


Other paths of Clio: The representations of cities in Piauí in the work *Caatingas e Chapadões*, by Francisco de Assis Iglésias (1912-1919)

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this work is to understand the representations of the cities of Piauí in the years 1912-1919 described by Francisco de Assis Iglésias in his work "Caatingas e Chapadões", 1953. Thus, some specific objectives are pertinent to the research, such as: discussing the (auto)biographical and memorialistic traits of the writer in his narrative; infer about the relationships between the notions of space and spatialities, time and temporalities in the writer's work; analyze the narrative of the book Caatinga and Chapadões in its approximations and distances between History, Memory and Literature. Therefore, as a methodological framework, the work is analyzed together with theoretical-methodological readings on the main axes of inference, literature, memory and city essential for a satisfactory exploration of the research. In order to deepen these academic branches, it is necessary to read authors such as Marc Bloch (1997), Euclides da Cunha (1984), Peter Burke (1992), Raymond Williams (1989), Ítalo Calvino (2003), Pedro Pio Fontineles Filho (2008), Teresinha Queiroz (1994), Erisvaldo Fagundes (2015) and Durval Muniz (2018). author's view, since his book is the main source of this research. In the meantime, the previous consideration points out that the research reconstructs the spaces traversed by Iglésias, presenting the conditions present at the time that make up the cities and culture of Piauí. The memory of these scenarios preserves their strangeness and representations in relation to the landscapes of cities such as Teresina, Parnaíba, Uruçuí and Floriano. Thus, "Caatingas e Chapadões" constitutes a place of memory, a rich source for historical research, which brings a romanticized narrative, which transcends the technical content of an agronomist, as it has as its background the urban, the rural, the cultures and political issues present at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Keywords: History, Literature, Memory, Representations, City.

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INTRODUCTION

[...] How I feel an enchantment, an irresistible attraction, to the things of the past, for our life is nothing more than a moment in the succession of lives through the immortal cell.³

Writing emerges as a tool developed by men and that breaks the threshold of death, preserving a fragment of time for the new generation, preserving the paradigms of those who write, keeping information about the origins of past societies and their representations in fictional and/or memorialistic writings. In this way, the branch of History and Literature problematizes fictional writing and extracts from its subjectivity discussions that enrich the world historical scenario, the landscapes described in literary works are sources from which historians should drink, as Marc Bloch said⁴, "[...] Behind the sensible features of the landscape (...) it is precisely the men that history intends to apprehend."⁵ Therefore, they are indicative of what man creates, uses and transforms, as well as resignifies and feels.

It is about these possibilities of representation and reconstruction of the landscape that the work of Francisco de Assis Iglésias, entitled "*Caatingas e Chapadões (1953)*"⁶ is taken in the present study, since in his narrative, there are traces of approximation between History, Memory and Literature. Thus, it is useful to expose the biography of the writer, he was born on January 6, 1889, in the city of Piracicaba and died on July 13, 1969, was the son of Spanish immigrants, and graduated as an agronomist. His training earned him the work in sectors related to the maniçoba issue and later in the management of union lands within Piauí, and it was on these journeys through the Sertão that his travel diary to the Brazilian northeast would be born, passing through several cities in Piauí.

From this trip, as a result of his work, the book *Caatingas e Chapadões (1953)* was born, in which the cities of Parnaíba, Teresina, Floriano, Santa Filomena, Uruçuí, among others⁷, gain prominence, he navigates aboard the ship "Brasil" that transports him from Rio de Janeiro to Fortaleza, a place that gives access to the Parnaíba River and follows through a cage⁸, the means of transport was perfect for the conditions of the North, as the river was too narrow for large vessels. Thus, the research goes from 1912, on the author's first trip at the invitation of Professor Charropin⁹ to carry out the plan to protect the rubber culture, since latex was one of the main raw materials for

³ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco de Assis. *Caatingas and plateaus: notes, impressions and reminiscences of the Brazilian mid-north (1912-1919)*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1953, p.14.

⁴ BLOCH, Marc. *Introduction to the story*. Lisbon: Europa-América, 1997.

⁵ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco de Assis. *Caatingas and plateaus: notes, impressions and reminiscences of the Brazilian mid-north (1912-1919)*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1953, p. 88.

⁶ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco de Assis. *Caatingas and plateaus: notes, impressions and reminiscences of the Brazilian mid-north (1912-1919)*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1953.

⁷ Other cities such as Oeiras, Amarante, Bom Jesus, Coroa, Barra Grande.

⁸ "Cage" - in the popular nomenclature. It is a medium-sized vessel, which carried people or goods, passengers usually slept in hammocks on deck. It was mainly used in crossing narrow rivers

⁹ Professor of botany at the "Luiz de Queiroz" agricultural school in Piracicaba and head of the commission for Juazeiro da Bahia.



elastic gum, passing through major world events such as the First World War¹⁰ of 1914 and the Spanish¹¹ Flu occurred in 1918 and lasted until 1919, the last year of the present post-Influenza pandemic research in the last journey recorded in the book to Piauí at the service of the Butantã Institute¹².

His notes go beyond agronomic study, as Iglésias made a point of exposing right at the presentation of the book, "In addition to the agronomic observations that interested me more closely, I did not miss the opportunity to gather information about the way of life of man in the regions I visited."¹³ Thus, he clarifies that his writing would be marked by curiosity and attention to record a little about the culture of a Paulista who glimpses a little of the man from Piauí.

Thus, the objectives of the present study have as their main goal to expose the history, memory and representations of cities in Piauí, in the work *Caatinga e Chapadões (1953)*, by Francisco de Assis Iglésias. Debating about the representations of the city represented by the author and comparing them with the government reports of Piauí.

IGLÉSIAS THE TRAVELER: BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORIES

Joseph Campbell¹⁴ is an American author and writer who created the theory of the Hero's journey¹⁵, which is a universal theme present in myths and fabulous literatures around the world. He believed that this journey reflected the journey of human life itself, which each individual goes through throughout life, facing challenges, seeking fulfillment, learning along the way, and impacting the world. The three main phases of the hero's journey would be the call to adventure, the challenges and learnings along the way, and the hero's arrival at his goal and fulfillment. Paraphrasing Campbell's theory and bringing it closer to the author Francisco Iglésias, we see a similarity with the theory, since he leaves São Paulo for the north, encounters the challenges of the Northeasterners and returns to his city with knowledge that gave rise to *Caatingas and Chapadões*.

¹⁰ World War I was a conflict involving several countries between 1914 and 1918.

