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⇒ Antero de Quental, *Iberista*: Iberianism as Organizing Principle and Evolving Intellectual Commitment

Abstract: In scholarship on Portugal's *Geração de 70*, Antero de Quental (1842-1891) is commonly remembered as the group's intellectual guide or as a poet, with his socio-political prose unfortunately receiving less attention. This paper will propose iberianism – an intellectual current that advocates closer ties between Portugal and Spain – as an organizing principle of Quental's prose, with his iberianist commitment evolving from an early advocacy of an Iberian federation through an interest in a common "peninsular race" and a defense of the beleaguered First Spanish Republic (1873-1874), to more fatalistic reflections on prospects for Spanish-Portuguese union. I will present Quental's position in relation to earlier iberianists (J. F. Henriques Nogueira) and federalists (P.-J. Proudhon), and will analyze Quental's *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares* (1871) as a transitional text in the author's evolving iberianism.

Keywords: Antero de Quental; *Geração de 70*; Iberianism; Portugal; 19th Century.

O iberismo é de ontem; mas invade tudo.

(J. F. Henriques Nogueira: "O iberismo e seus adversários IV", 1855
[1980: III, 67])

The *Geração de 70* (Generation of 1870) stands as one of the most remarkable groupings in Portuguese intellectual history, counting among it the celebrated writers, public intellectuals and politicians Eça de Queirós, Oliveira Martins, Ramalho Ortigão and Teófilo Braga. At the center of the group stood Antero de Quental (1842-1891), an Azorean-born writer, theorist, labor organizer and political agitator often remembered as his generation's philosophical mentor or as a poet, rather than as an important contributor to Portuguese intellectual history in his own right.¹ In this paper I will look to iberianism, a long-established minority intellectual current that advocates closer political, economic, intellectual and/or cultural ties between Portugal and Spain, to lend coherence

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¹ I draw on the following texts in arguing for Quental's broad importance: Almeida (1993; 1994); Martins (1986); Carreiro (1981); Catroga (2001).

to my analysis of Quental's socio-political prose. In casting Quental as a committed iberianist, I will break with the received critical tendency to limit his iberianism to a brief phase of youthful enthusiasm in the wake of Spain's 1868 revolution.

I will argue for iberianism as an enduring feature of Quental's thought, and will propose that his iberianism evolved rather than diminished over the course of his career. After introducing the theme of iberianism and its reception in nineteenth-century Portugal, I will chart Quental's iberianist engagement as it developed over three periods: (1) the early years of his professional career (approximately 1864-1871), in which he explicitly called for an Iberian federation in the form of a decentralized republic; (2) a second period, lasting roughly from 1871 to 1875, in which Quental engaged with the idea of a common "peninsular race", made a guarded defense of the floundering Spanish Republic, and co-founded the iberianist-themed *Revista Occidental*²; (3) Quental's final years: his iberianist considerations are on display here in an 1890 letter to Alberto Osório de Castro, as well as in the text *As tendências gerais da filosofia na segunda metade do séc. XIX* (Quental 2000), in which Quental addresses ideas he applied previously to the iberianist problem (racial "genius", alignment of particular interests with the universal good, the tendency of civilizations toward mutual approximation) in the context of a philosophical survey. This conceptual continuity illustrates, in my view, Quental's enduring faith in iberianism's underlying principles, if not his confidence in a workable peninsular political union after the collapse of the Spanish Republic in 1874. I will conclude my analysis by offering a reading of Quental's *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares nos últimos três séculos* (Quental 2001a), arguing for its importance as a key transitional text in Quental's evolving iberianism.

1. Iberianism and its reception in nineteenth-century Portugal

"Iberianism" refers to a long, minority current in Spanish and Portuguese intellectual history that advocates greater approximation between the two peninsular nation-states, and sometimes extends to include Spanish and Portuguese-speaking America. The goal of a united Iberian state has remained elusive, and the iberianist project has historically had trouble attracting adherents. Notwithstanding these problems, iberianism, in the mode of a Nietzschean or Foucauldian critical history, serves the salutary function of contesting the dominant peninsular narratives of national identity by positing a single peninsular state as a desirable, possible future.³ This critical function is accentuated in the case of Portugal, where the perceived threat of Spanish annexation is a long-standing feature of the national narrative. This particularly informs nineteenth-century Portuguese histori-

² The *Revista Occidental*, charged with "provoca[ndo] a reunião dos elementos da nova renascença intelectual da Península, e a formação das novas escolas espanhola e portuguesa", was conceived as a forum for Portuguese, Spanish, and Latin American intellectuals to exhibit in print the shared "gênio dos povos que habitam a península ibérica, e dos que, filhos dela, foram acampar na América Meridional". The publication's contributors included Manuel de Arriaga, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, Patricio de la Escosura, Francisco Pi y Margall, and Eça de Queirós. See Oliveira Martins' leadoff article in the journal's 15 February 1875 edition (Martins 1948: 65-66); *Revista Occidental* (1875).

