

**FRAMES FOR FRAGMENTS FROM HISTORY OF THE 20TH CENTURY:
PORTRAYALS OF GRADUATIONS AND SCHOOL MEMORIES OF BRAZILIAN
CATHOLIC COLLEGES IN THE 20TH CENTURY ¹**

***MOLDURAS PARA FRAGMENTOS DA HISTÓRIA DO SÉCULO XX:
QUADROS DE FORMATURAS E MEMÓRIAS ESCOLARES DE COLÉGIOS
CATÓLICOS BRASILEIROS NO SÉCULO XX***

***MARCOS PARA FRAGMENTOS DE LA HISTORIA DEL SIGLO XX:
CUADROS DE GRADUACIÓN Y RECUERDOS ESCOLARES DE LAS ESCUELAS
CATÓLICAS BRASILEÑAS EN EL SIGLO XX***

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ABSTRACT: The trajectory of school subjects is impregnated by diversities of rituals, these have progressively undergone changes in meanings and moments of accomplishment, however they have preserved riches of symbolism, profusion of meanings and production of material and immaterial goods, being able to evoke varieties of feelings and revolving memories. Among the school graduation rituals, it stands out, although it has undergone modifications, in contemporary times, connections with the meanings and symbolisms inherited from the solemnities of previous centuries, especially in the 20th century. Study of graduation portrayals, in particular those existing in Brazilian Catholic schools, make it possible to apprehend, in addition to the school culture and the memories inscribed by students in these documents, the configuration of the sociocultural and historical context, and identify the social web in which the schools are interfered. We analyzed 26 graduation portrayals produced between the 1930s and 1970s, to celebrate the graduation in different courses in two Brazilian Catholic confessional schools dedicated exclusively to female schooling. To understand these historical sources, a reference of Cultural History was used.

KEYWORDS: Memories. School culture. Portrayals of graduations. Catholic colleges. 20th century.

RESUMO: *A trajetória dos sujeitos escolares está impregnada por diversidades de rituais; estes progressivamente sofreram alterações nos significados e momentos de realização, contudo, preservaram riquezas de simbolismos, profusão de sentidos e produção de bens materiais e imateriais, sendo capazes de evocar variedades de sentimentos e revolver as memórias. Dentre os rituais escolares a formatura destaca-se: ainda que tenha sofrido modificações resguarda, na contemporaneidade, conexões com os significados e simbolismos*

¹ The original idea for this article was presented in the Oral Communication format at XIII CIHOLA (Iberoamerican Congress of History of Education) – 2018, Montevideo/Uruguay, with the title Framing Stories and Memories: graduation pictures in Brazilian Catholic schools in the 20th century. From the reflections and original writings, historiographical analyzes were unfolded from other and more in-depth perspectives on the school culture of Catholic confessional school institutions during the 20th century.

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herdados das solenidades de séculos anteriores, especialmente no século XX. Estudo dos quadros de formatura, em particular, os existentes em colégios católicos brasileiros, possibilitam apreender, além da cultura escolar e as memórias inscritas pelos estudantes nesses documentos, a configuração do contexto sociocultural e histórico, e identificar a teia social na qual os colégios se imiscuíam. Analisamos 26 quadros de formaturas produzidos entre as décadas de 1930 a 1970, para celebrar a colação de grau em diferentes cursos em dois colégios confessionais católicos brasileiros dedicados exclusivamente à escolarização feminina. Para compreensão destas fontes históricas se utilizou referencial da História Cultural.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: *Memórias. Cultura escolar. Quadros de formatura. Colégios católicos. Século XX.*