¹¹ The Spanish flu was a pandemic that took place between 1918 and 1919, affecting all continents and leaving a balance of at least 50 million dead

¹² The Butantan Institute is a prominent biological research center located in the Butantã neighborhood, in the west zone of the city of São Paulo, adjacent to the Cidade Universitária campus of the University of São Paulo

¹³ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco de Assis. *Caatingas and plateaus: notes, impressions and reminiscences of the Brazilian mid-north (1912-1919)*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1953. p. 23

¹⁴ He was born in New York City in 1904. The young Campbell went with his father to the American Museum of Natural History, where he began to take an interest in everything related to Native American culture, graduated in English Literature at Columbia University in 1925, where he also completed a Master's Degree in Medieval Literature in 1927. While at this University, he made two important trips to Mexico and Guatemala. He later traveled to Europe and met the philosopher and writer Jiddu Krishnamurti. After this encounter, he traveled to India and became interested in Eastern philosophies, especially Buddhism.

¹⁵ The hero's journey, Joseph Campbell's life and work were approached in a dialogued way about the author's biography and his theory about the journey.



The present topic aims to introduce the traveler who created the work and part of its history before going to the North¹⁶.

The underlying work of this study was written by Francisco de Assis Iglésias, son of Spanish immigrants. His mother's name was Anna Iglésias and his father, João, had him on January 6, 1899 in Piracicaba, located in the interior of São Paulo, where he spent his childhood and youth. In general parameters, Brazil at that time was in a situation of searching for its own identity, with the recent abolition of slavery thanks to the Golden Law¹⁷, which changed the country's economic dynamics, requiring the demand for foreign labor on the farms. His parents arranged for Iglésias to have the privilege of education within a society that was mostly illiterate and economically miserable.

In this context, he studied during his childhood¹⁸ at the school of the Ipiranga group¹⁹, then entered the Luiz de Queiroz school¹⁹, where he graduated in agronomy, an area that had a lot of relevance taking into account the slow process of Brazilian modernization, initially restricted to large urban centers and dependent on rural work. After his academic training, he began to work at the Butantã Institute, where he established himself professionally until he was summoned, in 1912, by Professor Emílio Charroupin²⁰ to work with rubber, specifically latex, which was a strong economic exponent during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the target of research such as that of Teresinha Queiroz²¹ about the importance of *Maniçoba*, and that it needed care for its production. Iglésias was one of the delegates to ensure the success of this production, as he mentions at the beginning of the work: The federal government organized a plan to protect the rubber culture; Several commissions would be set up in the various northern states that produce the precious latex, which is the raw material for elastic gum.²²

This mission evidenced an economic concern in the exploration of these activities, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of the North for the national economy. However, it also highlighted the neglect of development and infrastructure in the northern region of the country. The teams were sent to cities that seem to be "frozen in time", compared to the large metropolitan regions such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais that continued to grow and prosper.

The purpose of the rubber protection service was not to mitigate the disparities between Brazilian regions and the lack of investment in infrastructure and development in the Northeast.

¹⁶North is the term used by the author to refer to the Northeast and its inhabitants, during the research, North and Northeast will be widely cited, following the rule that North is used when it comes to something related to Iglésias and Northeast portrayed by the author of this research. The Term will be deepened in chapter 2 in the discussions of history and city.

¹⁷ Lei áurea was responsible for the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888

¹⁸ School groups created by residents of the Ipiranga neighborhood.

¹⁹ In 1901, the São João da Montanha Practical Agricultural School was created in Piracicaba, along the lines of the European agricultural schools. Incorporated into the newly created USP in 1934, it was renamed the "Luiz de Queiroz" College of Agriculture (ESALQ), whose headquarters is listed as a State Public Heritage.

²⁰ Head of the Botany Section of the Juazeiro Rubber Defense Commission

²¹ The importance of *Maniçoba* rubber in the economy of Piauí 1900-1920

²² IGLÉSIAS, Francisco de Assis. *Caatingas and Chapadões: notes, impressions and reminiscences of the Brazilian mid-north (1912-1919)*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1953. p.20



Since it had the purpose of economic exploitation, which, although important, cannot take priority to the point of neglecting the needs of the less developed regions. At the same time that the large metropolises advanced and benefited from economic advances and infrastructure, the cities in the Northeast remained stagnant, without receiving the proper attention and resources necessary for their progress and when they did, in the case of the engineer's coming to the Sertão, they had the purpose of protecting the national economy and not helping the region to face its daily problems.

BETWEEN LEAGUES, MEMORIES AND LETTERS: THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CITIES OF PIAUÍ IN THE WORK OF IGLÉSIAS

While the caatinga drowns him; it shortens his gaze; assaults him and dazzles him; it entangles him in the spiny plot and does not attract him; it repels him with the stinging leaves, with the thorn, with the sticks cracked into spears; And leagues and leagues unfold in front of it, unchanging in its desolate aspect: leafless trees, with twisted and dry branches, rebellious, crisscrossed, pointing stiffly in space or stretching flexuously across the ground, reminiscent of an immense brawling, of torture, of the dying flora²³

In *Euclides da Cunha's Os Sertões*²⁴, History meets Literature. In the work, the author travels from São Paulo to cover the Canudos War in the²⁵ Northeast of the country, with a critical eye on and portrayed the daily life of the landscapes through which he traveled. Like Iglésias, Euclides has a strange feeling for the situation of the Sertão and the Sertanejo. In his chapter "The Earth", in which his perception of the conditions of the environment is described, the caatingas cause an agonizing sensation of a passage that struggles to survive the climatic conditions of violent droughts and floods in this unprepared region, which subjected both individuals and nature to a daily struggle for survival.

As Euclides himself defines it, "The sertanejo is, above all, a strong man".²⁶ Despite being strong, the Northeasterners were helpless. The strength of the Northeast resulted from the daily struggles for survival, seeking better conditions that should be ensured by the government. To classify the sertanejo as a strong man is to ignore, on the one hand, the misery faced by the majority of the population and, on the other hand, to recognize his effort to resist in the face of so many difficulties.

²³ CUNHA, Euclides da. *The Barrens*. São Paulo: Três, 1984 (Student Library). p.23

²⁴Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909) was a Brazilian writer, journalist and professor, author of the work "Os Sertões". He was sent as a correspondent to the Sertão of Bahia, by the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, to cover the war in the municipality of Canudos. His book "Os Sertões" narrates and analyzes the events of the war.

²⁵The Canudos War was a series of armed conflicts involving the Brazilian Army and sertanejos who followed the religious leader Antônio Conselheiro, taking place between 1896 and 1897, in Arraial de Canudos, in the interior of the state of Bahia. Brazil was still going through the transition to the republican system, having just elected its first president by direct vote and also the first civilian president: Prudente de Moraes

²⁶CUNHA, Euclides da. *The Barrens*. São Paulo: Três, 1984 (Student Library). p.40



Iglésias along *Caatingas and Chapadões* also stands in front of the daily scenarios of the Sertão, his comments go beyond the fauna and flora, he also passes through the urban landscapes of the North, delving into issues of public management such as health, lighting, sanitation that in the South was already in another state of modernization, while at the destination of his journey, progress had not yet found its way. In the words of the agronomist, some cities had "few signs of progress",²⁷ "less favored by progress".²⁸ In other words, his writing contemplates the natural and human aspects, based on his origins which, like Euclides da Cunha, defines his reference on what progress was.