³ See Nietzsche (1995); Foucault (1984).

ography, which frequently looked to events like the 1385 Battle of Aljubarrota (in which the Portuguese defeated Castile), and the 1640 “Restoration” of Portuguese independence after a sixty-year “Spanish captivity” as defining moments in Portugal’s national history. As such, in considering possible causes for iberianism’s unpopularity it is important to recall that Portuguese nationalism, as much as it is tied to the early modern maritime voyages or to Luís de Camões’s *Os Lusíadas*, has also been constructed in opposition to Spain, particularly since the 1580-1640 dynastic union. In this way, examining as prominent a writer as Antero de Quental as an iberianist serves not merely to elucidate an under-examined feature of his intellectual engagement, but moreover offers an alternative to triumphalist readings of nineteenth-century Portuguese intellectual history.

Iberianists have frequently grounded their arguments in the example of a united Roman-era *Hispania*, contending that the peninsula’s present division into two nation-states is artificial, and that some form of mutual re-approximation is desirable.⁴ As Sérgio Campos Matos (1998: 278-313; 2006) and Manuela Mascarenhas (1980: 7-32) have each shown, iberianism accommodates a wide variety of positions: monarchists, socialist revolutionaries, twentieth-century doyens of high culture like Eduardo Lourenço, and globalization-era economic pragmatists have all been described (or denounced) as iberianists. Notably, iberianism does not necessarily imply political union – a fact often lost on anti-iberianists, who have frequently reduced iberianism to its most radical unionist impulses. Moreover, iberianists have frequently shifted between political, economic, strategic and cultural strategies of approximation without surrendering their iberianist credentials. This was the case with Joaquim Pedro de Oliveira Martins, Quental’s close associate and the author of the landmark *História da civilização ibérica* (1879; Martins 1923).⁵ In his 1869 article “Do princípio federativo e sua aplicação à Península Hispânica”, Oliveira Martins (1960) defended a federated Iberian republic, as did Quental at the time. However, by 1890 Oliveira Martins was arguing in the article “Iberismo” for “[u]nião de pensamento e acção, independência de governo; eis, a nosso ver, a fórmula actual, sensata e prática do Iberismo” (Martins 1923-24: II, 216). While Oliveira Martins’s shift away from peninsular federalism often causes scholars to exclude him from the iberianist camp, his overall iberianist agenda carries over from 1869 to 1890 – what changes are the *means* he advocates for bringing about the desired approximation between Portugal and Spain.⁶

While Portuguese intellectuals have been considering their nation’s place in the Iberian Peninsula since the *Condado Portucalense* broke away from Castile and Leon in the twelfth century, iberianism in Portugal has perennially met with significant opposition,

⁴ Miguel de Unamuno observed as much in a 1914 conference at Figueira da Foz: “Espanha e Portugal, *Hispania*, pois foi esta a denominação comum que tiveram no tempo dos romanos, levaram – disse – uma vida se não comum, paralela, mais ainda na vida cultural do que na política” (1985: 225).

⁵ For the influence of Quental’s *Causas da decadência* on Oliveira Martins’s *História da civilização ibérica*, see Matos (2006: 360). See also Saraiva (1995: 16).

⁶ See, for instance, Sérgio Campos Matos’s position. While he acknowledges Oliveira Martins’s historical, cultural, and diplomatic iberianism, he excludes him (and Quental) from his list of the principal Portuguese iberianists for the 1850-80 period. Campos Matos identifies a wide range of iberianist positions, though he seems to view pro-unionist agitation as the most radical of the iberianist variants. Quental and Oliveira Martins’s eventual abandonment of a strictly pro-unionist position (though not of iberianism in a broad sense), may explain their exclusion (Matos 2006: 361, 365).

and tends to be equated with political union with Spain, a decidedly unpalatable prospect for many Portuguese nationalists. For evidence of the staying power of this interpretation, one needs look no further than two twentieth-century definitions of iberianism from Portuguese encyclopedias. In the first, Alberto Martins de Carvalho (1965-71: 237-239) argues that the question of iberianism “não tem existência ao nível popular”, being merely “um problema de letrados e de políticos, isto é, de homens que ambicionam fazer, dirigir, ou explicar a história”. Confronted with the variety of potential iberianist solutions, the author affirms that “[s]eja [...] qual for a variante apresentada, é inegável que sempre arrastaria uma diminuição ou um risco da nossa autonomia política” and that to “falar numa *Espanha* que nos englobasse, por ter sido esse o sentido que certos escritores clássicos lhe deram, é esquecer que a palavra apresenta agora um conteúdo que não é o que teve ou desejaríamos que tivesse”. And in his later definition, Domingos Maurício (1998: 270-276) describes Portuguese iberianism as a “tentação”, “ilusão”, “vírus”, and as a series of “delírios utópicos” closely linked to Spain’s hegemonic pretensions.

Regardless of this entrenched suspicion and hostility toward Spain, Portugal’s historical crises (real or imagined)⁷ have led to the periodic reconsideration of iberianism as a legitimate, albeit counterintuitive solution for the nation’s problems; the greater the real or perceived crisis, the more seriously iberianism in one form or another has been considered.⁸ As José Antonio Rocamora argues for nineteenth-century Portugal and Spain, “[l]a unidad [entre los dos] fue vista por muchos como el único camino para reverdecer las viejas glorias, transformando dos países débiles en uno poderoso, capaz de actuar en la política mundial y restaurar el prestigio perdido. Además de estas consecuencias políticas, se esperaba de la unión el acceso a una época de progreso económico y cultural” (1994: 21).⁹ Significantly, iberianism’s heyday occurred during Quental’s formative years in the early to mid-nineteenth century, a tumultuous period in Portugal marked by the removal of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil in 1807-1808 in reaction to Napoleonic invasion, Brazilian independence in 1822, the triumph of constitutional monarchy in 1834 after a protracted civil conflict, and the twin currents of liberalism and Romanticism. During these years iberianism in Portugal was folded into a more general reform movement, though two of the period’s principal liberal reformers – Alexandre Herculano (1979; ¹1853) and Almeida Garrett (undated; ¹1830) – were on balance hostile to closer ties with Spain. Nonetheless, nineteenth-century iberianists called for reforms including a centralized Iberian monarchy, a federated peninsular republic, economic integration and mutual defense, and greater cross-border intellectual exchange as means to stem the tide of perceived national decline.

