

EMPTY FATHERS AND FAILING EMPIRES: PATRILINEALITY AND MASCULINITY IN *OS LUSÍADAS*

IMPÉRIOS EM CRISE E “PAIS FALHANDOS”: PATRILINEARIDADE E MASCULINIDADE N’ *OS LUSÍADAS*

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ABSTRACT: The epic poem *Os Lusíadas* reflects mid-sixteenth century imperial masculinity as Camões narrates the deeds of Gama and his successors mainly in a glorifying way. However, the poet also expresses his worry about a loss of glory and an analogy may be drawn between effeminacy and the failing empire. Specifically, Canto IX and X hold a rhetorical encouragement for D. Sebastião to be a “father” to his nation. This paper focuses particularly on the patrilineal construct and shows how *kleos* (heroic glory passed from father to son) during the imperial conquest becomes empty since patrilineality fails when fathers survive their sons, thereby revealing an empire under pressure.

KEYWORDS: Empire, masculinity, *Os Lusíadas*.

RESUMO: O poema épico *Os Lusíadas* reflecte a masculinidade imperial em meados do século XVI através da narração gloriosa dos feitos do Vasco da Gama e dos seus sucessores. No entanto, Camões expressa simultaneamente a sua preocupação com uma perda da glória e do poder, e é possível fazer uma analogia entre a efeminação e a fraqueza do império. Concretamente, os cantos IX e X podem ser lidos como uma retórica de encorajamento a D. Sebastião para assumir o seu papel de ser o pai da nação. Este ensaio foca particularmente na construção patrilinear e demonstra como *kleos* (a glória heróica que é passada de pai para filho) se desfaz durante as conquistas imperiais, revelando um império em crise.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Império, masculinidade, *Os Lusíadas*.

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Masculinity in Canto X

The unrivalled noblemen, or *barões assinalados* that are the very first line of the epic poem *Os Lusíadas*, signal to the reader the importance of the male hero. Unfortunately however, few scholars have explored the subject of masculinity in *Os Lusíadas*. In spite of that, masculinity is a pertinent topic for the early modern studies, particularly when the expansionism of the period is considered. According to Connell, “the creation of overseas empires by the Atlantic seaboard states” influenced the “social practice that we now call ‘masculinity’” (CONNELL, 2002, p. 246). This paper investigates how masculinity is linked to paternity and how Camões urges the possible queer D. Sebastião to protect his patrilineality by procreating and subsequently be a father to his nation. Hence, at the same time Camões gives examples of a fraught patrilineage that corrupts heroic legacy and perils the continuation of empire.

I realize I am headed on thin ice by attempting to apply queer theory to a canonical text such as *Os Lusíadas*. Yet, as Goldberg and Menon have argued

to queer the Renaissance would thus mean not only looking for alternative sexualities in the past but also challenging the methodological orthodoxy by which past and present are constrained and straitened; it would mean resisting the strictures of knowability itself, whether those consist of an insistence on teleological sequence or textual transparency. (GOLDBERG AND MENON, 2005, p. 1609)

It is thus essential to look past binaries and reassess our literary past. If we understand queer theory as “bringing down patriarchy,” it is interesting to look at how the patriarchal and, by extension, the Portuguese empire were already fraught in Camões time, and how the poem’s ambiguous content has been brushed under the carpet by other generations. Also, I believe its relevant to read older text, especially those that have been abused for political reasons such as *Os Lusíadas*, against the grain and shed new light on aspects that may change our way of thinking today.

One may state that the representation of the heroes of the Portuguese expansion in *Os Lusíadas* reflects mid-sixteenth century imperial masculinity, as Camões narrates the deeds of Gama and his successors mainly in a glorifying

way, to support his epic's goal of reinforcing Portugal as an imperial nation. Yet, at the same time, it seems that the poet is in doubt about the heroic skills and morals of his heroes. This paper focuses on the representation of heroic masculinity and how its ambiguities that are present in the ninth and tenth canto reveal certain fissures in the heroic discourse and illustrate the corruption of imperial masculinity. By paying particular attention *kleos*, an important theme of epic poetry which was not only in vogue during the Classical period but also during the Renaissance, it is possible to lay bare Camoës' anxiety about his dedicatee and the future of the Portuguese empire.