In *Caatingas and Chapadões*, Iglésias takes over the work within the Ministry of Rubber Production in Piauí and ends up making personal comments about the conditions of the cities of the Sertão. In this context, these scores are located in the first contacts with the author in the cities to insert the reader in the landscape and involve him in the narrative. The author resided in the South of the country, which was considered the first stop of progress,²⁹ so, paraphrasing Raymond Williams²⁹ in his work, "City and the Countryside"³⁰ who wrote, "even after society became predominantly urban, literature, for a generation remained basically rural"³¹, as much as the author was talking about literature, from the passages of Iglésias it is notorious that the urban city had not yet touched the regions of the North that were in a process of transition over the years that Iglésias revisited.

However, when he goes from the South to the North loaded with precepts and prejudices, Iglésias consciously or unconsciously enters the debate of Durval Muniz in his work "The Invention of the Northeast", because even before seeing the absence of progress witnessed in his region of origin, he is unaware of the arduous battle of the Northeasterners against the politics of centralized power and against nature. As Muniz reveals,

In the regionalist discourse, the neglect of the Federal Government and the privilege of other regions were what explained the decadence of the region and the poverty of its population, it was not the northeastern man who would be racially inferior or even indolent, lazy, without activity. How can we accuse of being indolent a man who was fighting a centuries-old battle with nature and who in this battle became, above all, a strong and capable, albeit hardened and harsh? The regional elite, in addition to naturalizing the social and economic problems of this space, by speaking of a generic Northeasterner, which would include seeking to defend the very nature of the region, accused of being unviable for human life. In the national

²⁷ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco de Assis. *Caatingas and plateaus: notes, impressions and reminiscences of the Brazilian mid-north (1912-1919)*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1953.p.281.

²⁸ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. op. cit. 1953, p. 38.

²⁹ Welsh researcher, critic and writer Raymond Williams was born on August 31, 1921, in the small village of Llanfihangel Crucorney, Wales, located in the United Kingdom. His father worked on a railway and, like his colleagues, bet on the British Labour Party. In the locality where they lived, the Welsh language was not practised, although the Welsh tradition was intense. He would become one of the leading scholars and creators of cultural studies, and would emerge as a significant name in this sphere in the English New Left in the period following the end of World War II. He has developed studies on literature, theater and television, always seeking to understand these vehicles both from the point of view of erudite culture and popular culture, without leaving aside the famous cultural industry.

³⁰ WILLIAMS, Raymond. *The countryside and the city: in history and literature*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989.

³¹ WILLIAMS, Raymond. *The countryside and the city: in history and literature*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989, p. 12.



congress, the parliamentarians from the south proposed the evacuation of the semi-arid region, alleging that it was not prudent to continue spending large amounts of federal resources to maintain a population living in a world where it was not possible to develop productive activities³²

In other words, the historian reveals how the Northeast and the Northeast are inventions of certain power relations and the knowledge corresponding to them."³³ This means that the strangeness of the outsider Iglésias and his empathetic writing about the ills that plague the region, such as drought and poverty, highlight the power relations between the State and Federal Government, which, due to neglect or default, saw no value in investing in the Northeast of the country, in the words of Durval Muniz, "We, the Northeasterners, tend to see ourselves as constantly defeated, as the other side of the power of the South, which oppresses, discriminates and exploits us."³⁴

This dialectic of "Us" and "Them", people of the South and people of the North is explicit in *Caatingas and Chapadões*, because throughout the work, the South is the reference while the Sertão is the resilience. Iglésias characterizes progress as something of his region and strength to the people of the Northeast, exemplifying how the country was - and still is - marked by prejudices and regionalisms that separate the Brazilian identity.

Another situation that shows this dichotomy was the reason for the traveler to come to the Sertão, to explore and develop the economic exponent that would leverage the Brazilian economy, that is, the Northeast serving as a path of exploration to the South and not as a region worthy of having urban development as a priority, seen as, by the engineer himself, as a part of the country that has suffered from droughts for many decades and had not yet conditions, knowledge or investment to deal with this problem that impacted local agriculture and livestock. Placing the sertanejo as an object hostage to his government, his climate and his own fate.

At the moment when the agronomist makes comments about the cities, there is room for problematizations about the state and infrastructure of these backcountry landscapes, the author passes through more than 10 cities in Piauí³⁵. As a general rule, his comments vary in length from 3 paragraphs to 4 lines, some cities, as they have been revisited more than once, such as Teresina, create an idea of progression, where with each visit the author elucidates another detail or a change in relation to what he had seen previously.

Right at the beginning of Iglésias' work, on his first trip to the Sertão in mid-1913 aboard the cage and passing through natural landscapes typical of the region, such as the "igarapés, circling the deltas, resembling paths of large parks whose flowerbeds were "covered with homogeneous areas".³⁶

³² ALBUQUERQUE Jr., Durval Muniz de. *The Invention of the Northeast and other arts*. São Paulo: Cortez. 2011. p.166.

³³ ALBUQUERQUE Jr., Durval Muniz de. *The Invention of the Northeast and other arts*. São Paulo: Cortez. 2011. p.31.

³⁴ ALBUQUERQUE Jr., Durval Muniz de. *The Invention of the Northeast and other arts*. São Paulo: Cortez. 2011. p.31

³⁵ Parnaíba, Teresina, Amarração, Floriano, Santa Filomena, Caxias, Uruçuí, Bom Jesus, Regeneração, Amarante, Água Branca.

³⁶ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.28



For the author, the first thing reported was the cultural trait of the rivalry between the residents of Teresina and Parnaíba, where the sertanejos say that in the capital, "little is found to eat"³⁷. Despite the native's speech, Iglésias counters with the comments about the infrastructure, making it clear to the reader that the sertanejos of Parnaíba would also be in trouble.

Speaking of the traveler was that, "Parnaíba, despite the vanity of the people of Parnaíba, they were small towns, badly paved streets or no pavement at all. They had no sewage, no water; This was carried by donkeys from the river to the residences"³⁸ Thus, at the beginning of the work, the author already has the first contact with an urban landscape in Piauí and classifies it as small and without basic conditions, where the "donkeys" walk freely and that, at least at first glance, there was no supervision. The city also had the port, with the presence of the Customs and its own sea port offices, as commercial houses of the first order, for export and import.