Texts like J. F. Henriques Nogueira’s *Estudos sobre a reforma em Portugal* (1851), which coupled a broad reform agenda with a call for a federated Iberian republic, and the Catalan diplomat Sinibaldo Mas y Sans’s *La Iberia* (1850, Portuguese translation published in 1852), which advocated a united Iberian monarchy, touched off a heated polemic in Portugal that continued into Quental’s adulthood (Matos 2006: 353). The

⁷ On this link, see Matos (2002: 9-10; 2006: 369).

⁸ Oliveira Martins expressed exactly this view in 1890: “Nesta crise, como em todas as que sucessivamente têm açoitado Portugal desde o começo do século, o pensamento de muitos portugueses tem-se voltado para a possibilidade de uma união com a vizinha Espanha” (Martins 1923-24: II, 203).

⁹ See also Abreu (1996); Catroga (1985; 1991).

polemic was stoked by factors that called into question the viability of Iberia's present two-state division, namely, Portugal's continued political and economic troubles and the 1868 revolution in Spain. As Saraiva reports, events in Spain "incendiava[m] a imaginação dos radicais portugueses [...] Os velhos escritos teóricos de Henriques Nogueira deixavam de ser utópicos, porque já tinham um lugar – e bem perto" (1995: 18).¹⁰ And as Pi y Margall argued in his 1876 study *Las nacionalidades* – published after the fall of the republic he briefly led – federalism could still solve "[e]l problema de Portugal" by respecting its distinct language, culture, and history, thereby assuaging Portuguese fears of absorption by Spain. Under federalism, the Portuguese, much like the Basques, Sicilians, Poles, Belgians, and other smaller European nationalities and groups, "[n]i sentirían entonces la repugnancia que ahora Portugal para formar parte de España" (1973: 142, 156).

Despite its prominent supporters in the nineteenth-century peninsular intelligentsia – including Antero de Quental – iberianism was far from a consensus position. Portuguese conservatives in particular vilified local iberianists as anti-patriotic servants of Spanish annexationism, publishing a series of anti-iberianist texts, many of which celebrated Portuguese nationalism over and against Spanish aggression by invoking Aljubarrota and the "Spanish captivity".¹¹ Significantly, these texts met with a more sympathetic public and with a wider readership in Portugal than did their iberianist targets, with Tomás Ribeiro's anti-iberianist poem *D. Jayme ou a dominação de Castela* (1862) achieving the "extraordinário sucesso" of selling two thousand copies (Matos 1998: 297). Another vehicle for anti-iberianist sentiment was the Comissão Central 1º de Dezembro, which beginning in 1861 advocated the annual commemoration of Portugal's 1640 "Restoration" to independence under the Bragança dynasty, and left a monument in Lisbon's Praça dos Restauradores as a visual legacy (Matos 2006: 364-366).

2. Antero de Quental, *iberista*

The events of 1868 inspired Quental to write the pamphlet *Portugal perante a revolução de Espanha*, in which he argued that Portugal should join Spain in forming a decentralized pan-Iberian federation. While it is uncertain what originally attracted Quental to iberianism, he seems to have come to it by way of P.-J. Proudhon and Henriques Nogueira, both of whom advocated federation as the only means for weaker, smaller nations to achieve effective independence.¹² For Proudhon, confederation with one's neighbors does not compromise national autonomy – quite the opposite. As he explains in his *Du principe fédératif* (1979; ¹1863), by aligning one's particular interests with the common good, "contracting parties, whether heads of family, towns, cantons, provinces, or states, not only undertake bilateral and commutative obligations [in the federal system], but in making the pact reserve for themselves *more*

¹⁰ See also Álvarez Junco (2001: 528).

¹¹ For an overview of the anti-iberianist backlash, see Mascarenhas (1980: 32-36) and Matos (1998: 278-313).

¹² See Quental's glowing review of Henriques Nogueira's *Estudos sobre a reforma em Portugal* (1923-31: I, 17-23).

rights, more liberty, more authority, more property than they abandon” (1979: 39; my emphasis).¹³ Federation, as a “pact” based on a “reciprocal and equal agreement”, is broadly applicable, though it holds special benefits for states in perceived decline like Portugal and Spain, by removing them from a deterministic, annexationist struggle in which powers like England, France, Russia, and Prussia expand at the expense of their neighbors (Proudhon 1979: 38).¹⁴ Spanish-Portuguese union would in theory create a political entity too large and too powerful to conquer, and would prevent a repeat of Spain and Portugal’s difficult resistance struggles against Napoleon during the first years of the nineteenth century. Simultaneously, the new state’s federal structure would guarantee Portuguese autonomy by eliminating the Bourbon monarchy (and presumably the Braganças as well) and dissolving their former kingdom into its component parts – Castile, Aragon, Catalonia, the Basque Country, and so on – each of which would constitute an autonomous member of the federation. Portugal, in addition to being a powerful presence in a devolved, federated peninsula, would be better protected from external threats than it was on its own. It is in these terms that Henriques Nogueira argued, as Quental and Oliveira Martins soon would, that federation was in Portugal’s national interest. As Henriques Nogueira writes of his fellow Iberianists, “[n]ós também nos prezamos de amar a terra em que nascemos, e de render culto às suas gloriosas memórias. Mas por profundo que seja em nós esse respeito, ele não chega a fazer-nos preferir a conservação de um nome falso”, which he identifies with a formally independent Portugal, to the “bem verdadeiro” he sees in peninsular federation (1851: 165).

