneers in shipbuilding and navigation (fig. 5). The legendary Phoenicians were a seafaring, textile-trading people, to whom the modern inhabitants of the Greater Syrian provinces and their *mahjar* compatriots traced their ancestry. The caption of the photo featured in the *Correio Paulistano* article described the scene as "remembering the construction of the first ships by the Phoenicians".[34] The scene serves as an allegory of migration, while emphasizing the global routes and cultural relations forged by Levantine peoples.[35] Visual references, such as the archaic prow of the ships and

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31 "Gratidão dos Syrios", *Correio Paulistano*, March 8, 1926, p. 5.

32 Ugo Fleres. *Ettore Ximenes.* Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1928, pp. 222. Cited in Reiner da Andrade. *Ettore Ximenes, op. cit.,* pp. 98-101.

33 Translation is my own, from "Gratidão dos Syrios", *op. cit*.

34 "Gratidão dos Syrios", *op. cit.,* p. 5.

35 Reiner da Andrade. *Ettore Ximenes*, *op. cit.,* p. 99.

Figure 6. Detail of base, Education and Economy scene. *Monumento Amizade Sírio Libanesa*, Ettore Ximenes, 1928. Photograph by Douglas Nascimiento, "Monumento Amizade Sírio Libanesa" *São Paulo Antiga* blog, http://www.saopauloantiga.com.br/amizade-sirio-libanesa/. Consulted April 29, 2017.

the traditional garb of these figures incorporate key symbols of Phoenicianism—a growing movement that constructed an image of Levantine identity that emerged with the creation of the states of Greater Syria and Lebanon under the French mandates in the early 1920s.[36] Other examples of Phoenicianist iconography in *mahjar* monuments can be found in Brazil and Argentina, such as the commemorative column erected in 1935 in Porto Alegre depicting the 1835 Battle of Farroupilhas. [37] A similar use of geometric crenellations and acanthus leaf embellishments, along with depictions of ancient Phoenician ships in bronze bas-reliefs across its base, is displayed.

The sculptural group directly to the right of the sea-faring scene constructs its narrative around another legendary Phoenician contribution—the invention of the alphabet.[38] Indeed, the oldest verifiable orthographic system has been traced to ancient Phoenicia, in line with the account of famed Greek historian, Herodotus.[39] The maritime trade of these Semitic peoples is believed to have helped spread its variations across North Africa and Europe.[40] In this scene, a scribe elder and his assistant instruct two male youths, who examine a tablet or scroll bearing phonetic symbols. The representation is intended to emphasize the powerful cultural transference and impact of this Middle Eastern literary legacy on Western culture.[41]

This sculptural composition also constructs an imagined vision of economic and gendered activity in the ancient Levant. Allusions to

36 Asher Kaufman. *Reviving Phoenicia: In Search of Identity in Lebanon*. New York, I. B. Tauris, 2004.

37 Roberto Khatlab. *Mahjar: Saga Libanesa no Brasil*. Zalka, Lebanon, Moktarat, 2002, p. 152.

38 Jeffrey Lesser. *Negotiating National..., op. cit.,* p. 57.

39 Joshua J. Mark. "Phoenicia", *Ancient History Encyclopedia,* September 2, 2009. Online at http://www.ancient.eu/phoenicia/.

40 Steven Roger Fischer. *A History of Writing*. Chicago, Reaktion Books, 2004, p. 90.

41 Reiner da Andrade. *Ettore Ximenes*, *op. cit.,* p. 99.

Figure 7. "Monumento ao Imigrante Sírio-Libanês", Administração Adhemar de Barros - Álbum 7 - Escultura em bronze e pedra. Nº 1573. Photographer unknown. *Acervos Artísticos e culturais da Prefeitura de São Paulo*. Online archive. http://www.acervosdacidade.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/PORTALACERVOS/ExibirItemAcervo.aspx?id=606612.

the textile-trade and its production are referenced in the figure of the young nomadic herder in his wooly tunic, playing panpipes to the left. A skillfully modeled goat accompanies him. In the background, a woman bears a bountiful bundle above her head—another allusion to ancient Phoenician textile production. Imagined gender roles are underscored within this composition as only males attend the educational lecture on the alphabet, suggesting the artist envisioned limited literacy for women in the ancient Levant. In contrast, Phoenician women are only visible in the background or the fringes of the overall monumental composition. Within the greater narrative of the scene, these women are solely portrayed as anonymous laborers, carrying goods or caring for children while peeking over the corners of the monument into the flanking narrative panels. Posed in these activities, their female bodies function as visual devices, guiding the viewer into the next scene.

Parallel to the scene of ship-bearing Phoenicians, the viewer encounters a surprising image—a depiction of the legendary discovery of the Canary Islands by Hiram I, King of Tyre.[42] While Hiram I does not appear predominantly in the history books in such a role, the ancient king figures frequently as an ally of the Biblical Kings David and Solomon, and as the founder of the city of Utica in modern-day Tunisia.[43] Interestingly, at the turn of the twentieth century, various alternate theories of the "discovery" of the Americas prior to Columbus circulated contagiously. Several controversial authorities argued that Greek sources and petroglyphs discovered in North America and Brazil suggested that Phoenicians under the authority of King Hiram I were

42 Tyre was an ancient Phoenician city believed to have been located in the region of Lebanon today.

43 Reiner da Andrade. *Ettore Ximenes, op. cit.,* p. 100.

the "first to circumnavigate the Atlantic" around the first millennium BC.[44] Within this sculptural composition, this theory is illustrated via the depiction of the legendary voyager-king greeted by indigenous and African peoples with generous gifts upon arrival in the New World. During its public inauguration, the *Correio Paulistano* described the scene as follows: "The Africans bring gifts to please the Civilizer to indicate that Syrians were the first colonizers."[45] Archival photographs of the monument show the body of the indigenous figure in the foreground prostrated at the feet of Hiram in complete supplication.[46] The scene thereby casts the *mahjar* community as protagonists in an imagined depiction of "civilizing" encounter.