Approximately 18 kilometers from Parnaíba was Amarração, the city also had a port, it was reported by Iglésias that the first railway section of the State was in completion, in contact with a resident, he says, "It can no longer be said that Piauí does not have a foot of railroad".³⁹ Paraphrasing the phrase of the Piauí native, for Iglésias, there is at least a foot of the modernization process in the state. However, this inch of progress was short, for in the traveler's view,

The port of Mooring was very deficient; it had no facilities fit for the purpose it was supposed to fill, nor the deep sea capable of permitting it! the entry of ships such as the "Brazil". Only the small ships of the Lois, such as the "Iris", were allowed to enter. On the way out of the "Igaraçu" I saw a lot of traps, in the form of a pad-and-daub enclosure, to catch fish.⁴⁰

His observations play with the words and conditions of the city, pointing out that in addition to the weak structure, Amarração had not yet overcome the very nature that surrounded it, as Iglesias said, "Mooring, if it is not tied, the sea, aided by the sands of the dunes, will end up swallowing it. The waters were advancing and destroying streets and houses, in a slow but continuous invasion."⁴¹ tag. He also made reference to Carthage⁴² to emphasize the urgency of going through this situation, as the waters left clear signs of conquest saying that if the situation is not resolved, "one day one day a sign may be put up - Here was Mooring."⁴³

Just like Italo Calvino in *Invisible Cities*, who, through Marco Polo, revives, reconstructs and relates cities in his work, Iglésias also accomplishes this feat by referencing other cities as a model,

³⁷ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.28

³⁸ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.29

³⁹ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. op. cit. 1953,p.30.

⁴⁰ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. op. cit. 1953, p. 30.

⁴¹ IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. op. cit. 1953, p. 31.

⁴² Carthage was an important city in the north of the African continent in antiquity. It was located in the coastal region of the Mediterranean Sea, near the capital of present-day Tunisia (Tunis). However, the Carthaginian civilization also inhabited the north of the Iberian Peninsula, Mediterranean islands, and several locations on the North African coast.

⁴³ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p. 31



creating moments in which the real and the imagined take the lead in the construction and imagination of the city for the reader. Quoting Polo's words: "I speak, I speak," says Marco, "but those who listen to me retain only the words they want. [...] It's not the voice that commands the narration: it's the ear."⁴⁴tag. In this sense, the cities within a literary narrative are revived through the words of the characters, allowing the reader to create a representation of what has been written.

Together, the two works make the past of the invisible cities be reconstructed by both the reader and the character, being idealized and modified as they experience more in their journeys, thus, in each new city, "the traveler reenounters a past that he did not remember existing: a surprise of what he has ceased to be or no longer possesses reveals itself in the strange places, not in the known."⁴⁵tag. The present discussion works in parallel with the traveler to provide a perspective beyond the author's vision, transforming the reconstructed cities in *Caatingas and Chapadões* into cities problematized by *Clio's Gaze*.

Thus, the traveler makes these comments and leaves for Teresina aboard the cage, and with these comments about these two cities, it is evident the presence of the formation and historical influence of the past of Iglésias who, because of his privileges and literacy, sees solutions to situations that are still being faced with many difficulties by the state government, At the same time, there is a lack of detail within urban landscapes with regard to the minimum conditions in which society has the right to have.

The trip to Teresina is marked by uncertainties, aboard the cage, he asks about the time it will take until the arrival and the captain of the vessel makes it clear that not even he knows, due to the maritime uncertainties of the Parnaíba River. Before arriving at his next destination, in the interlude of rural landscapes, Iglesias writes another passage about the nature present on the way, in the song of the birds, "the trees laden with nests, looking like coffee grinders", ⁴⁶with nests that "touched the water of the river".⁴⁷ In this way, the paths taken by the traveler, at times, seem to pass through landscapes untouched by man, preserving the natural aspects in which man was only a visitor in his home. The violence of modernization and the flame of capitalist progress had not arrived in certain parts of Piauí, which contributes to *Caatingas e Chapadões* being a unique travel account as a historical source, for having urban and rural traces in a single work, nature, as well as cities and people revive the reader who sees and attributes meaning to the experiences through the lens of the traveler.

⁴⁴ CALVINO, Ítalo. *The invisible cities*. Rio de Janeiro: O Globo; São Paulo: Folha de S. Paulo, 2003. p.129.

⁴⁵ CALVINO, Ítalo. *The invisible cities*. Rio de Janeiro: O Globo; São Paulo: Folha de S. Paulo, 2003. p.35

⁴⁶ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.34

⁴⁷ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.34



His arrival in Teresina was categorized by him as the "least and the least favored by progress".⁴⁸ Iglésias find it strange that the houses were still made of straw, with only 500 houses on average with some remnant of urban landscape. With this, the reader is informed of the dangers that the city would go through in the event of a fire. "When a house catches fire, the fire spreads incredibly quickly, all over the street, because, in addition to the fire being truly straw, there were no firefighters in the city."⁴⁹ The capital itself would have the kerosene lamp lighting system, which caused an even greater sense of delay to Iglésias, "this fact, just on the afternoon of our arrival, impressed us very badly; We were no longer used to seeing such obsolete lighting."⁵⁰

The absence of lighting, which was one of the symbols of the city's progress, was a challenge before the departure of Iglésias, as it was necessary to install a public lighting service more in line with civilization, kerosene lighting was already becoming obsolete in large urban centers and remained active in the capital. It was necessary for a more modern and more satisfactory system, since Light is a resource that says a lot about the condition of the city.

In the case of Teresina, the battle to implement electric light was initiated during the government of Antonino Freire in the capital. The city, as Pedro Pio Fontineles Filho said in his master's dissertation "Challenging Medusa's gaze",⁵¹ which analyzes the process of modernization of the capital through the writings of Clodoaldo Freitas⁵² and periodicals of the time.

The history of the city and culture in the period of the early twentieth century is marked by a modernizing and controlling project of cities and shaping the customs of individuals. However, this did not happen uniformly, nor did it affect the entire population, increasingly targeting those who were not part of the political and economic elites or were not linked to them.⁵³

In other words, urbanization was divided between those who "still did not have access to water supply, without electricity, without housing improvements, mainly because they could not

⁴⁸ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.37

⁴⁹ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.37

⁵⁰ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. 1953, p.37

⁵¹ FONTINELES, Pedro Pio Filho. Challenging Medusa's gaze: modernization and modernizing discourses in Teresina, in the first two decades of the twentieth century. 170. f. Dissertation (Master's Degree in History) – Federal University of Piauí, 2008.

⁵² He was born in Oeiras (PI), on September 7, 1855, and died in Teresina, on June 29, 1924. He did his first studies and those of Humanities in São Luís, at the Seminary of Mercês and at the Liceu Maranhense, concluding them at the Liceu Piauiense, in 1870. In 1880 he obtained a bachelor's degree in Legal and Social Sciences from the Recife Faculty of Law. He lived in several locations in the national territory, such as Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso and Pará, where he held important positions. He moved to São Luís at the beginning of the twentieth century, and here he had such an intellectual activity that, although he was not from Maranhão, he was among the founders of the Academy. Back hometown, he participated in the foundation, in 1917, of the Piauí Academy of Letters, of which he was the first president. Judge of the Court of Justice of Piauí. He was a prolific writer, of whom only these historical novels, originally published in a newspaper, will be cited: *O Bequimão*; *sketch of a novel from Maranhão*, and *O Palácio das Lágrimas*, for the first time bundled in a book.

