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ANTONIO PIGAFETTA, A *CULTURAL MEDIATOR* DURING THE EXPEDITION OF MAGELLAN-ELCANO

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ABSTRACT

Although it is difficult to legitimize lately, in a way, who the supreme title holder is of the first circumnavigator among Magellan and Elcano, each one has his undeniable merits. Beyond the difficult route and the obstacles encountered, or the successes achieved on several levels (geographic, anthropological, economic, etc.), what stands above all is the significance of self-discovery and of the Other. In order to facilitate the encompassing of the significance of the discoveries, what interests most is the message, sometimes apparently codified from the point of view of writing, of a message of hope for the descendants, of a certain godliness to the divinity, and of the idea that such civilizing gestures could ever be repeated. The emblem of this testimony, but also of a kind of paradoxical happy testament of the supreme sailors, or of the several unknown illustrious people, is, of course, the fierce and powerful Antonio Pigafetta who, together with his masters in navigation and survival beyond human limits, completes the splendid earthly trinity of the explorers.

Keywords: circumnavigation, incipit of globalization, explorers, cultural identity, otherness

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INTRODUCTION

Among the two pillars of the Magellan-Elcano expedition, A. Pigafetta's manuscript stands out as a stable and significant bridge over time, which highlights the importance of this approach, proving once again the relativity of the pioneers' actions in the field of geography, and (in) the consistency of the written records over the centuries, as a defining testimony for the middle of the Middle Ages, and for the discovery of what will later become major colonies of the European countries. Pigafetta's writing *The First Voyage Round the World/ Account of Magellan's Voyage* is one of the most eloquent, powerful and precious testimonies of those times on the famous expedition and the only written source that contains enough data about it.

Our work intends to balance the role of the three actants of the great voyage, the geographical, as well as the literary one, in order to (re)discover the potential of a cultural strategy, though less aware (by its author, the Italian Pigafetta). It seems that Magellan himself first completed a broad overflowing diary. After his killing by the local savages, his mission was taken over by Elcano or Delcano. Irrepressibly, as a kind of passing down an invisible whip, A. Pigafetta takes on the overwhelming task of the journey and, at the same time, he delivers to the whole world a concentrated version of it, impossible otherwise than through writing, by revealing new and deep meanings.

Highlighting the traits of the three nations (or even more), of various mentalities, or a double faith, changes it – they make the little Italian knight a salutary figure by revealing several details inherent in Magellan-Elcano's expedition and a landmark for travel writers. Pigafetta's travelogue presents some well-known versions, firstly that of 1525, *The First Voyage around the World*. The exegete Theodore Cachey Jr. claims that it means "the literary epitome of its genre" (Cachey, 2007, p. xi) and has a fairly wide spread. One of Pigafetta's mentors, Francesco Chiericati, considers that writing is "a divine thing" (Cachey, 2007, p. xv), and that the character Setebos, found in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, has its inspiration, in a fictional entity from Pigafetta's text, found within the excerpt regarding the savages encountered in Patagonia. Moreover, the documentary, but also the literary interest of the diary made on board of the ship, and then expanded, caught the attention of some biographers such as Stefan Zweig, the echoes of this adventure reverberating almost to the present day.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Nowadays, travel literature has declined to a certain extent, as globalization has intensified, and on the other hand it has somehow revived. If travel literature is a bordering literature, with regards to the combination of the genres, and if it has declined in some measure, because of the ongoing spread of digital media, it experiences paradoxically a revival of its forms, due to the extension of the globalization phenomenon. However, those writings, even though they belong to the older times, still arouse interest, because they firstly emphasize the role of the traveller, and of the author in the end, as a representative (facilitator) of a cultural mediation. Broadly speaking, it counts, in a way, more than the visited places, the explored landscapes, or the strange customs encountered, so than the journey described in one book or another:

> "At the centre of the modern travel book lies the mediating consciousness that monitors the journey, reflects, confesses, and sometimes changes; travel literature as known today begins when such a consciousness textualizes its presence. This means that travel literature, as opposed to pre-travel, is the function of a self-consciousness on the part of the author that is said to not have been fully acquired" (Cogeanu, 2014, p. 2).