The idea of effective as opposed to “false” or nominal independence played prominently in Quental’s defense of federalism in *Portugal perante a revolução de Espanha*, which he concludes by declaring that, “nas nossas actuais circunstâncias, o único acto possível e lógico de verdadeiro patriotismo consiste em *renegar a nacionalidade*” (1994: 128). Despite Quental’s penchant for rhetorical flair and categorical language, this does not amount to a call for the Portuguese to surrender their national identity, but merely to cast off their weak, nominally independent government in exchange for federation. If understood in federalist terms, “nationality” refers to one side of a binary Quental, following Proudhon and Henriques Nogueira, describes between *nação* and *pátria*, with the former referring to the state apparatus and the latter referring to the ideas of “homeland” and “people”.¹⁵ Here Quental draws on Romantic ideas of national spirit, in the mode of Rousseau’s general will, Herder’s folk-soul, and Hegelian *Geist*. *Nação* and *pátria* are far from like terms, as patriotism resides in the people rather than the government, which is prone to ignore popular interests. In his 1868 pamphlet, Quental links the people to the idea of the *pátria*, and argues that the Portuguese government has betrayed the people and the *pátria*’s “mais formosas aspirações, os seus mais íntimos impulsos” (1994:

¹³ Quental’s argument from 1890’s *As tendências gerais da filosofia* (2000: 92-94), that alignment of individual interests with the universal good works to increase individual freedom, recalls Proudhon’s argument for federalism.

¹⁴ Proudhon writes that, “[e]very state is annexationist by nature. Nothing stops its aggressive march, unless it confronts another state, likewise an aggressor and capable of defending itself” (1979: 52).

¹⁵ See also Herculano’s distinction between the “país real” and the “país legal” (Matos 2006: 351).

127).¹⁶ For Henriques Nogueira and Quental, federalism offers true patriots a better way to defend the *pátria*: by casting off a debased, corrupted, and ineffective Portuguese nation-state and entering into a mutually beneficial alliance with like-minded, neighboring peoples. As Henriques Nogueira put it, federalism is the “[b]aluartes e última esperança dos povos oprimidos, que só na aliança com os seus iguais podem achar uma protecção benéfica e sincera” (1851: 162). The events of 1868 gave Portuguese iberianists reason to hope in the republican aspirations of the Spanish people as well as in the replacement of the Castilian monarchy with a decentralized federal structure, thereby improving the prospects for Portugal to join a peninsular federation on equitable terms.

Regardless of the explicit calls for union made in texts like *Portugal perante a revolução de Espanha*, critics have tended to downplay the extent of Quental and his generation’s engagement with iberianism. In fact, various members of the *Geração de 70* took up the iberianist banner – a conspicuous fact given that this was the “cream” of Portuguese intellectuality openly engaging with ideas that were considered by many as misguided or even treasonous. Oliveira Martins is unquestionably the group’s best-known hispanophile, living for a time in Andalusia as a mine supervisor, authoring various Spanish-themed texts and befriending the Spanish writer Juan Valera. However, Oliveira Martins was not alone: at various points Guerra Junqueiro, Teófilo Braga and Manuel de Arriaga all expressed iberianist sympathies. This is particularly striking in Braga and Arriaga’s cases, as they would both later serve as president of the Portuguese Republic (Rocamora 1994: 130; Matos 1998: 284). Eça de Queirós and Ramalho Ortigão were virtually alone among their peers in consistently opposing stronger ties with Spain (Medina 1980).

Quental’s iberianist sympathies, while not as well documented as those of Oliveira Martins, are nonetheless significant and sustained. Four years prior to his 1868 pamphlet, Quental published the poem “Ibéria” (1864), in which he calls on Spain and Portugal to “como irmãos, reconhecer-se / Os amigos – há tanto tempo ausentes!” His republican and iberianist agenda clear, Quental accuses national leaders of “cava[ndo] oceanos” between the two nations, declaring, “[s]ejam-lhe ponte os corpos dos tiranos!” (Quental 2001b: 605, 607). See also Quental’s 1863 poem “Pepa”. Ostensibly about an Andalusian girl, the poem can be read allegorically as describing Portugal’s struggle to find its “[o]juto peito, seu irmão” (2001b: 76). After giving this early federalism more comprehensive treatment in *Portugal perante a revolução de Espanha*, Quental reoriented his iberianist position toward the study of a common “peninsular race” and a concurrent, more cautious defense of the embattled Spanish republican movement. What he did *not* do was renounce iberianism, as some critics would have us believe.¹⁷ Scholars like Pilar

¹⁶ Quental provides an early sketch of this understanding of the *pátria* in his 1857 prose fragment, appropriately titled “A Pátria”. He writes of the *pátria* as a “reunião de amizades, simpatias, amores, recordações, felicidades, penas, tudo isso constitui o laço que encadeia o coração do homem ao cantinho da terra onde nasceu, onde vive, e onde espera morrer” (1923-31: I, 92).