RESUMEN: *La trayectoria de los sujetos escolares en las escuelas está impregnada de diversos rituales, estos han ido sufriendo progresivamente cambios en los significados y momentos de realización, sin embargo han conservado riquezas de simbolismo, profusión de significados y producción de bienes materiales e inmateriales, pudiendo evocar variedades de sentimientos y revolver memorias. Entre los rituales de graduación escolar se destaca: si bien ha sufrido modificaciones, en la época contemporánea, las conexiones con los significados y simbolismos heredados de las solemnidades de siglos anteriores, especialmente en el siglo XX. Estudiar los cuadros de graduación, en particular, los existentes en las escuelas católicas brasileñas, conocer, además de la cultura escolar y las memorias inscritas por los estudiantes en estos documentos, la configuración del contexto sociocultural e histórico, e identificar la red social en donde se ubican las escuelas. Analizamos 26 fotografías de graduación producidas entre las décadas de 1930 y 1970, para celebrar la graduación en diferentes cursos en dos escuelas confesionales católicas brasileñas dedicadas exclusivamente a la escolarización femenina. Para comprender estas fuentes históricas, se utilizó una referencia de Historia Cultural.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Memorias. Cultura escolar. Tableros de graduación. Escuelas católicas. Siglo 20.*

Introduction

The trajectory of school subjects is permeated by a variety of rituals; these progressively underwent changes in meanings and moments of realization, however, they preserved riches of symbolism, profusion of meanings and production of material and immaterial goods, being able to evoke and engender in all those who experienced it or even in contact with "relics" varieties of feelings and stir up memories.

The school space is a producer of lively culture(s), which is daily maintained by and through social subjects immersed in and inserted in them, engendering multiple and different

aspects of school culture, which can be expressed both in practices and knowledge (immateriality) and in objects, furniture, buildings, etc. (materiality).³

Among the school rituals that fill and give meaning to daily school life, graduation deserves to be highlighted, because even though it has undergone modifications, it preserves, in contemporaneity, intrinsic connections with the meanings and symbolisms inherited from the solemnities performed in previous centuries, especially in the 20th century.

A graduation is an important moment in the functioning of school institutions, an outstanding reference for proving the successful pedagogical acts processed within them. It is the final moment of a formative process, meaning graduation, a publicly recognized advance in the educational scale, which differentiates those who have obtained it from other people and which, in the case of professional formation courses, marks a prerogative of work. [...]

Several elements make up the ritual of course completion, linked to social status, economic conditions of the families and the importance of the school where the course was held, and the title obtained. There are varied objects and relationships: rings, festive solemnities in auditoriums with guests, speeches (CUNHA, 2002; NASCIMENTO, DANIEL, 2002), paronyms, dances, thanksgiving masses, special clothes – tuxedos, gowns, and costumes and symbols that make up the act of completing a course and its ritual celebration (WERLE, 2005, p. 03-04, our translation).

It is important to emphasize that republicanism in Brazil used to exhaustion – since the beginning of the regime's implementation, and still does – the school rites to exalt the achievements of the new regime. Thus, transforming school *achievements* into public events became a singular strategy and, with immeasurable repercussions, to promote the position of the ruling groups, in addition to a fruitful social practice, as it awakens *in all citizens the desire to achieve social ascension, a higher social position, and demonstrates this possibility through dedication to studies.*

We remind you that we are approaching and analyzing graduation from the perspective of a rite of passage that is part of the formal school process and as a ritual as it was instituted and recognized by Brazilian society, demarcating the final of the phase of formal schooling and, therefore, a symbol of "achievement" of certain social-cultural ascension. A subject "*graduates*" or is "*authorized to participate in the graduation rite by the school institution*", in accordance with Brazilian social regulations, because he obtained the

³ To support the concept of school culture adopted in this text, we use the perception of Dominique Julia presented in the text *A cultura escolar como objeto histórico* (Revista Brasileira de História da Educação, nº 1, jan/jun 2001, p. 09-43, translation Gizele de Souza); while to support the concept of material school culture, we appropriated the definition elaborated in the works published by Rosa Fátima de Souza, especially in the text *History of material school culture: an initial assessment* (BENCOSTA, 2007).

relevant academic-scientific knowledge, authorizing him to be in that place, social place of trainee, one who is publicly recognized as holder of knowledge.