In order to understand the importance of ancient travel books (travelogues) for profiling their identity in terms of regions and a related outlook (hereinafter, the idea of Spanish supremacy, broadly speaking, in terms of measures and oceans), during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we must become aware of the *authenticable agreement* features found in the respective manuscripts (i.e., the writing of Antonio Pigafetta...), to a point, and other hybrid traits from the point of view of the narrative discourse (a tendency towards hyperbolization and even allegorization). Beyond some *egocentrism* of the writing and an obvious solemnity, the Italian A. Pigafetta, with noble origins, and yet a humble servant during the Magellan-Elcano expedition, becomes a kind of *traveling ambassador*, holding several undeclared positions: *testimonial*, *narrative*, *negotiating*, representing a sort of triple interface – between the members of the expedition and the local tribes, between the travellers and its contemporary receivers and, last but not least, between the direct and indirect witnesses of the famous discoveries and, more easily, due to the text itself, nowadays' readers. On this realistic emphasis the subsequent decline in travel texts must be deciphered, which, following the 19th century, becomes highly subjective:

> "Consequently, the desire to know reflected in encyclopaedic travel writing is replaced by a desire not to know and to enjoy the advantage of ignorance; the traveller will behave ever more as a

> simple visitor or tourist cut away from local realities. Travel literature adapts as a consequence: subjectivity, even idiosyncrasy becomes the condition certifying the authenticity of vision" (Cogeanu, 2014, p. 2).

If diachronically there was always a journey for the sake of the journey, then that undertaken by Magellan, Elcano, and Pigafetta himself, goes beyond the simple limits, meaning not only an initial attempt, intrinsically inscribable within both the framework of literature and the universal culture, but also an anti-self-fiction, with simultaneously legendary and realistic elements:

> "In fact, this correlation of the outer and inner voyage is the specific achievement of travel literature, containing a tentative balance of the objective and subjective, exterior and interior, impersonal and personal. Successful travel literature maintains Paul Fussell in *Abroad*, *mediates between two poles: the individual physical things it describes, on the one hand, and the larger theme that it is about, on the other* (Fussell, 1987:126). Then, what travel books are about is, indeed, travel, that is, the interplay and negotiation between the traveller and the travelee. Travel is not just employed as a symbol or a motif; travel literature dwells in an actual journey and propels it into myth" (Cogeanu, 2014, p. 3).

The minor, but consistent volume of conjunct writer Antonio Pigafetta, about the impressive expedition having Fernando Magellan and Juan Elcano as its navigational leaders, but also spiritual guides, to a point, becomes an important landmark, and is confined to a broader approach, through which *cultural geography* is linked to a process by which literary productions coagulate somewhat the vastness of spaces, first discovered, in our case, and being in a complex inter-communication relationship transmitted posthumously:

> "To travel is to make a journey, a movement through space. Possibly this journey is epic in scale, taking the traveller to the other side of the world or across a continent, or up a mountain; possibly, it is more modest in scope, and takes place within the limits of the traveller's own country or region, or even just their immediate locality. Either way, to begin any journey or, indeed, simply to set foot beyond one's own front door, is quickly to encounter difference and otherness. All journeys are in this way a confrontation with, or more optimistically a negotiation of, what is sometimes termed alterity. Or, more precisely, since there are no foreign peoples with whom we do not share a common humanity, and probably no environment on the planet for which we do not have some sort of prior reference point, all travel requires us to negotiate a complex and sometimes unsettling interplay between alterity and identity, difference and similarity" (Thompson, 2011, p. 9).

METHODOLOGY

In order to reveal the importance of A. Pigafetta's work in outlining a distinct textual region – the record of the author's experiences regarding the traveling alongside the impressive commanders Magellan and Elcano – which, in its turn, reflects not only precise geographical realities, but also fictional areas that transcend any imagination, we used a kind of cross-sectional comparativism, by combining the cultural geography, as a sub-branch of human geography, with elements of comparative literature. It goes without saying that we have mostly carried out an investigation of the fundamental descriptive marks of F. Magellan's expedition, and of his deputy, Juan Elcano, at the end of the journey, to understand not only its spread, consequences, but also some effects regarding its cultural landscape. The stylistic analysis, broadly speaking, is often interwoven with indirect observations of a strictly geographical nature, and the diagonal approach of Antonio Pigafetta's autobiographical volume, as an individual result of the values of the collective memory, is part of the necessary decomposition

of the initial route of the adventure, on the one hand, as well as the subsequent attachment to a gallery of milestones of geographical culture, on the other hand.

This transversal approach is, of course, also based on a diachronic structure, the settling of past events being achieved by an ideal receiver to which the Italian knight is addressed: he is detached, to a certain extent, but he is also involved when needed, taking the reader as a witness and confident over the centuries. Beyond some inherent empirical tendencies, this scientific essay attempts to extract its geographical and especially its literary meanings, to re-evaluate important figures such as the Portuguese captain Magellan and his Spanish helper Elcano, reserving a privileged place, less visible at first, to Pigafetta, the narrator, who has a catalyst role for lived experiences and who, to some extent, is seen as a mediator especially among posthumous actors and receivers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Last year (2018) Spain decided to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the first circumnavigation of the world, carried out by the Portuguese discoverer Fernando Magellan, and concluded by the Spanish explorer Juan Sebastián Elcano. The respective ceremonies will take place until 2022, as actions to promote the first globalization act in history. As it is known, the Magellan-Elcano expedition not only simply changed the configuration of the Earth, but also the human knowledge in this regard, proving that the Earth's globe was indeed a sphere, finding a place of passage that would connect the Pacific, subsequently named The Strait of Magellan and discovering new territories unknown until then, such as the Philippine Archipelago.