I believe that an analysis of *kleos* is important as it shows both the poet's stance on imperial masculinity and paternity, two concepts that are intrinsically linked. Related to the word "to hear" and carrying the implied meaning of "what others hear about you" the Greek word *kleos* (κλέος) is often translated to "re-nown", or "glory." A hero earns *kleos* through accomplishing great deeds, often through his own death. Something or someone "has a *kleos* if it is talked about [...] especially if it is in some way remarkable" (SEGAL, 1983, p. 32). In order to be talked about, it is necessary for a man to perform heroic behavior or die an heroic death, such as we see in the catalogue of canto X. Additionally, *kleos* can be linked to heroic legacy that is invariably transferred from father to son; the son is responsible for carrying on and building upon the 'glory' of the father. In *Os Lusíadas* it is Sebastião that needs to carry on the glories of his forefathers, even if through Bacchus, *Lusus* father who previously led an empire in India, Camões evokes an unconvincing father figure as well. Also the fathers of Canto X, may be heroic but ultimately their paternity is "empty," as the father figures cannot pass on their genes since their sons die before them.

Empire and empty paternity

In canto X the Portuguese imperial history of the conquest in India is narrated through the prophecy of Tethys in the *Máquina do mundo*. It is important to keep in mind that the poet, who wrote in the mid-sixteenth century, disposed of valuable hindsight and therefore can demonstrate the imperial affairs that affected the Portuguese nation. I follow Connell's idea that: "masculinities are not only shaped by the process of imperial expansion, they are active in that

process and help to shape it” (CONNELL, 2002, p. 245). It will be interesting, then, to look at how Portuguese masculinity was shaped through its empire, which was already in decline during the second half of the sixteenth century, as history shows.

It is important to note that *Os Lusíadas* was written *post factum*, about 50 years after the Portuguese discovered the sea route to India. Camões was born around 1524 and grew up in a society that had changed significantly due to this historic event. However, during his lifetime, the overseas empire was threatened by both internal and external factors. The second half of the sixteenth century was a turbulent period, and there were in particular three factors that affected Camões’ writings. First, the Portuguese empire that once had been impressive and famous was rapidly declining. Subrahmanyam describes the years 1530-1550 as the “midcentury crisis” where the “personal power and private trade” of certain men in the *Estado da Índia* had increasingly destabilizing effects (SUBRAHMANYAM, 2012, p. 103). According to Subrahmanyam, the private gain of some Portuguese also affected the trade with local rulers and these tensions led in the 1550s to a “major debate among the administrators in Portuguese Asia, on the manner in which commercial affairs and general administration are to be conducted” (SUBRAHMANYAM, 2012, p. 104). These were years in which the empire disintegrated slowly but steadily. Newitt states that this period “saw the dismantling of the royal monopolies and the centralised bureaucratic state and its replacement by a new decentralised, privatised empire” (NEWITT, 2005, p. 253). During the same period, unofficial Portuguese settlements grew fast, as did the endeavors of missionaries. The growing corruption and dispersion threatened the Portuguese empire from the inside, while at the external level there was a growing influence from Spain within the Portuguese court, and both the French and the Dutch intensified their imperial efforts.

At the domestic level, politics changed during the reign of João III, who was very religious and quite conservative. D. João’s children died young and his grandson Sebastião inherited the throne in 1557, who had grown up in an environment “of hysterical religious fervor accompanied by an anachronistic revival of chivalrous ideals” (MACEDO, 1983, p. 4). Slowly, the open-minded Renaissance society was closing itself off from any differences or novelties.

Moreover, the establishment of the Inquisition both in Portugal and in its overseas territories, officially installed in the early 1540s, meant an “astonishingly rapid reversal” of the Renaissance humanism that prevailed at the beginning of the cen-

ture (SUBRAHMANYAM, 2012, p. 90). Francisco Bethencourt further emphasizes “its disruptive effects at all levels of society” (BETHENCOURT, 1995, p. 1), which confirms that Camões was likely affected by the Inquisition to some extent. There are several instances in the poem, especially in canto IX and X, where the poet conceals a critical message about national politics and masculinity with the help of allegory and myth.

Hence, a close reading of especially canto IX and X reveals that the epic is laced with references to paternity. Philip Rothwell has demonstrated how in Portuguese politics and literature there is an abundance of father figures who are “empty,” since they either “obliterate the Lacanian paternal function” (ROTHWELL, 2007, p. 20) or act as a lusotropical father who “is hardly a father at all, at least not to Portugal proper” (ROTHWELL, 2007, p. 21). Although Rothwell’s father figures date mostly from the nineteenth century onwards, he does point out to several examples from the founding moment of the nation such as D. Sebastião. Yet the concept of the empty father not only surges in the epic in the form of Sebastião. Besides the many references to the king’s paternity, especially in the episode of the Isle of Love in canto IX and X, there is also the figure of Bacchus, the epitome of oriental evil who is also Lusus father.