⁵³ FONTINELES, Pedro Pio Filho. Challenging Medusa's gaze: modernization and modernizing discourses in Teresina, in the first two decades of the twentieth century. 170. f. Dissertation (Master's Degree in History) – Federal University of Piauí, 2008. p.40



afford to pay for services."⁵⁴tag. While another part of the population that is part of the elite, they sought to implement modernization and adopt new cultural habits, thus making the city being "represented according to the different forms of contact with modernization"⁵⁵ varying for each social class.

Within this context, Iglesias' feeling of estrangement in relation to lighting was also shared by the city's elite, who were concerned with issues different from those faced by the less privileged backwoodsman. From this perspective, the absence of pavement, running water, electricity and sanitation contributed to modernization being only a desired objective, but not achieved, as stated by Teresinha de Queiroz: "the pretensions of modernization and alteration in the urban structure were still nothing more than projects that could only become viable from the moment the integration of the State occurred"⁵⁶

However, in sequence, Iglésias recognizes that there were installations for electric light being worked on, analyzing the government reports of 1913, the governor declared the investments and priorities for the issue of public lighting, as well as for the health and sanitation of sewage in the cities. Iglesias' next comment was about the lighting system, again carries the inside scoop from his experience in the South. He anticipates and criticizes the work carried out by the government of Piauí by pointing out that:

What I could not understand, however, and even bothered me, was the way in which they placed the poles. Everywhere in the world, lampposts are lined up at the edge of sidewalks; Only on the large avenues are they placed in the middle of the road. Well then. In Teresina they planted them in the middle of the streets, and very narrow streets. Each pole had a masonry basement, so large that, in addition to harming the aesthetics of the city, it hindered traffic. At the time it was not very large, but the administrators of public affairs had to think about the future.⁵⁷

Their speeches seem to come from someone from the future contemplating a few years in the past, the reasons for this difference would be the result of the organizational structure of the country, the backwardness of the northeast, would be the result of a stereotyping, which is manifested in these rural and urban landscapes where the State resides, which would be the "privileged field of struggle for regional disputes"⁵⁸ with a lack of interests from the federal government to extinguish the

⁵⁴ FONTINELES, Pedro Pio Filho. Challenging Medusa's gaze: modernization and modernizing discourses in Teresina, in the first two decades of the twentieth century. 170. f. Dissertation (Master's Degree in History) – Federal University of Piauí, 2008. p.41

⁵⁵ FONTINELES, Pedro Pio Filho. Challenging Medusa's gaze: modernization and modernizing discourses in Teresina, in the first two decades of the twentieth century. 170. f. Dissertation (Master's Degree in History) – Federal University of Piauí, 2008. p. 42

⁵⁶ QUEIROZ, Teresinha de Jesus Mesquita. The literati and the Republic: Clodoaldo Freitas, Higino Cunha and the tyrannies of time. Teresina: Fundação Cultural Monsenhor Chaves, 1994. p. 27

⁵⁷ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. 1953, p.38

⁵⁸ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.38



stereotypes and delays present in the Sertão, as it would profit from the process of exploitation and misery of this part of the country that only serves to strengthen the homeland that weakens it.

The regional history that Iglésias would carry in his cultural baggage would be an image-discursive construction of the regional space as historical continuity, which favored the image of a backward Sertão with this precept reinforced in contact with the landscape traversed by the Northeast. It is important to highlight the concept of regional and local history in order to contextualize the reader about these terms. Based on the text by Erisvaldo Fagundes⁵⁹, in his article "History and Region: topics of regional and local history. Spear Point"⁶⁰

For the author, regional history encompasses a territorial region that can be understood through its cultural, political and economic specificities. Investigating internal interactions and external articulations, seeking "knowledge of lives and knowledge in dimensions unattainable by other systemic approaches or broader spatial scopes".⁶¹ Whereas local history was a more restricted search for part of that region, such as a city, a neighborhood or a community, from the perspective of the subjects who live in that space. Together, these concepts are present in *Caatingas and Chapadões*, as the author writes and portrays the social plots of the North region, such as political issues and the battle against droughts, and delves into local history talking about the cities, their infrastructures and residents.

With that, his stay was at the 15 de Novembro hotel⁶², a hotel that offered good conditions compared to most of the city, and once again, another surprise when he discovered that in the reserved room there was barely furniture, because because of the heat, the furniture was the hammock and due to the absence of a basic sanitation system there was a bathroom with a "Franciscan poverty" with "two or three barrels full of water, a gourd and a towel rest."⁶³ Other comments about the city were the mapping of its natural landscape within the urban and the main buildings of the capital,

The city of Teresina is located in the "Chapada do Corisco", on the right bank of the Parnaíba River. The streets were well laid out, in a rectangular direction; Unfortunately, almost no afforestation; The squares were large, with a few shade trees, but no landscaping; the only

⁵⁹ He holds a degree in History from the Catholic University of Salvador (1976), a Specialization in Content and Methods of Higher Education from the Federal University of Bahia (1977), a Master's degree in History from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (1985) and a PhD in History from the Federal University of Pernambuco (2003), with a one-year sandwich scholarship from the University of Salamanca (Espaa). Full Professor at the State University of Feira de Santana (1978-2013). He has taught several disciplines in the area of History, in undergraduate, specialization and master's courses in the disciplines: Brazilian Economy, General Economic History, Economic Formation of Brazil, History of Bahia, Methodology of Historical Research, Historiography, Regional and Local History, Agrarian History, Theory and Methodology of History. He develops research on the hinterland of Bahia, slavery in cattle ranching and in the polycultures of the semi-arid region, agrarian history, historiography, theory and methodology of History.

⁶⁰NEVES, Erisvaldo Fagundes. History and Region: regional and local history topics. Ponto de Lança, v. 6, n. 11, p. 147-166, 2015. Available at: <https://seer.ufs.br/index.php/pontadelanca/article/view/3146/2755>. Accessed on: 03 Apr. 2023.