¹⁷ The following description of *Portugal perante a revolução de Espanha*, from Quental’s 1887 autobiographical letter, is frequently cited as evidence that his iberianism was short-lived: “Advogava aí a União Ibérica por meio da República Federal [...] Era uma grande ilusão, da qual porém só desisti [...] à força de golpes brutais e repetidos da experiência” (Quental 1989: II, 836). I would suggest that, as with Oliveira Martins, Quental’s rejection of an Iberian federal republic as an “illusion” does not fore-

Vázquez Cuesta (1993) and António Machado Pires (1992) have downplayed Quental's iberianism, basing their analyses on an exclusively political understanding of the doctrine. This excessively narrow definition of iberianism prevents us from appreciating the seriousness with which peninsular intellectuals like Antero de Quental and Oliveira Martins, and later Miguel de Unamuno, Miguel Torga, and José Saramago¹⁸, have viewed the project of constructing a common Iberian *pátria*, whether in political, economic, strategic, or cultural-intellectual terms. Vázquez Cuesta (1993: 161, 182) characterizes Quental's iberianism as a "pequena aventura juvenil", the product of a "patriotismo exigente e hipercrítico que, incapaz de aceitar a mediocridade presente, procurasse consolação na grandeza do que podia ter sido e não fora". For his part, Pires (1992: 67, 248) comments that the iberianism of the *Geração de 70* was largely rhetorical and reactive, catering to a then fashionable interest in Spain, and more concerned with inspiring the Portuguese to national renewal via the Spanish threat than with actually forming a single Iberian nation-state. While Vázquez Cuesta and Pires's characterizations may be appropriate for Queirós, who in his 1878 short story "A catástrofe" uses Spanish invasion as an occasion for Portuguese national resurgence, I do not believe they apply to Quental.¹⁹ In examining Quental's work we can trace his evolving iberianism from "Ibéria" (1864) and *Portugal perante a revolução de Espanha* (1868), through the *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares* (1871), "A República e o Socialismo" (1873)²⁰ and the *Revista Occidental* project (1875), to 1890's *As tendências gerais da filosofia* and his letter to Alberto Osório de Castro, in which Quental again speculates on the possibility of Iberian union, albeit with greater fatalism than he did in earlier years.²¹

In sum, I believe that we should think in terms of *evolution* rather than *rejection* in evaluating Quental's iberianist engagement. This perspective is in line with Quental's own writing, both socio-political and autobiographical. In 1871's *O que é a Internacional*, Quental describes social change as achieved through gradual, "sucessivas transformações, por uma lenta preparação" (1982: 343), and in an 1887 autobiographical letter he characterizes his thinking during the 1870s as an "evolução de sentimento [que] correspondia a uma evolução de pensamento" (1989: II, 837-838). In the remainder of

close the possibility of other forms of Portuguese-Spanish approximation, as I will demonstrate in my reading of the *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares*.

¹⁸ See Unamuno's *Por tierras de Portugal y España* (1911), Torga's *Poemas ibéricos* (1965), and Saramago's *A jangada de pedra* (1986).

¹⁹ Marques (2007) offers a short interpretation of Quental's iberianism that strikes me as closer to the mark than Pires (1992) or Vázquez Cuesta (1993), though he describes Quental's iberianist interest as clustered around the years 1868 and 1890, whereas I argue for a more gradual evolution.

²⁰ Here Quental reveals a tenacious faith in the Spanish Republic, even as it entered its death throes. He writes: "Se, finalmente, a república espanhola, evitando igualmente as violências da ditadura vermelha e a funesta aliança dos conservadores endurecidos, aplanar com mão firme um largo terreno de liberalismo [...] se a república, começando por vagamente democrática, se for definindo dia a dia como social [...] neste caso diremos que essa república liberal, progressiva e reparadora [embora] não [seja] ainda inteiramente a nossa, porque a nossa é o Ideal [...] estaremos de todo o coração com essa república liberal e progressiva" (quoted in Carreiro 1981: I, 491).

²¹ In this letter, and in the wake of the British government's humiliating ultimatum that Portugal relinquish its claims to territory between its African colonies of Mozambique and Angola, Quental speculates: "Não sei se a união ibérica se realizará: mas, a realizar-se, far-se-á pela força das coisas e não pela intervenção livre e razoável das vontades, que as não há cá para tanto" (1989: II, 1013).

this essay I will analyze *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares* as an example of Quental's evolving iberianism, and as a text that marks a transition between his early advocacy of peninsular federation and his later concern with affirming a shared Iberian history, race, and character, and with proposing common solutions for peninsular problems.