An important difference between the empty fathers of Rothwell and the fathers in this canto is that the empty father that Rothwell proposes doesn’t have any biological children of his own. Still, I would like to use the terminology that Rothwell proposes, since I see similarities between the empty fathers that he treats in his book and the heroes of canto X. Rothwell notes how “Portugal’s empty fathers had been underpinned by the imperial enterprise. Part of their projected personae drew on colonial or colonizing discourses” (ROTHWELL, 2007, p. 20). This is also the case in canto X and follows the scholar’s argument that “empire” can be linked “to a malfunctioning father figure” (ROTHWELL, 2007, p. 21). Rothwell states that the Portuguese imperial enterprise “donated’ its best youth to an exploration of the globe, and to an albeit bogus and retroactively lusotropical project” and, as a consequence, “denied Portugal its potential fathers” (ROTHWELL, 2007, p. 21). The lusotropical discourse is, according to Rothwell, at heart, “a discourse that evacuates the imperial center, transferring the gift of Portugal’s brightest and most adventurous young men to the farthest corners of the known world” (ROTHWELL, 2007, p. 24). I would argue that even before the surge of lusotropicalism, namely during and in the wake of the imperial conquest, Portugal lost its fathers and sons, thereby weakening its center.

Paternity promoting empire: Sebastião and Bacchus

By looking at the dedicatee of the poem, D. Sebastião, it already becomes clear that paternity and patrilineage is paramount for Camões. The message of the poet to the young king is twofold; besides beseeching Sebastião to “Tomai as rédeas vós do Reino vosso: / Dareis matéria a nunca ouvido canto” (I,15) he is also supposed to marry and procreate as the next stanza mentions “Tethys todo o cerúleo sengorio / Tem pêra vós por dote aparelhado” (I, 16). Of course this reference to Tethys is a prelude to the Isle of Love episode. At first glance, the images of Portuguese sailors pursuing nymphs at the Isle seem to serve as erotic stimulation for the reader. It is important to remember that Sebastião, as the dedicatee of the poem, is also the implied reader. Since he didn’t show much interest in girls it seems that the erotic stimulus was also intended to promote marital doctrine as they urge the young king to pursue a spouse. The pornotopic description of the lush Isle causes arousal while it is also implied that “realizing carnal desire in the ways exhibited in the episode would be, for Sebastian, the morally correct course of action” (KLOBUCKA, 2002, p. 129). I believe that, Camões describes the Isle of Love not only as a pedagogical example but he also suggests that Sebastião is neglecting his masculinity. Camões uses the myth of Actaeon as a rhetorical device to warn Sebastião against his abstinence from women and by linking Sebastião to Actaeon who “Foge da gente e bela forma humana” (IX, 26), it is suggested that Sebastião is effeminate, unable to pursue both his masculine and his royal duties. The delights of the Isle of Love thus have a double function; they both entice the reader and lament the course of the nation.

While many scholars have focused on the story of the Portuguese sailors and the nymphs in the episode, it is important to note that stanzas 25 to 35 and the Actaeon episode are interspersed with allegorical messages to Sebastião and his advisors. António Sérgio rightly states that the comments from these stanzas are not a general critique of a lack of morals but a very explicit address to the young king and his advisors. Even before he was born, Sebastião had already received the cognomen *o desejado* and had to meet the high expectations of the public. Sebastião was fourteen years old when he inherited the throne, and although

he was no longer considered a minor, it seems that Camões was anxious for the king to become a father yet doubted his experience and lack of interest in girls.¹

The poet's disquiet about the course of the nation is linked to his stance on royal masculinity. It is important to remember that, in the patriarchal society of the sixteenth century, family was the bedrock of the nation and for a monarch it was paramount to be "seen to subsume and control the royal family-household and, by metaphorical extension, the entire kingdom or empire" (ADAMS, 2004, p. 7). In Portugal, however, Sebastião had not yet secured the future of the Portuguese nation by having children. The Portuguese were preoccupied with the King's excessive lifestyle, taking part in "hyper-masculine activities such as jousting and hunting" (JOHNSON, 2007, p. 22) without showing any interest in women. As Américo da Costa Ramalho points out, "era patente a sua misoginia" (RAMALHO, 1980, p. 71).