In medieval times, more precisely at the beginning of the 16th century, the global pursuit known as *circumnavigation*, originated in various motivations, for different explorers, such as Bartolomeu Dias, Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, but also for less famous ones: on the one hand, the thirst for the increase and the greed of wealth, and on the other the pure curiosity or the scientific reasons that underpinned the undertaking of difficult expeditions. Apart from the captivating gold, of the actual geographical discoveries, there was also the chimera hidden in the spices, followed closely to the Archipelago of the Moluccas (for example, in Ternate), the tiny odorous powders found in huge quantities, finally being exchanged in ringing coins. Here's how the famous Stefan Zweig captures – of course alluding to the Magellan-Elcano expedition – the circulation of these goods at the time:

> "At least twelve hands must pass the Indian ingredients, speculates in the kitchen, until they reach the last hand, the consumer. But even though twelve hands divide their winnings, they still squeeze enough gold juice from Indian products; with all the risks and dangers, the colonial trade is considered the most profitable; it is much better off than all the businesses of the Middle Ages, because the traffic of goods of the smallest volume is related to the possibility of the greatest profits. Of the five ships (...), four can sink with all their cargo, two hundred of the two hundred and sixty-five people may not return home (...). But the trader still wins in this game. If only one ship out of five returns home, no matter how small it may be, but well loaded with spices, then the freight will almost certainly offset the losses – so great is the profit. For in the fifteenth century, a single bag of pepper is more valuable than the life of a man…" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 14).

Beyond the economic reasons, the vast knowledge gained about the conquered lands, or the configuration of the whole world is much more valuable than the goods acquired. In a way, the fast widening of the horizons during those times is a similar phenomenon and the opposite of the one that nowadays bears the name of *globalization*, although they tend to resemble to a

point. It is the point at which the current philosopher Paul Virilio suggested that, although it seems too early to discuss the *end of history* announced by Francis Fukuyama, it is possible to speak with complete conviction about the *end of geography*, as distances become seemingly insignificant, and the idea of geophysical border becomes more and more difficult to sustain in the "real world". In addition:

> "There is another element that can explain my so-called pessimism, that Humanity is approaching two singularities, in the mathematical sense: the fineness of the earth and the probability of the end of the unity of the mankind. We live the end of the world in real time, not its apocalyptic, but eschatological end. [...] The other singularity is the probability of the end of the unity of the mankind – I say *probability*, which shows that I am not pessimistic! [...] To deal with these two singularities does not lead to optimism, I grant you, but ignoring them would be more than accidental, reckless" (*my trans*., Virilio, 2005, p. 23).

During the times we refer to, similar to nowadays, at least two great maritime powers, Spain and Portugal, disputed their boundless territories of the seas and oceans, but especially the undiscovered shores, and this competition had tried to find its solution through the treaty from Tordesillas in 1494, which, after Columbus's incursions, drew an imaginary double line between the claims of the Spaniards and the Portuguese, so that the Spaniards were mostly in America, and the Portuguese, in Brazil, Africa and the Indies. However, if the dividing line had solved the problem in the Atlantic, we would not say anything about the Pacific, about those remote islands of spices (Moluce), which, according to the Portuguese, were an annex of the Indians, as part of their Eastern hemisphere, while according to the Spaniards, they were close to America, i.e. the western hemisphere. Of course, the competitors did not suspect that they were both partially right. Indeed, the dividing line – essentially a meridian – extended over the poles in the Pacific, was passing near New Guinea, cutting in two long-desired islands," says Paul Alexandru Georgescu in the *Introduction* of A. Pigafetta's book, *With Magellan around the World* (Georgescu, 1962, p. 13), translated to us from the Italian.

On the other hand, it was desired to smooth the maritime route to India, without any customs, by free passage, in order to permanently remove, as far as possible, the domination of Islam in this regard, so this mission was initially given to Christopher Columbus who had taken it to the west, then to Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama who had chosen the south, but also to the Italian Giovanni Caboto who had headed north, towards Labrador. It is interesting to note that from a relatively obscure country at that time, Portugal, which did not have the privilege of a sea such as the Mediterranean, came with a suite of first-hand explorers, some of them, including Fernando Magellan (Fernao de Magelhaes), putting itself rather in need of the service of the authorities of Spain.