And, even though it has undergone changes in format over the last century, and has acquired variations between different regions and Brazilian cities, the meanings and social symbolism of graduation remained coherent and current for Brazilian society. So, graduation and, consequently, the set of acts and artifacts (material and immaterial) that comprise it must be understood as:

A set of formalized, expressive acts, bearers of a symbolic dimension. The rite is characterized by a specific spatiotemporal configuration, the use of a series of objects, specific language and behavior systems and emblematic signs whose codified meaning constitutes one of the common goods of a group.

This is a definition that: retains morphological criteria; insists on the collective dimension, as the ritual makes sense to all who share it; recognizes that these manifestations have a specific field to mark ruptures and discontinuities, critical moments (passage) both in individual and social times; and prioritizes its social effectiveness.

Ritual makes sense, as it orders disorder, gives meaning to the accidental and incomprehensible, and gives social actors the means to dominate evil, time and social relations. Its essence is to mix individual and collective time. Defined in their morphological properties and through their social effectiveness, the rites are also characterized by symbolic actions manifested by sensitive, material and bodily emblems.

As strongly institutionalized or effervescent sets - whether they regulate situations of common adherence to values or act as regulators of interpersonal conflicts -, the rites must always be considered as a set of relatively codified individual and collective behaviors, with bodily support (verbal, gestural and postural), repetitive character and strong symbolic load for actors and witnesses. Such behaviors are based on a mental adherence - of which the eventual actor is not aware - to relative values of social choices considered important and whose expected effectiveness does not come from a purely empirical logic that would be exhausted in the technical instrumentality of the cause-effect link. Finally, the ritual is recognized as the result of learning, implying, therefore, the continuity of generations, age groups or social groups within which it takes place.

Through its symbolic dimension, 'the rite is an effective language insofar as it acts on social reality', as a result of which the rite cannot be done anyway, needing to be supported by symbols recognized by the community (SEGALEN, 2002, p. 31-32, our translation).

Graduation is a social practice marked by rituals that are supported by a myriad of symbols, among which the graduation plaques are currently prominent, heirs of the old graduation portrayals, carved until the 1970s, when they were replaced by plaques. The former are used to demarcate records, in general, from the completion of a higher education course; while the graduation portrayals registered, indistinctly, the end of any phase of formal

education (high school, commerce, normal, secondary, higher education, kindergarten, etc.), and was, in general, made by artisans.

By demarcating the graduation rite, as a dimension of unique importance in daily school life, in addition to being a fruitful and continuously re-signified social practice in society, the purpose of this text is to analyze one of the symbols that integrate material school culture: graduation portrayals. We take as historical sources twenty-six (26) portrayals produced between the 1930s and 1970s to celebrate graduation in four different courses: Secondary, Normal, Commerce (current accounting course) and Kindergarten.

The graduation portrayals used as research sources and analyzed in this text are part of the private collection of two Brazilian Catholic schools dedicated exclusively to female education until the 1970s: Nossa Senhora das Graças School⁴ (Parnaíba/Piauí) and Sagrado Coração de Jesus School⁵ (Teresina/Piauí). The set of graduation portrayals from Nossa Senhora das Graças School is displayed in perfect condition on the entrance list of the main school building: nineteen (19) of the most representative were selected for this study; while the collection of these objects from the Sagrado Coração de Jesus School was removed from the school's main headquarters (and to which we have not had access to date), been possible to access the images of seven (07) graduation portrayals present in the files of the establishment itself.

To analyze and understand the insertion of these school objects, meanings and symbolic contributions in the context of graduation ceremonies, the society in which the students mingled, and the very establishment that preserved these artifacts and keeps them displayed in a prominent place for students and visitors, we used the references of Cultural History, which gave us the opportunity to perceive, in addition to material school culture, the memories inscribed by students in these *documents* (the graduation portrayals are composed of: sculptures, photographs, texts, drawings, etc.), the configuration of the sociocultural, political and economic context in which schools were immersed, as well as the inherent and existing disputes in these scenarios.

Graduation Portrayals: fragments of stories, trajectory symbols, icons of a pedagogical project

⁴ Nossa Senhora das Graças School (CNSG) was founded in June 1907 by the Italian Sisters Savinianas, in the city of Parnaíba (PI), at the time the city with the greatest economic development in the state. The school has exclusively served women since its foundation until the 1970s, when it started to accept enrollments from boys. To date, the Savinian Congregation directs the educational institution.