The lack of an heir not only threatened the Portuguese nation but also Sebastião's masculinity. In fact, without a conjugal other, as Reeser notes, "moderate masculinity cannot operate, and the gendered analogies break down" (REESER, 2006, p. 45). Also the absence of children was seen as negative, according to Valeria Finucci, who connects paternity to masculinity and notes that men who were unable to father were seen as effeminate during the Renaissance (FINUCCI, 2003, p.178). In fact, during the seventeenth century Francisco Manuel de Melo commented in his *Carta de Guia de Casados* how men at Sebastião's court pretended to be more masculine so as to hide divergent behavior:

como se poderá crer que naquele reinado de el-rei D. Sebastião, em que os homens se fingiam de ferro, por contemplação dos excessos de el-rei, era costume andarem os fidalgos mancebos encostados em seus pajens, como hoje as damas? (MELO, 1651)

Hence, it seems that masculinity was something that needed to be performed, and by emphasizing male activities such as hunting one could divert the attention from any controversy around the king.

¹ For more information on the life of the young king, the psychological effects of his upbringing by Jesuits and the absence of his parents, as well as his queerness, see António Baños-García, *D. Sebastião - Rei de Portugal* (2006), Fernando Bruquetas de Castro, *Reis que amaram como Rainhas* (2010), Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, *D. Sebastião* (2009).

Sebastião's misogyny and dubious sexuality causes the poet to question his ability to rule the nation. Normally, sexual imagery was attributed to kings to create an image of the omnipotent ruler, but in Camões the description of rape reveals fissures that question masculinity and power, hence the poet identifies his royal dedicatee with the mythological hunter Actaeon, whose desire for Diana, goddess of the hunt, was punished by being transformed into a stag. Unable to speak and defend himself Actaeon was killed by his own hunting dogs that subsequently attacked their owner whom they no longer recognized. In Camões, the desire for Diana is not described as clearly as is the defeat and death of Actaeon. Thereby, the poet seems to suggest that his Actaeon, i.e. Sebastião, is being transformed into a weaker "effeminate" being.²

The idea of the incomplete male is further suggested because of the image of the stag. Curiously, Camões recurs to Actaeon in the description of the landscape, later on in canto IX: "Da sombra de seus cornos não se espanta / Acteon, n'água cristalina e bela" (IX. 63). Here, Actaeon is depicted already as a stag, who is not surprised to see his antlers. His representation as an animal with antlers (horns) can be linked to the image of the cuckold. Cuckolds were often depicted wearing horns or antlers and, during the Renaissance, cuckoldry anxiety was common as changing conditions in the early modern period increased a fear of female sexual power, which often caused cuckoldry anxiety (BREITENBERG, 1996, p. 6).

By drawing more attention to Actaeon as a stag than to his harassment of Diana, Camões creates an effeminate image of the hero that allegorizes the Portuguese king. As such, mythology and allegory become tools through which the poet can denounce and question the nation and its rulers. It is suggested that Sebastião is not capable of having an influence, either on women or on his people. The right course of action for the king is indeed maintaining *kleos* by creating an heir, even if a close reading of father figures in *Os Lusíadas* suggests that the legacies from father to son are often fraught.

² More about the transformation of Sebastião / Actaeon can be read in Denise Saive, "'Transforma-se o amador na cousa amada.' Queering Love in *Os Lusíadas*." In PEPE, Paulo; FERNANDES, Ana Raquel. (eds.). *Beyond binaries: Sex, sexuality and gender in the lusophone world Peter Lang* (Oxford). (In Press.)

Bacchus: Periled Patrilineage

Patrilineality also comes to the fore in the title of the epic poem as it alludes to *Lusus* whose father Bacchus is very ambiguous. I argue that, since Bacchus is the mythological father of the Portuguese, his mourning about the loss of his empire in India predicts the Portuguese destiny, as they will suffer the same loss. There are several moments in which he appears in the poem, mostly to hinder the Portuguese, frantically trying to protect his erstwhile empire in the East.