Stefan Zweig also masterfully sketches the imaginary portrait of the Portuguese political leader of that time, Don Enrique the Navigator from Ceuta, an incurable dreamer and navigator mentor at the same time, attracted by the marvellous bauble of the fascinating *great incognitum*. Thus, the Portuguese recklessness, descended along the South American coasts near Rio de la Plata; in 1506 they discovered the island of Madagascar, in 1507 the island of Mauritius, in 1509 they reached Malacca, which they stormed in 1511, thus holding in their hands the key of the Malayan Archipelago. In 1512, Ponce de Leon entered Florida, and in 1513 Nunez de Balboa was the first European to see, from the heights of Darien, the Pacific Ocean. "As of this moment, there is no great unknown to mankind anymore" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 35).

Therefore, the age of great geographical discoveries, started from late 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, determined the permanence of the thalassocracy as an independent planetary organization, which separates from the shores of Eurasia and

concentrates later not only within the Anglo-Saxon world (England, America), but also in the colonies. As a consequence, a "certain way of collective manifestation leads to a new space modelling, which moves its centre from the land on the sea, from the sedentary activities of the land, to the moving activities of the seas" (*my trans*., Bădescu & Mihăilescu, 2011, p. 12).

Little is known about Magellan's life: it is certain that his fascination towards adventure, broadly speaking, had been noticed since 1504, when he enrolled as a volunteer on a trip to India. In 1509, he was wounded in the battle of Diù, after which the European control over the eastern trade was finally guaranteed. Then he embarked in the same year to the Sporice Islands (Molucca Islands), but the expedition was foiled at Malacca. In 1510, he was given the rank of captain for his services granted to the Portuguese royal crown. He perseveres, along with others, in the conquest of Malacca (Singapore today), usually having the task of making detailed information about the spices found on the islands. After arriving in Portugal in 1512, he took part in an expedition to conquer the city of Azamor in Morocco, but unfortunately, he was badly injured. Remaining lame for life and being accused of trading with the Moors, Magellan fell to the disgrace of the Portuguese king. This is why he proudly renounced Portuguese citizenship and offered his services to Spain, which recognized his meritorious activity. Leaving aside this existential brevity, the writing mastery of S. Zweig reveals to us the solemn atmosphere during which the preparations of the vast expedition took place:

> "A great show takes place, therefore, that day of March 25, 1505, when the first Portugal war fleet leaves the port of Lisbon to conquer this new empire, the largest in the world. A comparable show in history only to that when Alexander the Great had crossed Hellespont [...]. With his own hand, the king gives the new white damask flame to the cathedral to Francisco d'Almeida, with the cross of Jesus Christ embroidered on it, which must be victorious over the Mauritanian and pagan countries" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 40).

Thus, begins the first stage of Magellan's journey that lasted from March 1505 to June 1512, initially being only a novice. At one point, the protagonist of the expedition finds a kind of chum, in the person of Captain Francisco Serrao, who is said "to have been tired of wars, adventures and business with spices" (Zweig, 1992, p. 49) at the end of his travels:

> "Without great solemnity, the brave captain retires from a heroic world to an idyllic one and decides to move on without public positions, in splendid chatter, in the primitive manner of this small, friendly population of Ternate. [...] Like a new Ulysses who has forgotten Ithaca, he spends years and years in the arms of his Calypso wanderer, and no angel of ambition is able to remove him from this paradise of his *dolce far niente*" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 59).

Between 1512 and 1517, Magellan, who will not know the same happy ending, is somehow relieved of the citizen's obligations to the original homeland, and patiently traces his own destiny, as if he would make meticulous geographical calculations, taking as a companion the astrologer Ruy Faleiro, an individual with a totally different nature.

It seems that the mysterious plan from which the explorer started was based on a map of the famous cosmographer Martin Behaim, found in the secret archive of the King of Portugal. The following year he finally receives the permission of the King of Spain, Carol V, who was only at his full age, to carry out the daring plan, to find the richest islands in the world and to find the shortest way to them. The actual departure takes place on September 20, 1519 from Seville, and the loading of the ships and especially the supplies were sufficient for at least two years, and mostly were Xeres wines and dried vegetables, breads and biscuits, instead salted meat, bacon, sardines or cheese which were in undulating quantities for this quite significant period. *The Molucca Army* included the following vessels: *Trinidad* (110 tons, 55 members), *San Antonio* (120 tons, 60 members), *Concepcion* (90 tons, 45 members), *Victoria* (85 tons, 42 members),

Santiago (75 tons, 32 members), in total 270 tons and 234 members. The general captain (or admiral) on *Trinidad* was Fernão de Magalhães, the Spanish Juan de Cartageña was captain on the *San Antonio* ship, the Spanish Gaspar de Quesada was captain on the *Concepcion* ship, the Spanish Luiz Mendoza was captain on the *Victoria* ship, and the Portuguese João Serrão was captain on *Santiago* ship. The others were the Spanish Juan Sebastián Elcano, who took the lead after Magellan's disappearance, the Italian Francisco Albo, the second, as well as another Italian, Antonio Pigafetta, a kind of scientist for those times, while the rest of the crew consisted of Portuguese, Spaniards, Italians, Germans, Belgians, Greeks, French and one Englishman.