⁵ The Sagrado Coração de Jesus School (CSCJ) was founded in October 1906 by the Italian Savinianas Sisters, in the city of Teresina (PI), capital of the state, still with timid socio-economic and cultural development. The school was opened to cater exclusively to women at the request of the bishop of the newly created Diocese of Piauí, Dom Luís Antônio, and remained so until the 1970s, when it began to accept enrollments for boys. To date, the Saviniana Congregation directs the educational institution.

Observing and analyzing graduation portrayals (images, photographs contained, drawings, written texts, in addition to the art used to carve and carve wood) and transforming them into historical sources provides an understanding of the social, cultural, historical scenario and the weaving of relationships in which social subjects were enrolled and coexisted in the school space and in the social space in which the School itself (co)existed.

Figure 1 – Humanist-Graduation Portrayal⁶ of 1941 (Class Madre Savina)



Fonte: Photo by Márcio Iglésias (July 2008) – Collection of Nossa Senhora das Graças School

The graduation portrayals analyzed in this text belong to the collections of Colégio Nossa Senhora das Graças (Parnaíba/PI) and Colégio Sagrado Coração de Jesus (Teresina/PI), where they are kept in a prominent and visible place for members of the current student body, faculty, employees and all visitors to the institution. And, as attested by Werle (2005, p. 09, our translation) in a visible place,

[...] the graduation portrayals are a sign and an indelible testimony of the institutional action and the educational mission achieved. They also act as an example because they set an image (success, completeness in formation) and, consequently exposed, urge their appreciators to also achieve their goals.

⁶ It is assumed that these students have completed the High School Course, since this course was implemented at Colégio Nossa Senhora das Graças in 1936, even before it was offered to women in the state capital (Teresina), same thing that would happen years later at the Sagrado Coração de Jesus School, in the Saviniana Congregation in the capital.

We design graduation portrayals as the materialization of memories, therefore carriers of a material support where the conjugation must be perceived, in addition to financial, social and emotional investments for the production of the graduation portrayal piece, the symbolic elements present in the structuring of this artifact full of histories, individual and collective trajectories, identities, which also publicly expose the educational project of an educational institution.

Let us remember that the 20th century infused traditions of modernity into Brazilian society, and access to and dissemination of formal education is one of the pillars of this new world; using Le Goff (2003, p. 469, our translation) we highlight that:

Tradition is biologically as indispensable to the human species as genetic conditioning is to insect societies: ethnic survival is based on routine, the dialogue that is established raises the balance between routine and progress, routine symbolizing the capital necessary for the survival of the group, progress, the intervention of individual innovations for improved survival. Memory is an essential element of what is usually called identity, individual or collective, whose search is one of the fundamental activities of individuals and societies today, in fever and anguish.

Taking this perspective as a starting point to analyze the graduation portrayals of Savinian Colleges, we can say that these *relics* were for the students – raised to the level of graduates at the end of the course (some would remain at the Colleges to continue their studies⁷, others would play the most honorable activity for women: getting married and taking care of one's husband, children and home) – an affirmation of success before the Schools themselves, the family, the group of school colleagues, society and, finally, her connection with the institution where she studied.

At this point of our reflections, it is important to emphasize the considerations made by Werle (2005, p. 10, our translation),

Having your photograph included in a graduation portrayal reaffirms the acquired cultural capital, the formation process linked to this institution, and not to any other, and the achievement of the proposed objectives. There is no way to deny, if you are a member of a graduation group, your institutional affiliation.