Similar to Sebastião, Bacchus further challenges the idea of imperial masculinity and is a complex figure whose masculinity raises a lot of questions. Hélio Alves notes that there is “a tremendous psychoanalytical interest” (ALVES, 2002, p. 102) in the relationship between Bacchus and the Portuguese but does not explore the paternal function. Aguiar e Silva returns to the Classics to explain how Bacchus’s own youth was filled with paternal conflicts: “Baco, aliás, repetia e sofria, a seu modo, o historial de violência familiar dos deuses primordiais: Júpiter destruíra o poder de seu pai Saturno, o qual, por sua vez, castrara o seu pai, Urano” (AGUIAR, SILVA, 2008, p. 147). Yet, at the same time Bacchus, is a very feminine deity as Aguiar e Silva notes “Baco é uma divindade primigeniamente feminina, criado por mulheres, rodeado de mulheres lascivas, frenéticas e enloquecidas” (AGUIAR, SILVA, 2008, p. 134).

Alves sees the conflicted relationship between the deity and the Portuguese as an epic convention that tests the limits of Portuguese heroic qualities in which “deceit is contextualized positively as an indispensable and unavoidable resource of every good leader struggling” (ALVES, 2002, p. 103). I would add that the heroic struggle also points to *kleos*, which besides meaning a quest for fame, is also a “search for masculine identity” (PETROPOULUS, 2011, p. ix). I believe that conflicted paternity in *Os Lusíadas* may illustrate how the imperial project transformed ideas about heroic glory and national identity.

Bacchus sees his own characteristics reflected in the Portuguese ambition while he warns against too much greed and voices the concerns of the old orders. He also points to the impending failure of *kleos*, after all *Lusus* is responsible for carrying on and building upon the “glory” of the father, yet fame may also become forgotten “Que esquecerão seus feitos no Oriente, / Se lá passar a Lusitana gente” (I, 30). Bacchus functions as a mirror for the Portuguese: what has happened to him (someone taking over his empire) will happen and is alre-

ady happening to the Portuguese. As Nóbrega points out, it is the *lusitanos* that “vivem experiência similar à do deus de quem descendem” (NÓBREGA, 2003, p. 83). In that sense Bacchus voices the difficulties of maintaining fame in the East and points to the pitfalls of Portuguese succession in India, as they also come to the fore in Canto X.

As I mentioned before, in Camões’ time the Portuguese empire was under considerable strain and the period became known as the “crisis years.” Corruption and personal gain threatened the “Estado da Índia” from within, while at the same time other European nations appeared on the Asian scene. In *Os Lusíadas* much of the anxiety around this crisis is obscured by the use of mythology. Hence, Camões stages the mythological figure of Bacchus to warn his readers and dedicatee against certain vices, such as greed and too much ambition, that obstruct the revival of the empire, whilst emphasizing the importance of paternity and *kleos*. As the previous paragraphs show, paternity is often allegorized by the use of mythology, yet in the latter part of poem (canto X) various heroic fathers are staged in the catalogue. The next section analyzes how patrilineage unfolded during the Portuguese conquest in the East.

Dying to be Men: Kleos and The Catalogue of Canto X

In canto X the Portuguese imperial conquest is narrated through the voice of Tethys, with the use of a catalogue (stanza 10 -73). Catalogues are a common element in Classical epics that consist of “a complete list of items, typically one in alphabetical or other systematic order,” and whose “enumerative form “may lend rhetorical weight to the utterings of the speaker, be he the narrator or one of the characters” (BEYE, 1964, p. 299). The catalogue in the final canto of *Os Lusíadas* is similar to a genealogical list as it presents the conquistadores that came to the East after Vasco da Gama in a chronological order. Fifteen men, mainly governors or *vice-reis*, are passed in review in a total of 63 stanzas. In this section I analyse how the catalogue constructs imperial masculinity, yet by closely examining the theme of *kleos*, I describe how this heroic masculinity is simultaneously under stress and demonstrates the poet’s anxiety about the decay of the Portuguese empire.

It is important to keep in mind that it is the poetic voice or bard who appoint heroes and boast of their glory or, on the other hand, may question their heroic suitability; Redfield notes that there is a “curious reciprocity between a bard and his heroes. The bard sings of events, which have a *kleos*; without the heroes he would have nothing to sing about” (SEGAL, 1983, p. 31). As a matter of fact, it is important to remember that it is Tethys who is the main narrator of this canto, which indicates that Camões is distancing himself from his bardic task. Tethys talks about the men and appoints them with *kleos*, yet it is important to remember that since she is a siren and not a muse (tagide) she may be “responsible for destroying heroic *kleos* instead of preserving it” (SEGAL, 1983, p. 40).