⁶¹ NEVES, Erisvaldo Fagundes. History and Region: regional and local history topics. Ponto de Lança, v. 6, n. 11, p. 147-166, 2015. Available at: <https://seer.ufs.br/index.php/pontadelanca/article/view/3146/2755>. Accessed on: 03 Apr. 2023. p.6

⁶² Famous hotel in Teresina, with advertisements in the main media of the time

⁶³ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.39-40



exception was the garden that 'stood behind the Carmo Church [...] the most important squares, due to their area and location, had the names of: "Saraiva", "Aquidaban" and "Marechal Deodoro". In the latter was the Government Palace, Assembly and Normal School, up to the riverside, in the port of the little ships.⁶⁴

The points cited by Iglésias in an assertive way contemplated important streets, squares and buildings that were being invested and formed the basis of the green city that concentrated all the main modern elements, the author also noticed the absence of sewage network and filtered water, that same year in the legislative reports, the governor, Dr. Miguel de Paiva Rosa⁶⁵ informed in the investment for their creation, implying that such resources would be implemented in the coming years. While the absence of this right did not reach the tables of the ordinary citizen of Piauí, they had to decant the water so as not to be affected by the germs.

The traveler, being part of a commission ordered by the federal government, soon fell into the arms of the local elites, "we were constantly the target of their kindness: Whenever a party was held in the Palace, whether social or civic solemnity, we received an honorable invitation".⁶⁶ In other words, the rulers saw Iglésias as a hope for strengthening the federative and state ties, and the traveler's job was to start the process of exploration that would send the latex to the Brazilian economic center. The author spends a few more days in the capital and leaves for another city, continuing his craft, so it is important to give voice to official documents to see another side of the story, out of the reach of the traveler, relating the efforts and failures of the government to the comments present in *Caatingas and Chapadões*.

In another scenario in the same urban landscape that Iglésias experienced, the present research contrasts the author's words with the official comments of the 1913 and 1914 reports made by the governor of the state, Dr. Miguel de Paiva Rosa. These reports are intended to inform the main events during the year of the government's management to render accounts to the Union, addressing various topics of the political structure, situating where the progress unnoticed by Iglésias would be being worked on.

Thus, the first visit made by Iglésias took place in 1912 and during this period of time, Teresina was in a financial crisis, in the words of the governor, "As a consequence of the financial situation we are going through, they did not have the desired continuation of the public works of the State."⁶⁷ this comment comes with the accountability of the public lighting service that faced numerous "delays"⁶⁸ such as the delay in transportation from Europe to the capital of Piauí, with the lack of transportation and equipment for handling the tools between Parnaíba and Teresina.

⁶⁴ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.41

⁶⁵ Former Governor of Piauí, born on December 15 in Teresina-Pi and died on June 9, 1929, he graduated in Law from the Faculty of Recife, lawyer, freemason and journalist who was chosen by his predecessor to take over in July 1912.

⁶⁶ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.44

⁶⁷ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 13, 1913 p.25

⁶⁸ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 13, 1913 p.25



Despite these delays, Miguel Paiva also informs the steps that are being completed, such as the house of the plant that would manage all production and the installation of poles and wires on the main streets of the capital. The governor does not report any irregularities regarding the installation of this equipment. He ends this part with positive messages about the near future of an enlightened Teresina.

On all the streets the poles are distributed and the wires have already begun to be extended. In a few months this capital will be able to add to its progress this further improvement, which I hope will be a model, because of the respectability and the just universal reputation enjoyed by the Siemens Schuckertwerke house, to which the government has entrusted it⁶⁹

Other problems that the traveler comments on are also present in the reports, such as the water supply service that would be incomplete, with a need for filters since the water, "and presents red, containing suspended matter, which produces a large deposit, for rest."⁷⁰ It is clarified that the State is aware of the lack of progress reported by the author and was working so that modernization would finally arrive. Still on public health, the whole of Piauí would be deficient in terms of the basic rights of citizens, "Public assistance, in this capital, is summarized in the Santa Casa de Misericórdia Assistance and Asylum for the Alienated. In public in the whole state there are only two hospitals, in Floriano and Parnaíba"⁷¹ and in the 1914 report he says that "the circumstance that, for a population of 500,000 souls, we have in the whole state no more than 14 doctors".⁷²

The absence of a solid presence of institutions and health professionals further favored the treatment of the Northeasterners with Iglésias when they referred to him as "dotô", which was another name out of respect for him. Examples of the agronomist taking on yet another function, even without medical training, are not lacking in *Caatingas and Chapadões*.

From the butantã sia with the panniers full of medicines destined for free distribution to the poor he met in the Sertões do Norte - How many times when passing on horseback in the vicinity of a house, a figure, squalid of a woman, begged him: a little girl, dodo! A sweet dodo! Still with this supplication in his ears, he asked the Master for remedies and instructions for its proper application.⁷³

In addition to the privileged education in the South, he also enjoyed medical privileges that made it possible to help the sertanejos who crossed his path, through the analysis of the work the moments in which he helps, reinforces the stereotype of the underdeveloped conditions of public health in the state, showing how health was still a privilege of the high level of Piauí society.

⁶⁹ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 13, 1914 p.26

⁷⁰ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 13, 1913 p.26

⁷¹ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 13, 1913 p.27

⁷² PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1914 p.20

⁷³ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.104



When we approximate this observation together with the governor's comments, the number of establishments to embrace these sick people was small and if they were indoors, transportation was also a problem, leaving at the mercy of luck those who would endure the disease or succumb to it. The most desperate thing to have access to Iglesias' perspective is to realize the number of people who died from diseases that in the developed parts of the country already had a network of treatments and medicines to support, this support, even if it was mostly from the elite, should be provided to the vulnerable classes of the state.

With regard to transport and navigation, the reports also include some of the same observations as the author. The governor talks about the federal helplessness, reinforcing the power relations established in the country, which for a moment had promised interventions in the state, with works such as the railway that would connect Piauí to Ceará, Amarração to Campo Maior, the latter of which had already been built the first hundred kilometers, and a third that would connect the bays of Parnaíba to São Francisco.

In relation to navigation, Miguel Paiva would also recognize that he would have a problem, because in a region crossed by inland rivers, it was from an immense delay to "the lack of means of transport, imposing, therefore, the need to facilitate them, helping them to demand a minimum fare. It is ridiculous that in a state of the territorial extension of Piauí, with the rivers that we have, only access to steamers."⁷⁴ As Iglésias commented at the beginning of the book, "The port of Mooring was very deficient, it did not have adequate facilities for the purpose it was supposed to fill, nor the sea depth capable of allowing the entry of ships like Brazil."⁷⁵, only the little ones could enter.

Thus, when analyzing the official source, it was notorious that the state administrators were aware of the progress that causes estrangement in Iglésias and the justifications for the absence would be divided in the reports made by Miguel for two reasons, the first, the economic crisis present in the state and the second, the federal neglect to invest and maintain the existing processes.