On the other hand, to be included in a graduation portrayal and to have your photograph displayed in the school corridors is to have a certificate that you

⁷ Nossa Senhora das Graças School offered courses: Normal (since 1934), Commerce (since 1935), Secondary (since 1936), Kindergarten (since 1960) and Scientific (since 1985). It was possible for women who did not reside in Parnaíba to attend this school, as it also offered boarding school. The Sagrado de Jesus School offered the following courses: Normal (since 1931), Commerce (since 1954), Secondary (1938), Kindergarten (since 1938) and Scientific (since 1959), Clinical Pathology – 2nd professional degree (from 1975) and Architectural Drawing – 2nd professional degree (from 1975). It was possible for women who did not reside in Teresina to attend the school, as it also offered boarding school.

have been and are accepted at this educational establishment and are supported and protected by it. The student/institution identity is reinforced in the portrayal displayed in the school corridors. The notoriety of the names of the students, the paronymph and honored professors, the variety of places where the students come from, confirm the institutional importance and scope of its formative action, indicating in how many cities it is known. Thus, graduation portrayals favor people from different generations and with different roles to introject the importance of the institution.

In the context of Piauí society, the schools run by the Saviniana Congregation from its foundation (early 20th century) to the present enjoy wide respectability in local and regional society, whether for the quality of education offered or for the social inclusion of students after the conclusion of the studies, or even through the webs of social relations and social and cultural capital mobilized by students and former students from these school institutions.

The graduation portrayals selected for analysis are part of a larger set of pieces existing at Nossa Senhora das Graças and Sagrado Coração de Jesus Schools, however these were chosen for their representativeness when analyzed as historical sources.

Table 1 – Descriptive table of the graduation portrayals of Nossa Senhora das Graças School - Parnaíba (PI)

COURSE	YEAR	CLASS NAME	PORTRAYAL MATERIAL
Commerce	1939	Sister Abelina Ducci	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1940	Sister Maria da Assunção Santana	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1942	Sister Emília Diniz	Column-shaped wood carving.
	1943	Mother Ester Verita	Wooden sculpture in the shape of a sailing boat, metal details, books and a symbol of the bookkeeping profession.
	1944	Catarina de Sena	Wood sculpture in book page format, with Parnaíba and Brazil flags.
	1950	Estelita Cardoso	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1951	Prof. Darcy F. Araújo	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
Secondary	1941	Mother Savina	Wooden sculpture in the shape of a world map, surrounded by books, flanked by the coat of arms of the republic (right) and cross (left).
	1943	Sister Severina Rego	Wooden sculpture in the form of a map of Brazil, metal details: world map, inkwell and pen, lamp, book.
	1944	Mons. Roberto Lopes	Wood carving in the shape of a heart, metal details in the shape of: hourglass, course books, lamp and pennant.
	1950	Prof. Raul Santos	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1952	Prof. Raul Santos	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1953	Profª. Maria da Penha Fonte e Silva	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1956	Dr. Sebastião Castelo Branco	Wooden sculpture in the form of a map of Piauí.
Normal	1957	Profª. Clea Araújo F. Lima	Anchor-shaped wood carving.
	1962	Prof. José L. Couto	Wooden sculpture in the shape of a shooting star.

	1960	Profª Maria Christina	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1970	Sister Eugênia de Oliveira	Wooden sculpture in frame format.
No Course ID	1949	Clea Furtado Araújo	Wooden sculpture in the shape of the Nossa Senhora das Graças School coat of arms, details in metal, lamp, book, hourglass, globe, carving insignia of Maria Santíssima.

Source: Devised by the authors

The graduation portrayals denote different investments made by graduates of the various courses existing in the same institution – even though they all hold a high socioeconomic standard –; observing those produced by the Commerce Course, we realized that in the interval of two decades only two classes produced sculptures to mark the end of their course at the School, while this was the type of graduation portrayal adopted by most of the concluding classes in the Secondary and Normal courses at Nossa Senhora das Graças School.

However, when we look at the set of graduation portrayals from the Sagrado Coração de Jesus School, we find only one wooden sculpture produced by the 1942 Class of the Normal Course; contradictorily, the practice established by the previous and subsequent classes used the composition of the set: drawing/illustration and photography, a wooden and glass frame for the graduation portrayals.