The following example demonstrates how the narrative voice has power over heroic glory when Tethys interrupts her speech: “Mais *estanças* cantara esta Sirena / Em louvor do ilustríssimo Albuquerque, / Mas alembrou-lhe uma ira que o condena” (X,45). Then it is narrated how Albuquerque is a “juiz cruel e inteiro” to his soldiers and examples are given of mythological figures, such as Campaspe, to indicate the involvement with a mistress. No explicit reference is given, but history teaches that Rui Dias, one of Albuquerque’s officers was executed because of his relationship with an Indian woman (WHITE, 2001, p. 255). Albuquerque’s reputation is damaged: “Põe na fama alva nota negra e feia” (X, 47) and the interruption of Tethys then puts a stain on the heroic deeds of Albuquerque that are sung in the previous stanzas. However, there are more moments in which the poet through Tethys demonstrates doubt about the heroic glory of the Portuguese. In fact, imperial masculinity, which is constructed through the catalogue, is under stress in three different ways.

First, as the previous example about Albuquerque shows, the ideological discourse of the catalogue contains certain slips, which disclose notions of corruption and decay. These slips show that besides all the saber rattling to resist the Non-Western Other, the Portuguese empire was also frail because it was threatened from within by corruption and mismanagement. Camões dedicates notably less attention to those governors that have a doubtful reputation. Susanne Wofford points to the *Aeneid* that incorporates a “demystification of the concept of *kleos* and of Virgil’s imperial celebration” (WOFFORD, 1992, p. 9). I believe that the catalogue of heroes of canto X demystifies *kleos* in a similar way by demonstrating that the internal rot within the imperial system may corrupt imperial masculinity.

Second, one may detect unrealistically exaggerated depictions such as the description of Lourenço de Almeida who managed to attack four hundred enemies with only one sword: “Na capitaina imiga, dentro nela / Saltando o fará só com lança e espada / De quatrocentos Mouros despejada” (X, 28). Kathleen Long notes how “exaggerated depictions of masculinity” may hint at “overcompensation for some lack” (LONG, 2002, p. xii). I believe that the excessive violence and the denial of injury are a form of what Long calls the “reversal of loss or lack,” which is often an attempt to “reassert masculine control and at least the aura of superiority” (LONG, 2002, p. xii). The use of violence is essential to maintain the empire yet there is a certain anxiety between the lines as it is left open how many men die on Portuguese side. It becomes clear that the empire’s existence was not automatically guaranteed, but rather under constant pressures due to the resistance of non-Western Others. As a consequence, a long list of governors and explorers, of which most become injured or die, exposes how *kleos*, in the sense of an inherited glory that must be carried on from father to son, is interrupted and may slowly fade away.

As a result, the catalogue showcases an excess of violence and destruction, which is of course part of the heroic discourse, however battle-scenes also become “mechanical and list-like” (BEYE, 1964, p. 345). The *Lusiadac* catalogue is a display of blood, corpses and weaponry that aestheticizes violence, yet the repetitive use of violence becomes rather affected and therefore may lose its impact.

What makes the catalogue of heroes more interesting is the *kleos* that is closely associated with the father, as it is in the representation of father and son relationships that the canto becomes more vivid. Often the poet represents the heroes as objects without humanizing them, since he often views *kleos* “retrospectively” and “as part of an heroic tradition” and that tradition can, as Charles Segal notes “be held up for reflection, examination, criticism” (SEGAL, 1983, p. 26). Yet Camões examines *kleos* through his chronological list of leaders and explorers in India and puts special emphasis on the blood ties between father and son. As Barbara Goff states “heroic identity depends on paternity and simultaneously confirms it” and, as such, heroic identity is something that descends “via the male line” (GOFF, 2010, p. 219). Camões also hints several times at the male line, referring to sons as “ramo[s]” (X, 63; X, 70) thereby recalling the image of the family tree.

However, some sons are regarded as less heroic than their fathers. For instance, of Vasco da Gama's own sons, Cristovão and Estevão, only the former is briefly mentioned: "Quando um teu ramo, ó Gama, se exprimenta / No governo do Império, cujo zelo / Com medo o Roxo Mar fará amarelo" (X, 63). History teaches that Cristovão didn't die a heroic death but rather as a prisoner of war, and that Estevão, who governed India for two years, was considered a poor leader. Also, Nuno da Cunha, who was the son of Tristão da Cunha appears only in one stanza. Historical sources show that he was linked to corruption and ordered back to Lisbon where he faced a Castilian-style inquiry. These examples then demonstrate how heroic genes are not always passed down and how *kleos* can be corrupted by the newer generations.