At the present time, the apprehensions that assail the spirit of Brazilian patriots are great and justified, due to the embarrassing financial crisis that overwhelms the country.⁷⁶

This crisis referenced would be the impact of previous war that forced Brazil to adopt new economic measures, as the present research does not stop to detail such crisis, what is deepened are the relations and investments of the federal government with the state, the main reason for the author's journey to the Sertão, it would be a federal attempt to economically rebuild the North of the country. Because of this crisis, Piauí would not be able to be left out, the governor himself weakens the state, calling it "poor, having determined and fallible sources of revenue, and certain and

⁷⁴ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1914. p.46

⁷⁵ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. 1953, p.30

⁷⁶ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1914, p.42



irreversible commitments, the rest had its incomes decreased in the progressive proportion of the increase in expenses. Under these conditions, the imbalance of their finances was fatal."⁷⁷

With these global and federal factors plaguing the country, Piauí still faced strong internal problems, with high loans and a strong internal debt due to the high costs of water and electricity services. That is, even without having these services working, they participated within the state's debts. In addition, even with the debts and internal problems, the Union would have made investments in the state and not fulfilled its part in maintaining the agreements, leaving the governor disappointed, even declaring that "a trace of indifference with which vital interests of ours were treated".⁷⁸ The landscapes that Iglésias comments on these cities in Piauí are reflections of a larger scenario than the author, since the reports are problematized, it clarifies the governmental attempts that, despite being insufficient to bring progress, were still being treated with urgency by the rulers.

BEYOND THE CAPITAL OF PIAUÍ: OTHER STRANGENESS

In some of the cities through which Iglésias passes, not all of them are described in as much detail as Teresina, however, as Raymond Williams writes in his work "City and the Countryside", "In the long history of human communities, this connection between the land from which we all, directly or indirectly, derive our livelihood, and the achievements of human society, has always been good."⁷⁹. extracting from this text the reflection that all landscapes, even if they are not detailed, are part of a whole that are being contemplated by the research.

Thus, the next city was Floriano, for Iglésias, this city became an important commercial center, as it was the "intermediary of the hinterland"⁸⁰ between the rivers of Gurguéia and Uruçuí, Teresina and Parnaíba. This was the only comment made about the characteristics of the city, which in *the official* sources has ample citations regarding investments and achievements, one of the possible explanations for this is that the author's rapid passage made him not pay attention to the details of infrastructure, or perhaps, the landscape is the same as that found in Parnaíba and in a large part of Teresina that had not yet moved progress.

After the brief passage in Floriano, the next stop was Caxias, a city in Maranhão that received comments mainly about the sidewalks that deviated from the pattern observed in the rest of the Sertão, which ended up causing the strangeness of the traveler.

The streets are paved with rounded stones; the surface, instead of being convex, like most streets in other cities, is concave, so that when it rains the waters flow through the middle as

⁷⁷ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1914, p.43

⁷⁸ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. 1 July 1914 p.43

⁷⁹ WILLIAMS, Raymond. The countryside and the city: in history and literature. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989. p.11

⁸⁰ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.155



if it were a stream. The pavement dates back to the Second Empire, which had it built to serve those scourged by drought - the eternal problem. 1 The city is typically colonial⁸¹.

His observations refer to a past time of the Brazilian empire, the preservation of these traces reinforces the different temporalities that coexist in the same country.

Returning to the Sertão of Piauí, the author passes through Uruçuí and with his strangeness returns to the question of the city's progress, making an analysis of its infrastructure similar to that carried out in the state capital.

Uruçuí, at the time of our passage, showed little sign of progress. The streets were a God Help us: unpaved, completely abandoned and sandy, so that they almost blocked our steps. [...] The houses, with very rare exceptions, were poor-looking. Only that of the political leader, Mr. Rogério de Carvalho, was a good masonry building, with the adjoining of the well-assorted commercial emporium, as they say in the language of the counter. Others were made of adobe covered with tile or straw, which offered a certain comfort; It consists of poor wattle and daub huts and huts built entirely of babassu palm straw.⁸²

In this city, the relations of power were clarified in the eyes of Iglésias, since the only house of the political leader presented for him an aspect of progress. Meanwhile, for the rest of the population there was only misery and helplessness, the author also does not see an urban lighting service, this resource for a large part of the population was nourished by "the moon's own risk"⁸³ and in homes, candles and lanterns took the lead.

The city had no sign of industries and for the traveler, trade seemed to be the only source of wealth and development that generated the livelihood of that population. The port of Uruçuí negotiated exports of cattle, goats and lizards but at rates above what the state market could handle, accentuated by the financial crisis cited in government reports, resulted in the evasion of rents, in his words, "then the evasion of the latter's rents, which crossed the river by swimming, reducing to almost nothing the income of the collectors of Piauí"⁸⁴

To understand the situations experienced by the author, it is necessary to go beyond the words of Raymond Williams, when he says that "it is necessary to investigate, in these cases, not the historical veracity, but the historical perspective".⁸⁵ In this case, progress was not seen from his point of view, because his perspective was individual in a more complex political scenario and full of historical and economic circumstances that prevented progress from reaching the cities, but that, in the analysis of government reports, it is clear that politicians were aware of the absence of this process of national modernization. In 1913, in the report, Miguel Rosa comments on the fear of the

⁸¹ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.136

⁸² IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. 1953, p. A 281

⁸³ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. 1953, p.281

⁸⁴ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. 1953, p.282

⁸⁵ WILLIAMS, Raymond. The countryside and the city: in history and literature. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989. p.23



crisis that Brazil would be facing and the fall of the maniçoba market and the resonances that this would bring to the Brazilian economy.

At the present time, the apprehensions that assail the spirit of Brazilian patriots are great and justified, due to the embarrassing financial crisis that overwhelms the country. Especially the North has its finances more aggravated by the competence that the rubber of the East is doing to one of its main sources of revenue,—by the quality and price of the product, undeniably more advantageous than ours. That is why everyone thinks that the crisis is not as temporary as it would have been—at least for this industry—because our competitors have advantages over us that we may not be able to compete with them in these few years.⁸⁶

Piauí was, in the governor's words, "small and poor,"⁸⁷ with an economy dependent on the international market that was in decline. Adding to these issues, the modernization processes that the state was going through, such as the construction of lighting and supply services, it was inevitable that an "imbalance in finances" would occur⁸⁸. In 1917, Euriclides de Aguiar, Miguel Rosa's successor, mentions that, "You are not surprised by the sad situation in which I found the state, with all public services disorganized, under the weight of an excessive debt for our weak resources."⁸⁹tag. Reinforcing that the political situations were also not favorable for investments in progress

At the same time, Raymond acknowledges that "The life of a gentle country man is therefore celebrated in explicit opposition to the life of the court and the town."⁹⁰ Urbanized cities would have elements that would affect the life of a civilization accustomed to the challenges of the countryside. On the other hand, Piauí was in a complicated situation that could not offer the best conditions even to the sertanejos of the rural landscapes, Iglésias was faced with the misery of Aparecida and felt "a deep desolation"⁹¹ because that village did not seem to be touched either by progress or by the care of the state.