Despite the undeniable importance of this expedition, this would have dissipated to a certain extent if it had not been for the few written sources, such as the testimonies of the Italian Antonio Pigafetta, which the Austrian portraitist S. Zweig shows as follows:

> "Indeed, only by a clean chance did this quiet and modest young man, belonging to an old family from Vicenza, find himself in this painted society of adventurers and *desperados*, of ambitious and gold seekers" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 146).

In a way, his writing, even if it seems like a trifling mirror, like those prepared for the savages of the islands encountered, is meant to reflect to posthumous generations at least a shred of the brilliance of those times. From the beginning, this extended account illustrates a certain awareness of the record of truly great enterprises, even if at times it is vaguely fictionalized:

> "Because several curious, too illustrious and exalted ladies, are not content to only know and to hear the great and wonderful things that God has allowed me to see and to try on my long and dangerous journey on the water, shown below, but also to find out the means and faces and ways that I have followed in order to proceed there, not believing at the end, if I do not understand clearly the beginning [...], you decided, with the will of his royal majesty and my so-called master, to try them myself and to go to see those things, which could give me some satisfaction and make me think of good names among my followers" (*my trans*., Pigafetta, 1962, p. 31).

From the beginning Magellan and the crew are trying to change the route, from Tenerife to the Canary Islands, following the coast of Africa far south, on Cape Verde to Sierra Leone, then changing the direction west to Brazil, the respective crossing attracting the discontent of the Spanish captains. During this expedition, he was accompanied by his faithful slave, Enrique, for whom he had left the following testamentary provisions:

> "From the day of my death, my prisoner and my slave Enrique, born in the city of Malacca and aged twenty-six, shall be released by any duty to serve, no longer be a slave, to do what he wants and to be left to his will. I also wish, from my succession, to be given for his support and maintenance, ten thousand *maravedis* in *petty* money. I grant him this legacy because he became a Christian and thus pray to God for the salvation of my soul" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 151).

In other words, the almost epistolary style of the Italian journalist, like most of the letter-reports of the time, is generally noted by a moderate objectivity, combined with a certain tendency towards fantasizing. Further, during the trip, although the owner (Magellan) is smart enough to use the advantage of the ocean currents in the area in favour of efficient travel, a series of most terrible storms thwart them from time to time, which determines Pigafetta, but also other crew members to trust some signs and wonders:

> "During these storms the holy body of Saint Elmo had appeared to us, in a dim light; among others, in a very dark night, shining brightly, like a burning flame, at the top of the highest mast; and he stayed with us for almost two hours, comforting us to tears. When this blessed light welcomed us to leave, it lit up before our eyes with such a great glow that we stood blind for more than a quarter of an hour, crying mercy, and really believing we were dead. *The sea, however, has calmed down*" (*my trans*., Pigafetta, 1962, p. 36).

Outside the atmospheric turbulence, Magellan is rarely faced with the insubordination of some of the officers, first of all the obvious dissatisfaction of Juan de Cartagena, whom he arrests without any right of appeal, once he enters the bay of Rio de Janeiro. Impressed by the vastness of the territory called in ancient Verzin (equivalent to Brazil), by the multitude of fish and fruit varieties or by the immensity of the sugar cane fields, the sensitive Pigafetta carefully observes the intense black colour of the locals who, while rowing, *resemble those on the Stix moors*. Visibly horrified by the stories of ritual cannibalism *in the memory of enemies*, he is amazed by the sight of *seagulls and wolves*, that is, penguins and seals. Usually, the Otherness is constructed in relation to identity, so that:

> "The psychological criterion of cultural identity requires an a-bodily identity, which is built up on the experience we have with the otherness, with what is beyond us, what is the result of self-care. Some cultures have too much self-indulgence and forget what they really are, forget that their own self is nothing without neighbouring the other. The identity of a culture, like that of a person, is validated only by referring to that *different*" (*my trans*., Hirghiduș, 2010, p. 152).