3. *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares* as an iberianist text

Of the activities that occupied Quental's early career, the Casino Conferences stand as the most significant in terms of their impact on Portuguese intellectual and political life. Quental and several associates organized this series of "conferências democráticas" in Lisbon in 1871. The conferences' pilot-program reflects an overlapping of liberal concern for public dialog with the conviction that revolution, on the order of that year's Paris Commune, was in Portugal and broader Europe's immediate future (Saraiva 1995: 42). Since revolution was seen as inevitable, the organizers argued that the public should "estudar serenamente a significação dessas ideias [revolucionárias] e a legitimidade desses interesses; investigar como a sociedade é, e como ela deve ser; como as nações têm sido, e como as pode fazer hoje a liberdade; e, por serem elas as formadoras do homem, estudar todas as ideias e todas as correntes do século" (quoted in Carreiro 1981: I, 404). No doubt reacting to a pilot-program that featured "revolution" writ large, and suspecting subversive intent on the part of the organizers, an alarmist government closed the conferences after five sessions – the second of which featured Quental's speech on the *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares*.

In the *Causas da decadência*, Quental attempts to diagnose and propose remedies for the causes of Portugal's historical decline. In taking up the theme of *decadência*, Quental joins a long tradition in Portuguese historiography of speculating on the reasons for the country's short-lived glory during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the protracted descent that followed. Additionally, the text sees Quental fusing Romantic-era ideas of the nation as an organic social body, characterized by a common will, genius, or nature, and more recent evolutionist and positivistic ideas that cast society as a social organism functioning according to supposedly scientific laws. If the social body is defined by gradual transformation, then Portugal's transition from expansion to decline can be traced back to historical causes. Here Quental's position dovetails with that of Oliveira Martins, though Quental is less deterministic with regard to the prospects for correcting wayward evolutionary trends. For Quental, decline results from the perversion of those qualities that gave rise to Iberian glory: genuine religious faith, local political liberties, and the drive to explore. Their debased versions – doctrinaire Catholicism, absolute monarchy, and a violent, unproductive overseas colonization – can be corrected through concerted, peninsula-wide effort. Quental's view that a people can intervene in its own history is made clear if we briefly return to *O que é a Internacional*. Here Quental writes in the context of socialism:

A sociedade é um organismo, e os organismos transformam-se, não se revolucionam. É pois necessário preparar essa transformação [...] A questão está toda em levantar e melhorar cada vez mais as condições do trabalho, e cortar os privilégios do capital, enfraquecê-lo,

bloqueá-lo, torná-lo dia a dia mais dependente e precário, até que se renda e desapareça (1982: 347).

For Quental as a socialist, economic relationships are determined by the conflict between capital and labor, which can only be overcome in the proletariat's final victory over the capitalist elite. Likewise, Quental believed as an iberianist that peninsular affairs are historically dependent on a fixed Iberian character, which manifests itself in religious practice, governmental organization, and overseas expansion efforts. However, this historical determinism does not preclude judicious human intervention in the interest of effecting change. By contrast, for Oliveira Martins the road back to prosperity is more complicated, as the causes of Iberia's past glory are also the causes of its present decline, merely evolved by some three centuries. He observes in his *História da civilização ibérica*: "As causas iniciais da vida e da morte são as mesmas: uma implica a outra; no princípio da primeira está a razão de ser da segunda" (1923: 329). However, both accepted historical diagnosis and remedy as their operating method, with the Casino Conferences, charged with "investiga[ndo] como a sociedade é, e como ela deve ser", projected as a model for this sort of operation.

One curious problem raised by Quental's speech regards the issue of the social body he discusses – whether it is exclusively Portuguese, or if it comprehends the whole of the peninsula. The Conferences' pilot-program speaks of "[l]iga[ndo] Portugal com o movimento moderno, fazendo-o assim nutrir-se dos elementos vitais de que vive a humanidade civilizada" (quoted in Carreiro 1981: I, 404). However, Quental frames his address as concerning the decline of the "povos peninsulares", and the text refers repeatedly to a common "raça peninsular", "génio", and "pátria". I see both a national register and an Iberian register at work in Quental's argument, with the former concerned with reforming Portugal, and the latter interested in broader peninsular renewal. I interpret this dual presence as reflecting the changes Quental's position was undergoing in the early 1870s. Whereas in his 1868 pamphlet he explicitly called for a peninsular federation, by 1871 his position had moderated, likely in response to changing conditions in Spain. As his correspondence from the time reveals, Quental was frustrated by the inability of the Spanish republicans to establish a stable government.²² While Quental clearly remained committed to the iberianist project, events in Spain compelled him to change the focus of his iberianism and couch his argument in vaguer, more "cultural" terms, thereby leaving interpretive room for Portugal to follow its own political path should the situation of revolutionary Spain degenerate further.

In the first pages of his *Causas da decadência* Quental presents us with a revealing case of ambiguity in terminology, in referring to his Lisbon audience – which was predominantly if not entirely Portuguese – as *peninsulares* and even *nós Espanhóis* (2001a: 7-8, 12). What does it mean for Quental to give the Portuguese the name of their histori-

²² Writing to Jaime Batalha Reis in July 1873, Quental declares his continued faith "no futuro republicano de França e Espanha". However, clearly frustrated by the continued weakness of the Spanish Republic, he argues in a letter to Oliveira Martins, also from July 1873, that Spain is not a united nation in the Portuguese sense, but rather a juxtaposition of peoples held together by monarchical tyranny: "Concluo, pois, para Espanha, para uma federação, semi-histórica, semi-revolucionária", but only "depois dum período de total desorganização" (1989: I, 198, 208).