By supporting the scientifically shaky theory of a Phoenician discovery of the Americas, the immigrant community inscribed itself within narratives of civilization and exploration parallel to those established by Latin America's European colonizers and immigrants. The sculptural group engages with modern representations of Spanish and Portuguese colonization celebrated in the arts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, the early twentieth century provided the stage for two major cycles of artistic production in Brazil, where nation-building narratives took on powerful momentum, proliferating a monumental leitmotif of the "discovery of the Americas". These included the so-called 4th Centennial of "Discovery", circa 1900, for which Rodolfo Bernadelli's Monument to Pedro Alvares Cabral, depicting the Portuguese explorer's foundation of Brazil, and Decio Villares' bust of the Italian voyager *Christopher Columbus* were constructed. The subject was also common in history painting across the Americas. Mexican Juan Cordero's *Columbus Before the Catholic Monarchs* (1850, oil on canvas) and Brazilian Eliseu Visconti's *Providence Guides Cabral* (1900, oil on canvas)[47] provide key examples. In this imagery, the European navigator

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44 For more on the theory that the Phoenicians first discovered the Americas, see "The Discovery of the Americas and the Return in Strength of the Occident," in Luc-Normand Tellier. *Urban World History: An Economic and Geographical Perspective*. Quebec, University of Quebec Press, 2009, p. 301. On the claims to classical and petroglyph evidence, see William McNeil. *Visitors to Ancient America: The Evidence for European and Asian Presence in America Prior to Columbus*. Jefferson, North Carolina and London, McFarland & Company, 2005, p. 278.

45 *Correio Paulistano,* May 4, 1928, *op. cit.* The press release specifically states that this sculptural group represents Hiram I as the first circumnavigator of the Altantic and his discovery of the Canary Islands.

46 See photograph titled "Monumento ao Imigrante Sírio-Libanês", *Administração Adhemar de Barros* - Álbum 7 - *Escultura em bronze e pedra* 1573. Photographer unknown. *Acervos Artísticos e culturais da Prefeitura de São Paulo.* Online archive. http://www.acervosdacidade.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/PORTALACERVOS/ExibirItemAcervo.aspx?id=606612.

47 Jacqueline Barnitz and Paul Frank. *Twentieth Century Art of Latin America, Revised & Expanded Edition*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 2015, p. 12.

is received in a docile, receptive manner by indigenous peoples. The 1922 Centennial of Independence served as the second key moment in which such leitmotifs would circulate. In addition to works like Ximenes' Monument to Independence, the Museu Paulista (Paulista Museum) in São Paulo and the Natural History Museum of Rio de Janeiro were both re-organized and transformed with the commission and installation of new nationalist paintings and sculptures.[48] The Syrian-Lebanese Monument, commissioned precisely at this moment, responded to the renewed interest in "discovery," while adapting it to include its patrons.

The strategic incorporation of this scene on the Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship appends the ancient Phoenicians, and by proxy, their modern Syrian and Lebanese descendants in diaspora– into epic narratives of heroic navigation and colonization of the Americas. Najib Jafet's public speech as the official orator of the monument's inauguration further promoted this vision of the Phoenicians' civilizing role, declaring, "The Phoenician unified Asia with Europe and America, if we are to recognize that which many modern historians currently affirm based on copious and rich documentation."[49] Clearly, the monument' patrons were eager to assert their place within discourses of civilization first established by Brazilians of European heritage.

This colonizing narrative is resumed and reconfigured on the fourth side of the monument. The prominent local newspaper, *O Estado de São Paulo,* described the panel as depicting "Syrian penetration in Brazil… represented by that commerce with which has resulted in a great prosperity".[50] Here, the bronze figures of Phoenician textile merchants solemnly and respectfully offer swathes of cloth to nude, indigenous women who receive them with smiles of delight and curiosity. Despite the claim of depicting textile commerce strongly associated with the *mahjar* community in its adopted Brazilian home, the panel embeds yet another civilizing trope within the monument's visual program. The depiction of Phoenician men introducing naked native women to cloth implies a role in introducing customs of dress, and thereby "civilization" and "progress" to the Americas. Again, a gendered dimension is at play, as the composition hierarchically portrays heavily robed, fez-capped men providing cloth to unclothed indigenous women.

The image strongly evokes colonial-era print images of native peoples, where they are consistently portrayed as either naked and "barbaric," or

48 Cecilia Helena De Salles Oliveira. "O Museu Paulista Da USP e a Memória Da Independência", *op cit*.

49 Ibidem.

50 Homenagem Syria", *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 3, 1928.

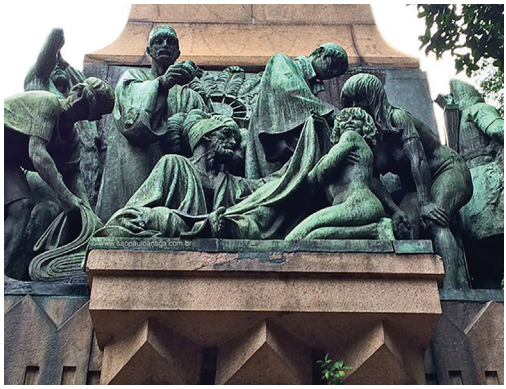

Figure 8. Detail of base, Education and Economy scene. *Monumento Amizade Sírio Libanesa*, Ettore Ximenes, 1928. Photograph by Douglas Nascimiento, featured in "Monumento Amizade Sírio Libanesa", *São Paulo Antiga* blog, http://www.saopauloantiga.com.br/amizade-sirio-libanesa/. Consulted April 29, 2017.