Table 2 – Descriptive table of the graduation portrayals of Sagrado Coração de Jesus School – Teresina (PI)

COURSE	YEAR	CLASS NAME	PORTRAYAL MATERIAL
Normal	1936	Professors 1936	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1942	Professors 1942	Wooden sculpture in the shape of a map of the state of Piauí colored by the national coat of arms, highlighting the boundaries of the 48 municipalities existing in the state that year.
Secondary	1935	Graduates 1935	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1939	Graduates 1939	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1942	Graduates 1942	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
Kindergarten	1937	Kindergarten – Students 1937	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.
	1960	Congress Class	Paper with photographs and wooden frame.

Source: Devised by the authors

Figure 2 – Graduation Portrayal - 1960 Kindergarten⁸ (Class of Congress)

⁸ The photograph printed on the lower right side of the graduation portrayals of the Congress Class of the Kindergarten – 1960 was distributed by Dom Avelar Brandão Vilela as a reminder of participation in the I Eucharistic Congress (1960) to all students and students of Catholic Scholl.



Source: Sacred Heart of Jesus School Collection

A differentiating element between the two Savinian institutions regarding the distinction of the graduates is the way of naming the concluding classes. While in the Parnaíba school, in general, this was used as an extra resource to "*capitalize relationships for the graduates*", resorting to tributes to local and state personalities, "baptizing" the classes with the name of these people and bringing them into the space school to get to know the "*excellent formation provided by the School to the girls of society*"; the school in the capital gave preference to demarcating and reinforcing the quality of teaching at the School in the graduation portrayals, self-naming the classes with the name of the course they were completing, followed by the year of completion. The exception was the Class of 1960 in Kindergarten, which was named the Class of Congress.

That year, the 1st Eucharistic Congress took place in Teresina, from 26 to 30 of October 1960, during the episcopal administration of Archbishop Dom Avelar (governed the Archdiocese of Piauí between 1955 and 1971). The event also celebrated the Silver Anniversary (25 years) of the Priesthood of Dom Avelar Brandão Vilela. All students from the Catholic Confessional Schools of Teresina (male and female) participated in the event, including the students of Saviniano School.

Figure 3 – 1960's graduation portrayal - normal course (Professor Maria Christin Class)



Source: Photo by Márcio Iglésias (July 2008) – Nossa Senhora das Graças School Collection

Another aspect that we cannot detect in the graduation portrayals, whether due to the wear and tear caused by time, or the intention of the producers, was the authorship of the pieces (sculptures, drawings, photographs, frames, etc.) that make up these artifacts that we analyzed. Except for the painting of the 1960 Class of the Normal Course, in which the drawings that illustrate the painting were handmade by Antonieta C. Mavignier and Maria Yedda Mendes (both graduates in this class), who sign as draftswomen in the lower left corner of the screen.

This impossibility of not recognizing and/or identifying the authorship of the pieces in a certain way is impacting, since the circulation of graduation portrayals in Brazil and in the city of Parnaíba is large, both of larger pieces - the one intended to be posted on the space of the educational institution – as well as smaller pieces – those intended to be kept as a souvenir by the individual who completes the course or given by him to someone, in general, family member or honored by the class. We find a copy of these graduation tables (table) among those existing at Nossa Senhora das Graças School.

Figure 4 – Graduation Portrayal– Teacher Students from 1970 (Sister Eugênia de Oliveira Class)



Fonte: Photo by Márcio Iglésias (July 2008) – Nossa Senhora das Graças School Collection

An element present in all graduation portrayals analyzed in the Savianian schools is the interrelationship between religiosity and civics, demonstrating the existing links between Church and State in Brazil in all spheres, and the portrayals indelibly publicize this articulation. For example, the Graduation Portrayal of the 1940 Class of Commerce has in the center the image of Nossa Senhora das Graças and highlighted on the left side in larger size than all the other photographs in the painting the portrait of President Getúlio Vargas; while the graduation portrayal of the 1943 Secondary Class is a sculpture in the shape of a map of Brazil and has as one of the honored Dom Severino Vieira de Mello (bishop of Piauí), with the following words “with the claim of children’s devotion”.