Aparecida caused me a deep desolation. I don't know why this village exists, and if it disappeared it would be a great good. I couldn't see the economic reason for this city. I had the impression that it was in frank decline. I found the *Mega Triatoma* in large quantities. The population looks sickly; Currently there are no papudos. I have been informed that an old papuda has just died. People I have spoken to say that hickkeys attack the hens in the broody in such a way that they die exhausted, without a drop of blood.⁹²

The misery and pain in this village was accompanied by complete helplessness, the health problems and the absence of state mobilization to contain the plagues present in that territory, show a weakness in the administration of Piauí that put the problems of this smaller city under the covers.

⁸⁶ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1913, p.41

⁸⁷ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1914, p.41

⁸⁸ PIAUÍ, Miguel de Paiva Rosa. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1914, p.42

⁸⁹ PIAUÍ, Euriclides Clementino de Aguiar. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1917. p.2

⁹⁰ WILLIAMS, Raymond. *The countryside and the city: in history and literature*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989.p.46

⁹¹ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. 1953, p.A 166

⁹² IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.167



Leaving the memories of the residents at the mercy of oblivion, being preserved by scarce historiographies that carried the "destiny of space to time"⁹³ these narratives in a place forgotten by the government and ignored by official sources.

In this way, the reports of the subsequent years contemplate the situation of the infrastructure of the cities of Piauí during the rest of the trip, in general Piauí, which was in a situation of dependence on the circumstances, could not find the means to sustain itself economically, as was said by the new Governor-elect, Eurípedes de Aguiar⁹⁴ that at the beginning of the topic in the report he pointed out that the State's money was only used for the maintenance of existing services such as electricity and sanitation. "We don't have a public health service, what we have among us with this name is something so embryonic, imperfect and devoid of practical utility that it would be better if it did not exist, reorganize or rather, create this branch of public service".⁹⁵

This situation of economic vulnerability, present since the first visit of Iglésias in 1912 until 1919, shows how the people of Piauí had their progress retarded, by the economy, by nature, which left them hostage to climatic conditions.

[...] They hinder the development of industries that put man in direct contact with the soil, hindering the use of our natural riches, the fertility of a large part of our lands, the magnificent pasture fields that we have, thus determining our poverty and our backwardness.⁹⁶

The lack of infrastructure of the Piauí administration to deal with the ills, the modernization process in which Iglésias is known, cannot reach the North. As for navigability, lighting and water supply, in the 1918 report there remained a target of struggle: "Electric light, we are struggling with great difficulty to maintain this service as a result of the high cost of electrical materials and fuel for machinery. Having gone up the price of crude oil too much that he remembered with the fuel."⁹⁷ tag. This service in fact needed economic aid for its sustainability, however, another major difficulty was the issue of transport and navigability.

The Parnaíba River, our main source of communication, a royal gift of nature that made nature to us, but which we have not yet been able to use properly, is going from day to day, losing, in plain sight, the conditions of navigability. The rare attempts made to improve it have all yielded incomplete results and are counterproductive. In the interior of the state, the communication routes are represented exclusively by irregular paths, traced by donkey's hoof, through quagmires, rivers and streams without bridges, full of holes and slopes. Due to the lack of roads, the use of wheeled vehicles is almost unknown in the Sertão, and all transport is carried out on animal coasts.⁹⁸

⁹³ IGLÉSIAS, op. cit. Cit. 1953, p.156

⁹⁴ Former Governor of Piauí, Eurípedes Clementino de Aguiar, Physician Graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in Salvador, BA in 1902. Journalist. Poet. Governor of Piauí (1916-1920), Senator (1924-1930 impeached by the Vargas dictatorship). He married Glacy Lopes, d. in Nazaria

⁹⁵PIAUI, Euriclides Clementino de Aguiar. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1917, p.18

⁹⁶PIAUI, Euriclides Clementino de Aguiar. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1917, p.18

⁹⁷PIAUI, Euriclides Clementino de Aguiar. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1918, p.15

⁹⁸PIAUI, Euriclides Clementino de Aguiar. Message to the Legislative Chamber. July 1, 1918, p.24.



With this passage, it is explicit that even the issue of navigability would be barred by numerous problems, the present situation in the state was not the most favorable, but they still resisted in the fight against retrogression and stagnation. If they managed to overcome this adversity, it would open a new opportunity for the development of the state of Piauí.

Piauí continued to be a land rich in culture and natural resources, but, unfortunately, with a temporality that would hinder the entry of progress, loaded with a gigantic potential to be economically developed and with excellent infrastructure conditions. However, within the historical context, at the time that Iglésias passed through this part of the Sertão, the region was still within a scenario of transition and resilience. And even with these difficulties, in the short period of time that Iglésias is going through, there are advances, such as the beginning of the lighting service, the distribution of water and investments in health and navigation. Although it was not an accelerated progress, the time for modernization was coming at the moment when the context and conditions allowed.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Caatingas and Chapadões are studied in detail by *Clio*, raising critical looks and problematizations, with the central objective of understanding the representations and memory of the cities of Piauí in the work of Iglésias. This work proved to be an enriching historical source, presenting traces and narratives of the sertanejo past at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Unfortunately, due to the period in which it was carried out, the 1910-1920 periodicals of the *Public Archive of Teresina* were not available for analysis, as they were in the process of being digitized. Despite the absence of these sources, the research proved to be valuable in reconstructing aspects of Piauí's past, by dialoguing mainly with official reports, consecrating its place within the studies of History, Memory and Literature.

Working with the memoirs of Iglésias is a challenge, considering the complex relationships and distinctions between history, memory and literature. Memory isn't always reliable, and history shapes memory in ways that don't always align. In the case of *Caatingas and Chapadões*, a literary work, there is no need for commitment to factual truth. The point of convergence between these three fields is access to moments from the past. Therefore, the research was concerned with avoiding romanticizations regarding the author and his views, which often reflected the perspective of the elite to which he belonged.

The search for establishing their social place aimed to understand their perspectives and submit them to historical analysis. The research adopted an interdisciplinary approach, uniting history, memory and literature. And within the object of study, it is clear that the work encompasses



more than the traveler's personal experiences, also incorporating the fields of Geography, Biology and even Psychology, to fully analyze the work of Iglésias it is necessary to use and abuse interdisciplinarity.

After establishing the relations between the author's memory and his literature, a dialogue between the work and the official reports begins, in order to understand the conditions of the cities and the way the author portrays them. It is evident that Piauí at that time was going through a transition between rural and urban environments. In rural areas, the disadvantaged dealt with everyday problems that made their lives difficult, while in urban areas modernity struggled to find its space. In both scenarios, the best conditions for survival were concentrated in the hands of those who held power, while basic difficulties were encountered in being able to withstand the challenges of the time, which were faced by the less fortunate



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