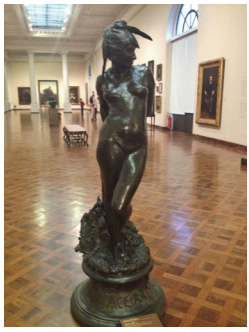

Figure 9. Rodolfo Bernardelli's *Faceira*, 1880. Museu de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photograph by Caroline Olivia M. Wolf, 2017.

as childlike beings in need of guidance by the "civilizing" colonizer.[51] Unclothed indigenous peoples are also depicted in famous history paintings, sculptures and monuments authored by the Brazilian academy. A key example in painting is Victor Meirelles' *First Mass in Brazil*, of 1861, in which nearly-naked indigenous peoples watch in peaceful wonder as a priest performs an imagined first Eucharistic on pristine Brazilian shores. Indigenous figures also feature prominently in Rio's Monumento a Floriano Peixoto by Eduardo de Sá, a student of Meirelles. Inaugurated in 1910, the monument depicts Father Anchieta catechizing a young native girl. Nearby along the base, a semi-nude tribesman sits in the shadow of legendary Portuguese castaway, known as Caramuru.[52] Sensuous indigenous nudes also proliferated in sculpture at the turn of the century, as in Rodolfo Bernardelli's voluptuous native beauties, exemplified by *Faceira* (1880), *Moema* (1895) and *Paraguaçu* (1908). In these works, the nude bodies of female natives suggest a metaphor between the fertile bodies of indigenous peoples and the fecundity of their "discovered" lands. Their nudity not only underscores the role of such images in colonizing narratives, but also European academic

51 For more on the prolific manner in which such imagery of indigenous peoples circulated in colonial prints, see Rolena Adorno. "The Depiction of the Self and Other in Colonial Peru", *Art Journal*, 49 (2), 1990, pp. 110-118.

52 A description of the monument was published in the *Diario de Noticias*, 26 September, 1943, online at: https://outrora.info/images/7/73/Dn_monumento_marechal_floriano_peixoto.pdf.

traditions in which native and/or female bodies served as the object of scopic pleasure.

Despite the efforts to portray the Phoenicians as purveyors of civilization in these scenes, the monument's depiction of its Eastern Mediterranean protagonists also reflects the influence of Orientalism across Latin America. Indeed, such imagery evokes the Bedouin-influenced representations of gaucho types in the literary work of Argentine author Domingo F. Sarmiento, as well as the Orientalist paintings of Raymond Monvoisin, a European traveling artist who settled in Chile.[53] These artists and authors all expressed an interest in Middle Eastern motifs across the southern cone reaching as far back as the 1830s.[54] Particularly, within the context of Brazil, the elegantly robed figures of the Syrian-Lebanese sculptural panel echo the masterful nineteenth century paintings of Middle-Eastern subjects by renowned Brazilian artist, Pedro Américo. Similar figures can be found in his works, including *A rabequista arabe* (*The Arab Rabel Player)* of 1884, in which a young child wearing a fez cap and flowing robes plays a exotic stringed instrument. Placed before an ornate woven textile with arabesque and geometric motifs, the environment emphasizes a vision of the Orient. Other Orientalist paintings by Américo depict biblical women in ornate dresses, such as Judith and Holofernes, as well as Moses and Jocabed, painted at approximately the same period.

Figure 10. Pedro Americo, *The Arab Rabel player*, 1884, oil on canvas. Collection of the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes (MNBA), Rio de Janeiro. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

Anthropologist Paulo Gabriel Hilu da Rocha Pinto refers to the particularly biblical strain of interest in the Orient as "intellectual Orientalism," a scholarly form that circulated widely in Brazil. Both

53 *Facundo,* a major text by Domingo F. Sarmiento first published in Buenos Aires in 1845, famously draws upon Orientalist references of nomadic bedouins to construct an image of gaucho and caudillo types. For more on Orientalism in the work of Sarmiento, see Carlos Altamirano. "El orientalismo y la idea del despotismo en el Facundo", in Leila Area and Mabel Moraña (comp.): *La imaginación histórica en el siglo XIX*. Rosario, UNR, 1994, pp. 265-276. Roberto Amigo notes the fact that Sarmiento cited the Orientalist paintings of Monvoisin, in particular his nineteenth-century painting, *Alí Baja y la Vasiliki*. Roberto Amigo. "Beduinos en la Pampa. Apuntes sobre la imagen del gaucho y el orientalismo de los pintores franceses", *Historia y Sociedad* 13, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Económicas. Medellín, 2007, p.2.

54 Roberto Amigo. "Beduinos en la Pampa", *op. cit.*

Pedro Américo and Emperor Dom Pedro II were avid intellectual Orientalists in this respect, having taken several trips to the Middle East and North Africa to further their studies.[55] Hilu da Rocha Pinto points out that this strain of Orientalism would fade with the onset of the Brazilian Republic in the early twentieth century. At approximately the same time, immigrants from the Levant would embrace a form of "native orientalism," as a means to construct a history distinct from its Ottoman past and negotiate cultural difference in diaspora. With its overt embrace of Phoenician and Orientalist figures, the Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship provides an iconic example of "native Orientalism," or as Christina Civantos dubs the phenomenon within the Argentine diasporic literary context, "auto-Orientalism".[56]

The monument's stylistic links to mid-to-late nineteenth century history painting and Orientalism might lead one to read the work as a retrograde piece within the 1920s. Yet, its strong references to a legendary or mythical past also permits a reading of its imagery more broadly within the context of *Modernismo*—Latin American Modernism—developing in the early twentieth century. Exotic and classical subjects were frequently depicted in the international offshoots of the Modern movement, such as Parnassianism and Symbolism. While the overall use of allegory and realistic representation of the Centennial piece allow it to register visually within Beaux Arts traditions, the ornamental motifs along the architectural base display geometricized, Art Deco styling. The juxtaposition of these motifs beside the figures of ancient Phoenician ancestors and pastoral shepherd boy, allow for an understanding of the monument within this greater rubric of Modernism.

Crowning the pinnacle of the monument are the three bronze life-sized allegories that comprise the composition entitled *To Liberty*. According to *O Estado de São Paulo*, the trio depicts a "pure Syrian maiden" offering a gift to "her Brazilian brother," with the "same love that she received upon her arrival to this land, blessed by God"[57] (fig. 1). The Brazilian brother, in turn, is embodied in the shape of an indigenous warrior. The romanticized diplomatic exchange is presided over by the colossal allegorical figure of Liberty, in traditional female form and Phrygian cap.[58] The flowing layers of the Syrian maiden's loose-

55 Hilu da Rocha Pinto. "A Labyrinth of Mirrors", *op. cit*., pp. 47-49.

56 Christina Civantos. *Between Argentines and Arabs: Argentine Orientalism, Arab Immigrants and the Writing of Identity*. State University of New York Press, Albany, 2006.