Maybe that was why the Europeans seem to be almost supernatural entities to the Brazilians, especially since:

> "It had been two months since it had not rained on this earth; and when we arrived at the port, it started raining by chance. *That's why they said we came from heaven and brought the rain with us*. These crowds would easily move to the faith of Jesus Christ. At first, they believed that boats would be the children of ships and that they would do so when they were lowered from the ship; and while standing so close to the ships, as is the custom, they believed that the ships were allowing them to suck" (*my trans*., Pigafetta, 1962, p. 40).

In the same vein, the portraitist Zweig translates with enough debate into the skin of the Italian memorialist, recounting the following:

> "The honest young man is overwhelmed by the cheapness with which that people sell their food. For a small rod, those brown hawks give five or six hens, for a comb, two geese, for a small mirror, ten beautifully stuffed parrots, and for a scissors they give so much fish that a dozen people can get tired of it" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 168).

When they pass Montevideo, everyone aboard believes that they can easily pass from there to *the South Sea* (later named the Pacific Ocean), but the huge gulf nearby is only the estuary of La Plata River (originally called Rio de Solis) which seems borderless, and which is incomparably larger than most rivers encountered on another occasion (Rhine, Po, Ebro, Tagus, etc.). From there, many doubts begin to arise regarding the existence of the long-*awaited* passage (*he stepped*), in the inner thoughts of the captain-general, unfortunately shaking the poor hope of the crew members. In Patagonia, the skippers' resort to some rattles to control to some extent the *people with long legs*. For example, they present some pairs of handcuffs as ornaments and then use them to simply take them as prisoners. Between December 1519 and January 1520, sailors briefly repair their ships, try to get to know the natives better, trade with mirrors, bells and other bargains, while earning much gold in return. A brief account of the Patagonians, from the tireless Pigafetta, states that an eyewitness also said by signs that he saw devils with two horns on their heads and long hair covering their feet, bursting fire from their mouth and back. Between February and August 1520, all remain in the port of San Julian, because the signs of the southern winter are getting stronger; people are increasingly dissatisfied, and eventually the *Santiago* ship fails on the coast.

Because most of the navigators did not want to go on towards the long-awaited Molucca Islands, in the spring of the same year, more precisely in April, there was a rebellion against Magellan, a

rebel whose leaders are Juan de Cartagena, Gaspar de Quesada and Luiz Mendoza, the latter being executed. Here is how Pigafetta presents such adverse events:

> "In order for your Highness to know something, as soon as they entered the harbour, the captains of the other four ships rushed a betrayal to kill the commander-in-chief [Magellan] [...] A ship called Santiago, going to coastal research, was lost. All men escaped as if by miracle, without drowning. Only two of them came to the ships and brought everything to our attention" (*my trans.*, Pigafetta, 1962, p. 46).

Eventually, a true miracle occurs and they finally find the strait they have been looking for too long, to which Magellan, in a sign of supreme thanks, calls it *To All the Saint*s, and the end of the strait will be called *The Head of the Eleven Thousand Virgins*. The atmosphere of sheer euphoria and the moment of meeting of the remaining ships are minutely described by the chancellor Pigafetta, as follows:

> "We thought that they were lost, first because of the big storm, and secondly because days had passed and they did not come back, as well as due to the fumes that two of them sent from the land, to give us news. And as we were waiting, we saw the two ships coming, with their blades blown and their flags in the wind, towards us. When they approached, they suddenly broke free of bombardments and then threw them all together, thanking God and the Virgin Mary, we set out to search further. *I do not believe that there is a more beautiful and welcoming strait than this"* (my *trans.*, Pigafetta, 1962, p. 49).

Unfortunately, the sailors from *San Antonio* had given up the mission, mainly because there were supplies for three months only, and had returned with the respective ship to Spain before the others. On November 28, 1520, after the Italian's recordings, the crossing of the Pacific Ocean began. In today's terms, in this sense one can speak of initiating a process of globalization; and yet "globalization is the most frequently used and abused word, the least defined and probably the most misunderstood, nebulous and spectacular, and politically, of recent and future years" (*my trans*., Beck, 2003, p. 37).

Going back to the trip, months from the beginning of 1521, hunger and thirst made their presence difficult, which caused A. Pigafetta to note with maximum objectivity and with much bitterness the famous lines:

> "We eat biscuits, but no more they were biscuits, but their powder, mixed with heaps of worms, because they had eaten what was good; very strong urine of mice, and I drank rotting yellow water for many days, and we ate some ox skin, with which the big antenna was dressed, so that it would not bear crumbs, very rough skins due to the sun, rain and wind. [...] The mice were selling half a ducat, and neither were too many" (*my trans.*, Pigafetta, 1962, p. 53).

Under these rather harsh conditions, as I mentioned, the captain of *San Antonio*, Estevao Gomez, decides to return to Spain with his crew, and one of the most enriched ship in terms of supplies. Magellan, who is in great turmoil, must decide whether to return to the country, or to go further, to the west or to the east, and that is why he even requests in writing this to his captains, precisely in order to have a possible cover for later.