Furthermore, *kleos* can be read as something futile and empty in canto X, as the sons may die a heroic death that awards glory while at the same time generations are lost and a lack of successors will quickly arise. The sons of João de Castro are still very young when taken to war. Álvaro de Castro, a child of thirteen, was knighted while out on an expedition led by Estevão da Gama. A mine blew up the other son, Fernando de Castro, even before he reached Diu (WHITE, 2001, p. 256). Stanza 69 describes how João de Castro wants his sons to be offered to God: "Castro libertador, fazendo ofertas / Das vidas de seus filhos, quer que fiquem / Com fama eterna e a Deus se sacrifiquem" (X, 69). Sacrifice and fame are regarded as positive and covetable, yet succession and continuation are brought to an end and this may weaken the empire. At times the heroes are represented as Christian martyrs but for the sake of the empire their sacrifice is useless because, as the poet knows since he disposes of valuable hindsight, the Portuguese empire was already crumbling during the second half of the sixteenth century. By losing generations of men to a cause that is in decay, Portugal moves from being heroic "leader of the seas" into a marginal position.

My final example, that demonstrates how paternity is fraught in canto X, is probably one of the most dramatic stanzas in the catalogue. While the catalogue often reads list-like and rather tedious, stanza 33 is a bit of an anomaly as it describes Francisco de Almeida's passionate and emotional response to his son Lourenço's death:

Eis vem o pai, com ânimo estupendo,
 Trazendo fúria e mágoa por antolhos,
 Com que o paterno amor lhe está movendo
 Fogo no coração, água nos olhos.
 A nobre ira lhe vinha prometendo
 Que o sangue fará dar pelos gíolhos
 Nas inimigas naus; senti-lo-á o Nilo,
 Podê-lo-á o Indo ver e o Gange ouvi-lo (X, 33)

This vivid stanza shows how Camões emphasizes paternal relations, as they are part of the *kleos* transferred from father to son, but also shows how death and grief were intrinsically linked to the imperial project.

These examples show the violence and destruction that are part of imperial conquest and form, albeit forced, masculinity. At the same time these paternal relations reflect how imperial masculinity is further constructed; important positions in the *Estado da Índia* are often passed from generation to generation (governors all came from the same elite families) or fathers take their sons to the battlefields as a rite of passage into a masculine world. Yet, the excessive violence of the conquest disrupts genealogical succession, as many sons die before their fathers do. In that sense, they may win glory for the father since “*kleos* is won by the warrior both for himself and for his father” (REDFIELD, 1994, p. 33), but also reveal the beginning of a vacuum, where most men leave the imperial center to die overseas. The *kleos* related to fathers and sons exposes then the effects of imperial paternity on the Portuguese nation of the mid-sixteenth century.

Conclusion

I hope to have demonstrated that imperial masculinity and patrilineage are important themes in *Os Lusíadas* and that the worries of the poet about the course of his beloved nation clarify how issues of gender and all its diversities are paramount in the epic poem. First, Camões reveals an anxiety about the continuation of Portuguese heroic glory as he tries to convince Sebastião to pursue glory and continue the *kleos* of his ancestors even if it is clear how *kleos* in

the epic becomes inverted and useless; instead of pointing to imperial glory, the examples of *kleos* demonstrate that the empire is under pressure and corrupt from within.

As such, masculinity comes under threat due to the failing empire since the sons, in their attempt to maintain the Portuguese empire in Asia, fail to continue the glory of their fathers. There is a lack of men and by dying early the empire's success is weakened. The concept of empire is linked with empty paternity; the heroes fail in their *kleos* since they become empty fathers, either because they survive their sons or because the sons are otherwise incompetent. *Kleos* then becomes a source of anxiety, since in its desperate effort to promote "imperishable fame" it actually demonstrates its exact antithesis, namely "rot and decay" (SEGAL, 1983, p. 40). This rot and decay of the empire is a major concern for Camões and may have likely led to the poet's ambiguous representation of the hero, and the mythological allegorizations of empty fathers Bacchus and Sebastião. Mythology then works as an facade to mask less masculine or heroic behaviour, yet exposes at the same time the anxieties about Portuguese imperial masculinity and the gender fluidities of their king.

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