57 *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 4, 1928.

58 Reiner da Andrade has pointed out that this allegory is often misidentified as the Brazilian Republic, including specialized websites and the online archives of the Departamento do Patrimonio Historico of São Paulo (DPH), at http://www.monumentos.art.br/monumento/

ly tied veil, ornate sash and dress evoke the Orientalist repertoire of Pedro Americo's Jocabed and Judith paintings. Enclosed in its precious case, the maiden's gift is conveniently ambiguous, and the indigenous "Brazilian brother" accepts it with an air of honor and duty.

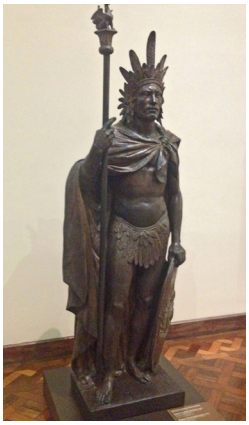

Figure 11. Francisco Manuel Chaves Pinheiro. *Alegoria do Império Brasileiro* (1872). Collection of the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes (MNBA), Rio de Janeiro. Photograph by Caroline "Olivia" M. Wolf, 2017.

The representation of Brazil as an indigenous warrior has a strong precedent within the nineteenth century, as seen in Francisco Manuel Chaves Pinheiro's *Alegoria do Império Brasileiro* (1872) (fig. 11).[59] The description coincides with images of "noble savages" depicted frequently in Latin American colonial and nineteenth century art. It is interesting to recall that the initial 1926 description published in the *Correio Paulistano* highlighted this figure's "strength and imposing beauty…[and] superb and dazzling character," while referencing the feather work on the figure's back as reminiscent of the "red skin from which the Americans are proud to descend".[60] Here, Ximenes' native "Brazilian brother" is rendered in an elegant *contraposto*, with weight shifted gracefully between hips and supporting bent knee in a manner that quotes Michelangelo's *David*—a work the monument's Italian sculptor was undoubtedly familiar with due to his studies in Florence.

The female allegory of Liberty finds a parallel in the female allegory of Independence atop its namesake monument, constructed contemporaneously by Ximenes in São Paulo's Ipiranga Park. Within this grandiose monumental work, one also finds an indigenous warrior flanking the chariot of Independence in the work's crowning composition. Yet, in the national monument, the native warrior plays a subordinate role, smaller in scale and less important in the overall program. He is also dressed in an eclectic, classicized costume showing antique Roman influences. In contrast, the Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship casts the native figure in a leading role as a critical figure symbolizing the nation in the overall message of transnational friendship expressed by its *mahjar* patrons.

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amizade_siriolibanesa. Reiner da Andrade. *Ettore Ximenes*, *op. cit*., p. 98.

59 This artwork belongs today to the collection of the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes in Rio de Janiero.

60 Translation is my own, from "Gratidão dos Syrios", *Correio Paulistano*, March 8, 1926, pp. 5.

Figure 12. Ettore Ximenes' *Monument to Independence*, and detail of indigenous figure. Ipiranga Park, São Paulo, Brazil. Photograph by the author, Caroline "Olivia" M. Wolf, 2016

Modern Constructions of Brazilian Identity

The diverse ethnic panorama visible within the Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship reflects debates surrounding conflicting modernisms and identities taking place on both the national and local scale during the Brazilian Centennial. Brazilian Modernism itself is powerfully associated with the 1922 São Paulo celebrations known as Semana da Arte Moderna (Modern Art Week), considered a watershed moment within the movement's construction. During February 11th to 18th of this week in 1922, the city of São Paulo famously hosted an art festival in which writers, artists and intellectuals associated with vanguard movements challenged and created new images of national identity, or *brasilidade* (Brazilian-ness).

The Modern Art week of 1922 boldly advocated a new approach that would address Brazilian contemporary culture and break from the academic tradition, with its imported foreign models.[61] The Grupo dos

61 "A Semana", Museu Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC USP), Secolo XX, http://www.mac.usp.br/mac/templates/projetos/seculoxx/modulo2/modernismo/

Cinco (Group of Five), was at the forefront of this vanguard, which included writer Oswald de Andrade and critic Mario de Andrade as well as the leading plastic artists Anita Malfatti, Tarsila do Amaral and Emiliano di Cavalcanti, among others. The exhibit embraced a radically alternative visual vocabulary that involved stylized and simplified forms in order to recover a primitive effect, as well as paved the way for the circulation of innovative rhetoric via bold manifestos.[62] Scorned by the São Paulo elite, the exhibition spurred debates surrounding the meaning of modernism in the nation, ushering in the diffusion of new ideas about the movement that were heterogeneous and malleable in nature.

Discourses promoted by Di Cavalcanti and entrepreneur Paulo Prado during this famed week preached of the necessity for a national renewal in the arts and encouraged nativist themes. However, with the exception of oeuvres like *Negro Head* by Vicente do Rego Monteiro, much of the actual artwork exhibited during the iconic week focused on alternate formalist approaches rather than indigenous or African figures.[63] Yet, over the following decade, representations of the "primitive" and "popular culture", and their valorization would shift radically in Brazil. Leading modernists explored these representations, celebrating the indigenous and the African heritage scorned by the elites. This led to the representation of legendary indigenous figures, such as Tarsila do Amaral's *Abaporu*, in 1928, which served as the inspiration for Oswald de Andrades's *Antropofagia* manifesto. Here, do Amaral famously embraced the cannibal as a cultural metaphor in her famous painting.[64] The titles of these works refer to the practice of anthropophagy—literally, man-eating or cannibalism. While Oswald de Andrade's manifesto opted for the scientific term, do Amaral named her painting using the language of the Tupí people—an indigenous tribe originally accused of cannibalism. This celebration of anthropophagy as a metaphor for

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semana/index.htm.