As S. Zweig writes again, in fact he had no doubt about the providential destination he was following and who was also pursuing him:

> "He looks deeply shaking; there, to the west, beyond the endless horizon, must be the islands of spices, the islands of fabulous riches, and beyond them, the immense kingdom of the east: China, Japan and India – and then further, always further on to his country again – Spain, Europe!" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 236).

When they wanted to dock on the Mariana Islands, after the current name, the Portuguese and the Spaniards were supposedly attacked by little men resembling monkeys, who did not shy away from stealing even a boat, because the sailors were very weak by so many shortcomings: towards the end of the adventure Magellan gave the places the name of the Island of Thieves. In March 1521, the Philippine Archipelago was discovered, of which the Island of Cebu was also part, and then the crew found their well-deserved rest on the Island of Good Signs, where they encountered the first clues about gold, but also over clear water springs:

> "There is plenty of white beans and large trees here, which bear smaller fruits than almonds and pistachios; and so do many palm trees, some good, some bad" (*my trans*., Pigafetta, 1962, p. 60).

The sailor Pigafetta himself goes through a terrible danger, slipping from a rod in the sea, while fishing, not knowing how to swim, and without anyone seeing it, but fortunately he is recovering quickly enough. The exchanges of ceremonies between the ship's authorities and the island's rulers are usually described in detail in these elementary reports by the Italian writer. The civilization actions of the natives by the Europeans or even those of the evangelization seem, at least in the journey diary, as usually peaceful and full of aesthetic interest for the locals. The disposition for the legend persists, and it is sometimes expressed in the following way:

> "Big, beautiful *corneas* in sight, that kill the whales live here. They swallow them alive, and when they are in the body of the whales they come out of their shell and eat their heart" (*my trans*., Pigafetta, 1962, p. 76).

The conquerors are able to perform the Christian baptism to 800 souls at once, and the villages that do not submit to them are eventually set on fire. An exceptional thing is happening on the Island of Massawa, which really marks the success of this *circumnavigation* carried out by Magellan: for the slave Enrique suddenly realizes that he had arrived even in the village where he had once been kidnapped; he achieves this precisely because he understands enough fragments from the language of the locals. In this region, the narrator of events, Pigafetta, observes in detail the funeral rituals, the *blessing of the pig*, the massive attendance at the Christian liturgy, and he again notes for the posterity the significant struggles with indigeneity. A single, decisive phrase marks the savage killing the supreme captain, Magellan, in the Mactan Islands: "Knowing the captain, so many were crushed over him that he twice lowered his headband, but he, like a good one knight, he always faced them" (Pigafetta, 1962, p. 139). Usually quite attentive to the details, the 'grammarian' forgets to finally mention what is happening with the body of the admiral.

The most important aspect is, however, that the significant Portuguese managed to discover the western path to India, sought in vain beforehand by Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Giovanni Caboto and Martin Alonso Pinzon. In other news, St. Zweig concludes his volume by precisely drawing the writer of the expedition, from the other perspective, that of the new civilians:

> "What a wizard! For example, this Pigafetta! He held in his hand a piece of wood or a feather pulled from some bird and, when something was said, he scribbled down with some black marks on the white sheet, and then he could repeat to anyone, word for word, what had been said two days before" (*my trans*., Zweig, 1992, p. 257).

Because there was still great confusion among the survivors, Serrano and Barbosa chose new leaders, Mendez, Espinosa and Elcano, also called Delcano. In November 1521, the ships of *Trinidad* and *Victoria* made their way back to Spain, but the first one was quite shabby and needed major repairs; finally, it was attacked by Portuguese rivals and shipwrecked. So, in fact, only *Victoria* returned to its homeland loaded with countless and valuable sacks of spices. During

the following year, he crossed the Indian Ocean consistently, benefiting most of the time from beautiful weather and favourable conditions, but this time under the careful guidance of Juan Sebastian Elcano. Only on May 22, 1522, the remaining ship passed through the Cape of Good Hope and entered the Atlantic Ocean. Some storms delayed the passage to the north again, but on July 9, the same year it reached Santiago and Cape Verde. Almost three years after the mission began, only a handful of seamen arrived back home, recording a number of 19 people (according to some only 18), after going the entire world around, all covered in glory and loaded with riches. The triumphal entry into Seville takes place on September 6, 1522:

> "Nowadays, we are very aware of our connection with the earthly world, given the continuous crisis of the environment [...]. We use our planetary consciousness not only to praise ourselves, but also to bring criticism, to highlight our great wisdom about the Earth, for example, or to emphasize its unprecedented transformation by us. Moreover, this is the meaning of our globalization" (*my trans*., Hirghiduș, 2010, p. 25).