cal archrivals by calling them Spanish? I suspect that despite his categorical, perhaps intentionally jarring language, Quental is actually describing the Portuguese as *Iberians*, and is enlarging the idea of “nós” to include all of the “povos peninsulares”.²³ He is interested in the idea of uniting Portuguese, Castilians, Aragonese, Basques, Catalans, and so on – through the idea of a common “raça peninsular”, possessed of an essential “génio”, “espírito”, and “instinto” that mark it as distinct from the rest of Europe. Invoking the Roman *Hispania*, Quental comments:

Logo na época romana aparecem os caracteres essenciais da raça peninsular: espírito de independência local, e originalidade do génio inventivo [...] Na Idade Média, a Península, livre de estranhas influências, brilha na plenitude do seu génio, das suas qualidades naturais. O instinto político de descentralização e federalismo patenteia-se na multiplicidade de reinos e condados soberanos em que se divide a Península, como um protesto e uma vitória dos interesses e energias locais, contra a unidade uniforme, esmagadora e artificial (2001a: 10-11).

Seemingly oblivious to the internecine violence that plagued the peninsula during the Middle Ages, Quental celebrates medieval Iberia as an ideal federation, in that it was divided into several autonomous regions, united by their common character and loyalty to a common, overarching *pátria*. Quental comments that during this period, “fora da *Pátria*”, meaning beyond the Pyrenees, “guerreiros ilustres mostravam ao mundo que o valor dos povos peninsulares não era inferior à sua inteligência” (2001a: 19; my emphasis). The trouble begins when municipalities are subordinated to centralizing and unifying monarchies, one based in Lisbon and the other (eventually) in Madrid. The paradoxical result is that under the two monarchies, Iberians are divided into two opposing camps, both subordinated to stifling central authority. Quental links his proto-federalist, medieval Iberia to 1871 by way of a proposed recommitment to federalism – now qualified as democratic and rooted in republican and socialist principles. However, in contrast to his argument in *Portugal perante a revolução*, Quental does not explicitly advocate a federated Iberian republic in his 1871 address. Instead, he calls for “a federação republicana de todos os grupos autonómicos, de todas as vontades soberanas”, which would leave ample room for Spanish-Portuguese political union if Pi y Margall and the Spanish republicans succeeded in consolidating their hold on government (2001a: 76).

In qualifying the iberianism Quental defended in 1871, we should note that in *Causas da decadência* he does not make exclusive reference to the Iberian register. He frequently refers to Portugal and Spain as separate entities, though the instances in which the ideas of “Portugal” and “Spain” are opposed are relatively few. In many cases, even when Portugal and Spain are mentioned separately, the idea of an overarching Iberian *pátria* remains, with Quental subjecting the two to common historical conditions or pointing them toward a shared course of action. This strategy provides for the greatest possible conceptual unity for “Iberia”, while acknowledging the historical reality of

²³ Curiously, Almeida Garrett and Henriques Nogueira, on opposite sides of the iberianist issue, apply the same polemical designation of *espanhóis* to the Portuguese (see Garrett 1859: 240-241). Meanwhile, Henriques Nogueira refers in a series of articles from 1854-1855 to Iberians as “todos os espanhóis” and to the Spanish nation-state as “o resto da Espanha” (1980: III, 46, 56, 98). See also Matos (2006: 360, 369).

Spain and Portugal's separation into distinct, sometimes rival kingdoms. Discussing peninsular decline generally, Quental observes rather poetically: "Portugueses e Espanhóis vamos de século para século minguando em extensão e importância, até não sermos mais que duas sombras, duas nações espectros, no meio dos povos que nos rodeiam!" (2001a: 21). And speaking of the colonial and religious manifestations of peninsular decline, Quental poses the following questions: "E a nós, espanhóis e portugueses, como foi que o catolicismo nos anulou?", and, "nós, Portugueses e Espanhóis, que destinos demos às prodigiosas riquezas extorquidas aos povos estrangeiros?" Finally, Quental calls for a concerted effort to combat decline, proclaiming: "Erguemo-nos hoje a custo, espanhóis e portugueses, desse túmulo onde os nossos grandes erros nos tiveram sepultados: erguemo-nos, mas os restos da mortalha ainda nos embaraçam os passos, e pela palidez dos nossos rostos pode bem ver o mundo de que regiões lúgubres e mortais chegamos ressuscitados!" (2001a: 28-29, 48, 61). While in this image the Spanish and Portuguese undead have separate faces, or *rostos*, they share the same shroud, or *mortalha*, in the manner of conjoined twins.

Despite the conceptual unity often accompanying his references to "Portugal and Spain", Quental provides occasional evidence of a critical stance toward Portugal's peninsular neighbors. These criticisms are relatively infrequent, and moreover, are tempered by Quental's continued support for the Spanish republicans. However, in the interest of full disclosure, Quental situates the historical moment at which the Peninsula passed from expansion to decline during the first years of the "Spanish captivity", following the Portuguese boy-king Dom Sebastião's disastrous 1578 military defeat and death at Alcácer-Quibir, in north Africa. Quental explains:

No princípio do século xvii, quando Portugal deixa de ser contado entre as nações, e se desmorona por todos os lados a monarquia anômala inconsistente e desnatural de Filipe II; quando a glória passada já não pode encobrir o ruinoso do edifício presente, e se afunda a Península sob o peso dos muitos erros acumulados, então aparece franca e patente por todos os lados a nossa improcrastinável decadência" (2001a: 20).