62 For a general overview of the Semana da Arte Moderna, see "The Avant Garde of the 1920s: Cosmopolitanism or National Identity?, in Barnitz and Frank: *Twentieth Century Art of Latin America*, *op. cit*., pp. 56-65. On the racial and ethnic undertones of the Semana da Arte Moderna, see Fabiola Lopez-Duran. "Chapter 2–Paris Goes West: From the Musée Social to Ailing Paradise", in *Eugenics in the Garden: Architecture, Medicine, and Landscape from France to Latin America in the Early Twentieth Century*. Dissertation, Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), p. 30.

63 Vicente do Rego Monteiro was also one of the first of the vanguard artist to develop an interest in Brazilian indigenous themes, as seen in his illustrations narrating the legends of Amazonian peoples for P.L Ducharte's *Legendes, croyances et talismans des indiens de l'Amazione* (1923). See "Vicente do Rego Monteiro", in Richard R. Brettell and Paul Hayes Tucker: *Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Paintings.* New York, N.Y., Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009, p. 287.

64 The painting forms part of the collections of the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, (MALBA), viewable online at http://www.malba.org.ar/tag/antropofagia/?v=diario.

Brazilian culture recast the nation as one that devoured the culture of its foreign colonizer to metabolize it into a new, distinctly unique form drawn from the best qualities consumed.[65]

While these vanguard works sought to incorporate indigenous and African imagery within the visual culture of modern Brazil, their championing of the cannibal as a cultural metaphor underscores the privileged position of the predominantly white, well-to-do artists. Recalling the real accusation of cannibalism hurled at *mahjar* immigrants, the use of such metaphors was indeed not accessible nor appealing for artists and patrons from minority communities, who would have undoubtedly risked real social scorn from this allusion. This does not suggest that the *mahjar* community did not support or subscribe to the vanguard movement, but rather proposes why the community may have opted to commission their monument by a more conservative artist. It is also important to recall Ximenes' history of including a diverse array of ethnic figures in his work. While Ximenes' sculptures drew heavily on academic traditions, he also championed a new national approach with a pluralistic ethno-cultural repertoire. Advocating for novel national and nativist imagery during the Centennial, Ximenes complained:

> [The Brazilians] ignore, or rather do not come to understand the spirit of their environment, namely: They want [sculptural] study to be consistent with all the publications that see light in Europe and in North America. No one thinks of studying the artistic origin of Brazil. They take horror in the Indian, and I implore them: Why not try to create a style from indigenous elements? They reply that they are Portuguese, and that their architecture and art generally begin to manifest in the colonial period.[66]

Although Ximenes and the vanguard artists of the Semana da Arte Moderna were on opposite poles in terms of aesthetic and stylistic approaches, they did share a strong interest in the creation of a new national art and nativist themes.

Ximenes' design for the Syrian-Lebanese Centennial monument also echoes the same desire to represent minority groups that remained an overlooked but critical component of Brazilian culture. The work visually introduced its patrons in plastic form within the modern, national

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65 Daryle Williams. *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945*. Duke, Duke University Press, 2001. See also También Aracy Amaral. *Artes plásticas na Semana de 22*. São Paulo, Martins, 1970.

66 Translation from the Italian is my own. Cited in Reiner da Andrade, *Ettore Ximenes*, *op. cit*., pp. 101-102. Reiner da Andrade notes that this quotation is difficult to verify, but appears in Ugo Fleres monograph on the artist. See Ugo Fleres. *Ettore Ximenes.* Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1928. p. 226.

imaginary and urban fabric. As noted, both Ximenes' projects for the Centennial incorporated indigenous and African figures within its visual repertoire, and include representations of native warriors. Yet, the Syrian-Lebanese monument, with its Phoenician protagonists alongside indigenous and African figures, displays a more pluralistic panorama of cultural diversity while legitimizing its immigrant patrons within Brazilian history.

Nonetheless, the vanguard participants of the 1922 Modern Week did not see Ximenes as modern because of his conservative academic style and foreign training. In fact, they criticized him as just the opposite. Instead, Victor Brecheret was the vanguard Modernist sculptor of choice, heralded for mastering the simplification of forms pioneered by European Modernists like Mestrovic and Brancusi. During this critical period in the shaping of Modernism, Brecheret exhibited works like *Eva* (c. 1920) and *Christ* (1919-1920), which would powerfully sway the support of critic Mario de Andrade. Brecheret's ability to render such stylized pieces would make him not only the preferred artist of Brazilian vanguard critics but also of authors like Monteiro Lobato, who would, on more than one occasion, explicitly praise Brecheret as a modern alternative to Ximenes. This polarizing comparison of the two artists by Brazilian intellectuals highlights their stylistic opposition in the Modernist context of 1922 São Paulo. Although their artistic differences were highlighted in such public critiques, the prolific participation of both artists in key exhibitions and commissions underscores shifting aesthetics and heterogeneous nature of Modernism at the time.

Centennial Critiques in 1920s São Paulo

Despite a shared interest in the construction of national identity via the arts, both of Ximenes' Centennial projects received a flurry of sharp criticism. The artist's design for the Monument to Independence was the jury-selected winner of a 1912 competition, yet the proposal of sculptor Nicolas Rolli had been the recognized favorite of the public.[67] This led some to accuse the selection of Ximenes' as the result of favoritism on behalf of the competition jury. Other criticized Ximenes' monument for its lack of names and figures historically associated with Brazilian Independence, obliging the sculptor to alter his design. Another sector

67 "Monumento á Independência", *Inventário de Obras de Arte e Monumentos em Espaços Públicos da Cidade de São Paulo*.

took issue with the style and the overly grandiose scale of the work. The rejection of Victor Brecheret's original design for the independence monument caused further outrage among vanguard critics. Semana da Arte Moderna protagonist Mario de Andrade complained: "The illustrious Mr. Ximenes, who has come from afar, disgraces the hill of Ipiranga with his colossal centerpiece of Sevres porcelain".[68]

Although the critiques were many and manifold, Ximenes' work overall was positively received by the Paulista public. He also particularly enjoyed the support of José de Freitas Valle, a major intellectual, patron and collector.[69] Freitas Valle was one of the judges of the competition for the Monument to Independence, and a prominent figure in the artistic life and careers of plastic and literary artists who lived and passed through São Paulo into the 1930s. The divergent readings of Ximenes' work by contemporaneous critics like Freitas Valle and Mario de Andrade—both renowned intellectuals of their time—shed light on the fact that modernisms were multiple and far from hegemonic in 1920s Brazil. These critical counter-positions reflect competing notions of the movement operating actively within Centennial-era Brazil. The co-existence of plural modernisms and Ximenes' success with both specialized audiences and the broader public also clarify the Syrian immigrant community's selection of the artist for their public monument.