The graduation portrayals reveal to us the interconnections and tensions that exist in the social web in which the schools were intertwined: we verified, from the representations inscribed in them, the fluctuations and interferences of the local and national economy in the daily lives of the graduating students, especially when it came to the course of commerce. For example, the 1943 Class made a wooden sculpture in the shape of a sailing boat, with metal details from books and a symbol of the bookkeeping profession, and other classes from the Commerce Course would insert boats, trains and planes in their paintings, exposing Parnaíba as a trading post and an exporting city, that is, economic activities in which the students' families were involved, and from which part of the income that kept them at the School was certainly derived. This shows us the search of the graduates to build relationships outside the school that would facilitate access to the job market, in addition to honoring their families and schoolteachers, through the choices of paranymphs, godparents, honorees, etc.

We believe that the graduation portrayals from the beginning of the 20th century maintain a direct relationship with the current Graduation Plaques, as they fulfill the same function, that is, demarcate the passage of graduates (former students) in the school space, and

inform students that it will come that those have completed the course and, probably, later success in the world outside the educational institution as well. The portrayals are distinguished from the Plaques by the grandeur and refinement of the former, both in size and in the materials used to make them. As an example, the sculptures in wood considered noble were carved in walnut, oak, cedar and had an average height between 1m 50cm and 2m and width of 1m 50cm, richly adorned with details in metal, sometimes in copper or bronze.

We realized the work of dedication and detail of the artisan when carving the piece that would become a graduation table. Take, for example, the graduation portrayal of the 1942 Class of the Normal Course of the School of Teresina, which was carved in the format of the map of the state of Piauí with all the territorial limits of the forty-eight (48) municipalities that until then were part of it. The photographs of the graduates were inserted within these "municipal boundaries", leading the observer to believe that they are positioned in accordance with their place of birth. The wooden sculpture on the map is crowned by the Republic's coat of arms cast in metal, which denotes the superiority of the nation's power over local power.

Figure 5 – Graduation Portrayal - Sagrado Coração de Jesus School (Teachers Class of 1942)



Source: Sagrado Coração de Jesus School Collection

The study of graduation portrayals reveals a framework of information about school culture and reality interspersed with the usual graduation rites. However, it is necessary for the analyst to articulate, in addition to the references of the History and History of Education,

elements of economics, sociology, anthropology - among other areas - to understand the extension of the meanings and symbolic contributions emanating from the portrayals, even when the subjects there represented are not physically present, nor are their names remembered by the living. Being inserted in a graduation portrayal ensures a singular notoriety and unique admiration, awakening in those subjects who are now circulating in the school space - even in those who do not effectively share that school culture - admiration, with the desire to achieve the achievements and merits that enable “*be worthy of being on a graduation portrayal*”. We need to seek to amplify the historical, social and cultural understanding of how these decorative and ritualistic pieces maintain the strength of symbolism.

Final considerations

By analyzing the graduation portrayals, it is possible for us to understand other interrelationships and consolidated connections between the school space and the society that comprises, delineates, shape and is shaped by it, thus allowing us to uncover a diversity of amplifications in the field of History of Education, specifically of the material school culture.

The study of Graduation Portrayals, although instigating, is still in its infancy, underlies other objects of material school culture, either because few examples of these artifacts have been preserved in and by school institutions, or because their successors - graduation plaques - are part of our school routine, and we have not yet turned our *historical gaze* to these historical sources that at the same time unfold and/or bring together three other types of sources (imagery, art, writing).

There is a scarcity of bibliography addressing the issue of graduation portrayals, both regarding the analysis of these historical sources existing in basic education institutions and in higher education. Here, it is important to point out that these artifacts are important elements to reveal the pedagogical practices and educational projects of the institutions, that is, revealing the school culture.

Certainly, entering into the symbolism of graduation rituals is revolving whirlpools of lived memories, unfulfilled expectations and unfulfilled gestated projects; to observe graduation portrayals is also to imagine that dreams were realized, even if for fractions of seconds, in the magical moment of the solemnities of passages, in the heat of awakened emotions; looking at photographs from previous centuries is to relive memories that are not ours, but could have been and still are, because graduation, the conclusion of the course, is

part of our Brazilian social reality, it is still a rite of passage that gives one way or another all of us Brazilians want to celebrate.

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