See also Quental's lamentation of D. Sebastião's death, and specifically his reference to the *pátria*, here understood as exclusively Portuguese: "Se D. Sebastião não fosse absoluto, não teria ido enterrar em Alcácer Quibir a nação portuguesa, as últimas esperanças da pátria" (2001a: 57). Curiously, the move to correlate Portugal's historical decline to the period of the "Spanish captivity" was popular in both the iberianist and anti-iberianist camps, with the former group seeking to differentiate their projects for peaceful, equitable union from the lingering memory of Spanish domination during the 1580-1640 period (Matos 1998: 299-300, 358). However, where an anti-iberianist might argue that the occupation proved the fundamentally untrustworthy, annexationist, and anti-Portuguese character of the Spanish, Quental focuses his critique on the rulers, bemoaning D. Sebastião's quixotic military campaign and the Spanish monarch's alleged inconsistency. Recall that for Quental, the product of Romanticism and a socialist, the actions of rulers, so prone to forsake the popular interest, cannot be ascribed to the people. Just as the Portuguese should not be held responsible for the misrule of their monarchs, nor should the Spanish be implied in the crimes committed by their governing elite, whether in regard to the "Spanish captivity" or the "bestiality" of the conquistadors in America (Quental 2001a: 71).

In sum, Quental maintains the principal features of his 1868 argument in the *Causas da decadência* – he contrasts past glories to a troubled late-nineteenth-century state of decline, he denounces political and religious elites, and he proposes a corrective course of action. However, in his 1871 address Quental does not explicitly advocate political union with Spain, as he had earlier, but instead couches his argument in broad references to race, modernity, and regeneration. Toward the end of his address, Quental states: “Somos uma raça decaída por ter rejeitado o espírito moderno: regenerar-nos-emos abraçando francamente esse espírito. O seu nome é Revolução”. However, for Quental, “revolução não quer dizer guerra, mas sim paz: não quer dizer licença, mas sim ordem, ordem verdadeira pela verdadeira liberdade” (2001a: 77). Does this modern spirit imply the reorganization of the peninsula as a decentralized federal republic, possibly as a prelude to a wider European union? Does Quental’s revolution, capable of reconciling order and liberty, point toward Iberian federation, or do his constant references to a shared Iberian heritage imply another sort of relationship? I would argue that Quental’s failure to answer these questions reflects his own evolving iberianist position during the early 1870s, as well as the unpredictable political climate of late-nineteenth-century Portugal and Spain. Quental’s retreat from his bold call for political union in 1868 to a more limited defense of the embattled Spanish republicans, coupled with greater speculation on a common Iberian identity, most likely took these factors into account. Regardless, it is a mistake to interpret Quental’s changing attitudes toward Spanish-Portuguese approximation as a rejection of iberianism. Quental’s involvement in the later *Revista Occidental* project (founded in 1875) shows that his iberianism, far from disappearing with the ephemeral First Spanish Republic, would remain an important part of his intellectual agenda.

In concluding my argument for Antero de Quental as an iberianist, I would like to refer to one of Quental’s ideological forbears, José Félix Henriques Nogueira. In 1854 and 1855, Henriques Nogueira wrote a series of articles entitled “O iberismo e seus Adversários”. In the fourth article in the series, published in March 1855, the author characterizes iberianism in the following terms:

É uma ideia diversamente interpretada, diversamente compreendida, diversamente aceite, mas é uma ideia de magnitude, de futuro, de vitalidade [...] A ideia ibérica tira a sua força principal dos homens novos, dessa mocidade filha da revolução, que a pretende completar, erigindo-lhe um templo condigno dos seus majestosos alicerces. O iberismo é de ontem; mas invade tudo (1980: III, 67).

A mere nine years after this article was published, a young Antero de Quental would write the poem “Ibéria” and in another four he would publish *Portugal perante a revolução de Espanha*. These texts would signal Quental’s entry into the iberianist debate, a problem with which he would continue to engage until his death in 1891. More than a century after Antero de Quental’s death and with Portugal firmly entrenched in the European Union, Quental and his generation can safely and fondly be characterized as an exceptionally gifted, rigorously intellectual, and charmingly nonconformist group, their radicalism largely forgiven if not forgotten. It would be a shame if the lingering exigencies of Portuguese nationalism – namely its historical construction in opposition to Spain – were to obscure Quental and the *Geração de 70*’s involvement with iberianism. Indeed,

Quental and company's calls for effective national sovereignty, social justice and neighborly reciprocity remain relevant for the present generation of peninsular intellectuals and political actors as they attempt to reconcile Iberia's continued two-state division with Spain's devolved system of government, and with Portugal and Spain's common participation in the European Union. Spanish decentralization and EU membership, which have weakened Spanish-Portuguese divisions and encouraged the reassertion of regional peninsular identities, have refashioned the Iberian Peninsula so as approximate (in certain respects) the goal of iberianism's federalist adherents. Understood in these terms, the question of iberianism remains more than relevant in the present day.²⁴

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²⁴ For a recent example of iberianism's continued relevance and capacity to generate controversy, see the 16 October 2006 survey published by the Spanish publication *Tiempo de Hoy*, which found that 45.6% of Spaniards were in favor of union with Portugal. On 28 October 2006, the electronic edition of *O Público* (Lisbon) asked the same question, with 2296 respondents (42%) voting in favor, and 3193 (58%) opposed.

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