While the Ipiranga monument found criticism among vanguard Paulista circles, fault was also found with Ximenes' *mahjar*-sponsored Centennial monument once it was finally publically unveiled in 1928. According to the sculptor Alfredo Oliani, the monumental representation of the "Brazilian brother" as an "indian" did not please either the leader of Syrian-Lebanese colony or the current President of the state of São Paulo, Dr. Washington Luís Pereira da Sousa, upon its inauguration.[70] In fact, Washington Luís suggested that Ximenes alter the figure to "dress him as a *bandeirante*".[71] The term *bandeirante* refers to the Portuguese colonizers of the region, who made their living as slave traders by trapping indigenous peoples in the region and later in the

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68 Aracy Amaral. *Artes plásticas na Semana de 22: subsídios para uma história das artes plásticas no Brasil*, p. 69. Translation is my own.

69 For a breif biography of Freitas Valle, see http://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/pessoa467510/freitas-valle. For more on support or criticism of Ximenes' project for the Monument of Independance, see Aracy Amaral, *Artes plásticas na Semana de 22*, pp. 89-90.

70 Dr. Washington Luís Pereira da Sousa would leave an important cultural and political legacy in Brazil, as a lawyer, historian, President of the state of São Paulo (1920-1924), and later President of the *República Velha* of Brazil (1926-1930), overthrown by the military coup of the *Revoluçao de 1930* by Getulio Vargas.

71 "Amizade Sirio-Libanesa", Inventário de Obras de Arte e Monumentos em Espaços Públicos da Cidade de São Paulo.

transatlantic commerce of Africans. Washington Luís' recommendation to transform the indigenous warrior into *bandeirante* reflects Centennial discourses as a moment in which São Paulo's elites adopted the figure of these slave-traders as historic, local heroes and an emblem of the city itself. His suggestion also reflects the aforementioned lingering reluctance to represent indigenous and/or African heritage remaining within a prominent sector of Paulista culture.

Indeed, Centennial-era institutions popularized the image of the *bandeirante* across São Paulo. Afonso Taunay, the Paulista Museum's first formal curator and a jurist for the 1912 Monument of Independence competition, authored various history books on the *bandeirantes* at this time. In them, he cast the slave traders as "civilizing" conquerors and regional pioneers.[72] Taunay also commissioned various statues and portraits of *bandeirantes* for the new Paulista Museum.[73] While this problematic championing of slave-traders as heroes had its origins in elite political circles, the *bandeirante* was also readily adopted by vanguard artists like Victor Brecheret. Brecheret's aforementioned original proposal for the Monumento ás Bandeiras (Monument to the Flags), first designed for the city's 1922 Centennial, was based on the *bandeirantes* motif. Although rejected in the Centennial competition, the work would be realized three decades later, in 1953, in Ibirapuera Park as part of the city's fourth Centennial celebration.[74] Brecheret's monument depicts herculean *bandeirantes* on horseback, leading a procession of African and indigenous slaves in chains who toil together to move a massive vessel. The adoption of this iconography by Modernists in the early to mid-twentieth century demonstrates the manner in which both conservative and vanguard culture makers embraced the Portuguese slave traders as an emblem of regional identity without qualms. The later construction of the monument highlights the powerful legacy of the *bandeirante* as a lasting urban emblem and underscores the pressure that artists such as Ximenes faced to perpetuate such iconography in their works during the Centennial. Despite the suggestion from São Paulo's president, the "Brazilian brother" atop the Monument to Syrian-Lebanese Friendship remained unaltered, maintaining its original indigenous warrior form, for reasons unknown. Perhaps this may have been due to the fact that

72 Maraliz De Castro Vieira Christo. "Bandeirantes na Contramão da historia: Un studio iconografico", *Proj. História* 24, São Paulo, jun 2002, pp. 307-335.

73 Ibidem.

74 "Monumento ás Bandeiras," Inventário de Obras de Arte e Monumentos em Espaços Públicos da Cidade de São Paulo.

Ximenes himself died before the completion of the monument,[75] a lack of consensus among its patrons, or even a simple lack of funding.

Interestingly, while the monument was not *physically* altered in response to these critiques, it was indeed *textually* altered in the press accounts of the monument's final inauguration in 1928. The *Correio Paulistano* once again described the allegorical group upon in public unveiling, stating: "At the top of the base emerges a group symbolizing an homage to Brazil from Syria, personified in the figure of the *bandeirante,* in patriotic Brazilian glory to whom loyalty is expressed by the Syrian maiden, offering gifts to her Brazilian brother".[76] While the newspaper article featured a large photograph of the monument, it selected a view of the "Brazilian brother" from behind, obscuring his indigenous features. In this manner, although the monument did not actually physically bear the representation of the *bandeirante* in its final plastic form, the adjustment was brilliantly achieved in print and circulated as such by the press. It is likely that the monument's immigrant patrons, who published several *mahjar* newspapers at the time, used local connections with journalist networks to ensure the press circulated this "corrected" image of the monumental Brazilian brother to the public. It also demonstrates a savvy understanding of the media by the immigrant community, which recognized the press's capacity to *verbally* alter the public perception of the monument enough to suit its needs. With the demands of critics met by simply altering the description of the monument in the press, it was unnecessary to physically alter the actual artwork.