The irony of fate causes Elcano, initially sentenced to death by Magellan himself, to take command of the expedition shortly after the latter's death, and in addition to become its treasurer. The end of the book, written as an extended letter, belonging to the Italian Pigafetta, is not as spectacular as the reader would have expected, but the closing phrase is a kind of revelation in order to understand the importance of the written notes for that time:

> "Leaving from Seville, I went to Valladolid, where I portrayed to the sacred majesty of Don Carlos, not gold or silver, but more worthy things to the honour of such a gentleman. Among other things, I gave him a book, written with my hand, about all the things that happened daily on our journey. Get out of there as best you can; and going to Portugal and talking to King Don Giovanni about the things I had seen. Passing through Spain, I went to France; and I gave to the mother of the Christian king Don Francesco, the regent some things from the other hemisphere. Then I returned to Italy, where I always worshiped myself, as well as expecting a few of my famous and overly enlightened Don Filippo de Villiers Lisleadam, too worthy master of Rhodes" (*my trans*., Pigafetta, 1962, p. 150).

CONCLUSIONS

If we admit that the expedition undertaken by Magellan and Elcano is generally known to the general public, we must be aware that this would not have been possible without the (inter) cultural mediation of a comparatively insignificant character at the time. Even later, the eyewitness A. Pigafetta is the only one who records the details of the journey in its essence. As previously mentioned with regard to the travel mentor, broadly speaking, F. Magellan, only a few general coordinates are known, while talking about the continuation of the mission, J.S. Elcano, after the disappearance of the owner (see The Strait of Magellan), there is relatively little data available. What triggers a significant mutation, while sending the message carried to the world, including the Christian one, in the broad journey from one end of the Earth to the other, is precisely the focused diary of the Italian Antonio Pigafetta, which can be considered, in turn, an expanded epistle, a detailed register, an official report, almost a more archaic than ours *book* at that time. It is the hidden message in the transparent bottle of the early literature that comes after long adventures in a sunny haven, *c'est-à-dire* the literary reception. Finally, "the distinction between *self / other* in travel writing is not just about subjectivity – others are made foreign to the extent that they are physically located elsewhere. Travelogues require spatial movement: the surest way to guarantee an encounter with difference is to physically go elsewhere" (Lisle, 2006, p. 41).

All the more spectacular, because initially the sailor from the Italian peninsula was just a simple *sobresaliente* (Sp., "Substitute"), meaning it was not intended from the beginning to be part of the crew, it was somehow extra. However, fate causes, over the centuries, his writing full of charm and accuracy, *Relazione del primo voyage intorno al mondo* (1524-1525) to survive the time and to arouse our interest for the great explorers and discoverers such as the Portuguese Magellan and the Spanish Elcano. As for Pigafetta himself, the very small biographical details show that he came from a wealthy family in the Vicenza region, in north-eastern Italy. In his youth he studied astronomy, geography and cartography. After the famous expedition, he also served aboard the ships of the Rhodos knights. It seems that:

> "[...] the travel book itself has a similar grab bag quality. It incorporates the characters and plot line of a novel, the descriptive power of poetry, the substance of a history lesson, the discursiveness of an *essay*, and the – often inadvertent – self-revelation of a *memoir*. It revels in the particular, while occasionally illuminating the universal. It colours and shapes and fills in gaps. Because it results from displacement, it is frequently funny. It takes readers for a spin (and shows them, usually, how lucky they are). It humanizes the alien. More often than not it celebrates the unsung. It uncovers truths that are stranger than fiction. It gives eyewitness proof of life's infinite possibilities" (Swick, 2010, p. 35).

His book should also be an instrument for reflecting on an journey of initiation, not only for himself but for the other members as well: this stems from the burdensome title of the most complete within manuscripts, just since 1800, *Primo viaggio intorno al globo terraqueo, ossia ragguaglio della navigazione alle Indie Orientali per la via d'Occidente fatta dal cavaliere Antonio Pigafetta patrizio vicentino, sulla squadra del capitano Magaglianes negli anni 1519-1522 / First trip around the globe, that is to say, a sail to the East Indies for the West route made by the knight Antonio Pigafetta, a Vicenza patrician, with the team of Captain Magaglianes in the years 1519-1522*. After all, the diary absorbs, figuratively, the crossing of the two oceans, The Atlantic and The Pacific, paradoxically through a single ink pot...

To conclude, if the exploration within the Magellan-Elcano global journey is an inexhaustible topic, then the surviving narrative of Pigafetta's writing is still pursuing a posthumous journey, this time focused on the reader, who extends the significance of this seemingly insignificant book to the deep implications of the globalization effects today.

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