Catering to the diverse patrons of his two Centennial monuments, the visual programs Ximenes employed across these works display a striking range of representations. The Phoenician and allegorical imagery of the Monument to Syrian Lebanese Friendship contrasts sharply with the colossal Monument to Independence's emphasis on historical events, such as *The Minas Gerais Conspirators of 1789* and *The Pernambuco Revolutionaries of 1817*.[77] Together with the epic relief quoting Pedro Americo's *Independence of Brazil*, these scenes complement the national narrative of the monument's crowning composition, the *Triumphal March of the Brazilian nation*.

Despite the difference in subject matter, several iconographic motifs are echoed across these two Centennial commemorations. Watchful feline

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75 Ibidem.

76 *Correio Paulistano,* May 4, 1928, *op. cit.*

77 Many of the historical figures or scenes in the visual program of the national monument were later additions to Ximenes original design, responding to criticism that the monument lacked historical content. See "Monumento ás Bandeiras," Inventário de Obras de Arte e Monumentos em Espaços Públicos da Cidade de São Paulo.

Figure 13. Detail of feline and pedestal relief of Ettore Ximenes' *Monument to Independence*. Ipiranga Park, São Paulo, Brazil. Photograph by the author, Caroline Olivia M. Wolf, 2016

forms guard the base of each monumental pedestal, and both refer to ancient ships (fig. 13). The ship in bas-relief on the base of the Monument to Independence is ambiguous, perhaps suggesting a Portuguese galley. Yet, the prow shown on the base is distinctly hooked, showing a strong parallel to the Phoenician ship that Ximenes contemporaneously designed for the Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship. The vessel image on the base of the Independence monument strongly resonates with the symbols of Masonry, with its images of pillars, compass, trowel, and pot of incense. However, within the Masonic tradition, arc motifs commonly depict the covered barge of Noah's Ark. The sharply hooked prow of the galley on the base is a bold departure from typical Masonic iconography, suggesting the artist may have been influenced by his sea-faring designs for the Syrian-Lebanese monument.

Mahjar Monuments and Transnational Politics in Centennial Latin America

A brief comparison of monuments sponsored by *mahjar* communities for the Centennials of Chile and Argentina reveals how such patronage allowed diaspora networks to become visible while signaling specific transnational allegiances. Although most Latin American countries celebrated their Centennials approximately a decade prior to Brazil's 1922 festivities, these commemorations all activated moments of reflection on national identity. Nearly all the Centennial monuments sponsored by *mahjar* communities in the southern cone were commissioned to Italian sculptors, who had garnered a reputation by the turn of the century for their nation-building projects. In Buenos Aires, the diaspora community commissioned the bronze and marble *Monumento de los residentes sirios a la Nación Argentina* (The Monument of the Syrian Residents to the Argentine Nation) by Italian immigrant turned Argentine national,

Garibaldi Affani. Similarly, the immigrant community in Santiago, Chile sponsored the *Monumento de la colonia otomana en honor a Manuel Rodriguez* (Monument of the Ottoman Colony in Honor of Manuel Rodriguez) by another Italian, Roberto Negri.

A quick observation of these monuments illustrates the diverse iconography employed in such works across the southern cone. Their visual programs contrast boldly with the distinctly Phoenician figures of São Paulo's *mahjar* monument. The statue was originally inaugurated in a small garden plaza located along the Paseo de Julio (today known as Leandro Alem avenue) between Santa Fe Avenue and Arenales Street. This placed piece in dialogue with several Centennial monuments sponsored by European communities nearby. Argentina's Syrian Monument presents a bronze Ottoman subject in cosmopolitan attire, wearing the fez and a European suit. The figure serves a symbolic surrogate for the monument's collective patrons, gesturing up to the allegory of the Republic while placed beside pendant bas-reliefs featuring idealized scenes of immigration (fig.14). The inscriptional references to Syrian patronage of the Argentine monument reflect the early stirrings of the Syrianist movement taking place both abroad and in the homeland, which advocated for the regional independence of the Greater Syrian province and ethno-religious unity.[78] In addition to this declaration

Figure 14. Monumento de los Sirios a la Nación Argentina. Garibaldi Affani, 1913. Photograph by the author, Caroline Olivia M. Wolf, 2016.

78 For more on modern Middle Eastern political movements, see Carol Hakim. *The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea, 1840-1920.* Berkeley, University of California Press, 2013; Hasan

of identity, the sculpture's coronation with a female national allegory visually quotes that of the *Pirámide de Mayo* (May Pyramid)—a major Argentine emblem. Paired with the fez-capped figure of the ideal Syrian immigrant, these visual references pledge of allegiance to both Argentine and Syrian communities.

In contrast, the Chilean monument solely displays the image of a patriot in typical heroic form, dressed in military regalia in a laudatory gesture and unsheathed sword. There is no visual reference to the immigrant community beyond its original inscription, which read, "La Colonia Otomana al reino de Chile".[79] Only Ottoman allegiances are declared in terms of patronage—a subtle but important statement. Smaller in terms of materiality and municipal reception, the Chilean monument was inaugurated on September 22, 1910, with speeches by deputy Don Malaquias Concha, tertiary mayor Don Carlos Silvio Batra,[80] and Teosodio Farah Hayad—chosen to represent the Ottoman immigrant patrons as he spoke the best Spanish in the community.[81] The conservative iconography and lack of visual reference to the work's patrons suggest a more antagonistic host environment faced by the migrant community during the Chilean Centennial. As scholars Aksoy and Robins point out, "it is only possible [for a migrant] to be integrated to the degree that the integrationist host culture permits".[82]

Interestingly, a different monument was simultaneously sponsored by a separate group of Arab-speaking immigrants in Santiago, titled El *Monumento Sirio Otomano del Centenario* (The Syrian Ottoman Centennial Monument).[83] Originally located on the hillside park of the Cerro Santa Lucia, this monument brandished a torch-bearing

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Kayali. *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Second Constitutional Period of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997.

79 Comment by Liliana Farah Taréon on "La estatua extraviada", in Guajardo: *El Tercer milenio.* Consulted 29/2/2016.

80 *Programa Oficial del Centenario, 1910*.

81 Farah Taré. "La estatua extraviada", in Guajardo: *El Tercer milenio*. Guajardo's blog also described the harsh critique the artist received for the statue published in the periodical *Zigzag*, to which the artist responded that he was limited by the small funds given to create the statue. Farah Taré states that the immigrant community made a major sacrifice to collect these funds. The statue was later moved from the capital to the outskirts of Llay llay, where its original plaque showing Ottoman patronage was removed and replaced with a new plaque misleading attributing the monument as a gift by the Air Force reserves of Viña del Mar to the city of Llay llay.

82 K. Robins and A. Aksoy. "From Spaces of Identity to Mental Space: Lessons from Turkish-Cypriot Cultural Experience in Britain"*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(4), 2001, pp. 685-711.

83 Criss Salazar. "El Monumento Sirio Otomano del centenario desaparecido desde el Cerro Santa Lucía", in *Urbatorium: cronicas y apuntes de exploración urbana*, blog, consulted April 27, 2017. Many thanks to Pablo Ortemberg, for pointing me to this info.

female allegory atop a classical column. Photographs of its inauguration were circulated in the popular press, in magazines like *ZigZag*. Like the Manuel Rodriguez monument, the Santa Lucia monument does not visually allude to the community beyond its dedicatory inscription. This work uses a generic female allegory to represent the Chilean Republic. However, this Western-influenced iconographic choice marks an important departure from modern Ottoman monuments, which primarily utilized epigraphy or architectonic motifs. Its inscription reads: "From the Syrian-Ottoman Colony to the Chilean Republic during its First Centennial. Let this monument be a memorial of our sincere affection, and remain a relic of gratitude. In honor of this date, we proclaim and state this a testament of our love in celebration of [the nation's] glory and triumph". These lines carefully specify the patrons of the work as "Syrian-Ottomans," marking a shift away from pure Ottomanism.[84]

The existence of parallel Centennial monuments by the *mahjar* community in Santiago, as well as the distinct patron groups attributed to each, signals competing notions of transnational identity emerging among Middle Eastern immigrants in the diaspora. Here, two monuments constructed by different *mahjar* communities express distinct visions of identity. While one group promotes a strictly Ottoman image, the other brandishes a Syrian-Ottoman identity. Over time, these constructs of identity would reconfigure within the larger Arab nationalist movement.[85]

The monuments constructed by these distinct *mahjar* communities in Latin America during the Centennial serve as a physical record and visual marker of the new transnational identities that these immigrants reconfigured in the diaspora. They are testament to a transitional moment in which modern Middle Eastern identities were reshaped within the southern cone in diverse visual modes. The images and public dedications inscribed on these monuments constructed the tangible transnational bodies of *mahjar* communities while making them visible to the national public. These Centennial images allowed their immigrant patrons to both publically identify with their homeland, and their host nation. The inventive imagery gracing São Paulo's Monument of Syrian-Lebanese Friendship particularly demonstrates how diverse

84 Ottomanism was an ideology that emerged in the Ottoman Empire before the First Constitutional Era, which was originally influenced by Enlightenment thinkers and the French Revolution and initially strove to promote equality of all Ottoman subjects before the law, regardless of religion. See Kemal H. Karpat. *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*. Leiden, Brill, 2002, p. 207.

85 C. Ernest Dawn. *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*. Urbana, Ill, University of Illinois Press, 1973.

ethno-political immigrant groups also contributed to shaping the multiple modernisms of twentieth-century Brazil.

Conclusions

The Monument of Syrian Lebanese Friendship still stands in the Plaza Ragueb Chofi adjacent to the Rua 25 de Março (March 25th Street) commercial district today. Its location has shifted slightly from its nearby original site in the Parque Dom Pedro II after it was transformed into a major urban transit center in the 1980s. Although situated in a highly active commercial zone, the area has deteriorated since the statue's inauguration in the 1920s. The close-knit streets and heavy pedestrian traffic of this discount shopping district along with the nearby transportation hub have led the area to become effected by the city's drug and homelessness crisis. The monument has been heavily vandalized, with key portions of the bronze statues (i.e. heads, arms, narrative props) removed by looters for its precious metals. It is also repeatedly tagged with graffiti. Yet the portions of the work that remain intact, which still includes the controversial indigenous "Brazilian brother", continues to convey the masterful message of immigrant identity at the heart of the original work. With its imaginative Phoenician travellers disembarking from ancient ships, the bronze and granite monument exhibits an innovative transnational iconography connecting Brazil with Syria and Lebanon. Nearly one hundred years later, the visual program of the statue still expresses powerful elements of Modernism afoot during the nation's Centennial, while marking the collective identity of its non-European patrons and their role in the construction of Brazilian identity.

The Monument to Syrian Lebanese Friendship also invites the contemplation of the role of collective artistic patronage in the highlighting of migrant bodies. In her theoretical discussion of public space, Judith Butler argues that politics requires the visibility of bodies within the urban fabric, which is in turn, activated by the physical presence of the minority or marginal in moments of assembly or occupation.[86] As seen in the *mahjar* monuments throughout Latin America, collectively sponsored public art can symbolically function as the public body of minority groups and serve as a surrogate for its patrons within the urban fabric. Thus, the collective patronage of public sculpture allows for migrant

86 Judith Butler. "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street". Transversal– ejpcp (European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies), http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en. Consulted April 27, 2017.

"bodies in their plurality [to] lay claim to the public, find and produce the public through seizing and reconfiguring the matter of material environments; at the same time, those material environments are part of the action, and they themselves act when they become the support for action".[87] By way of the creative and civic act of artistic public patronage, Latin America's *mahjar* monuments transformed the built environment of their modern, adopted cities while constructing political agency and new transnational identities.

87 Ibidem. My thanks to Fabiola Lopez-Duran for spurring this theoretical connection while working together to develop core concepts for Rice University's Summer 2017 *HART in the World - Rio* course.