

EL SANTUARIO NO SE RINDE
[*THE SANCTUARY DOES NOT SURRENDER*]:
FANTASY, FORGIVENESS AND MYTHOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION AND HYPOTHESIS

In 1938 José María Pemán wrote pieces for publishing companies of Burgos and Seville: while he was writing a prologue, he was also writing a Spain's history for kids and gave a history lesson for the National army that was at the front. Maybe that was the reason why it did not surprise him to receive a letter from a Civil Guard, José Rodríguez de Cueto, who lived couple days in the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary. The soldier asks him to present a preface to his own text about civilians and combatants in the civil war. In his prologue, Pemán apologized before the reader for writing in a hurry, and without the necessary "rest," and because he had planned a hypothesis that would be good for this article: "(Spaniards) barely have a political history, but we have poetic history." Rodríguez de Cueto's book was published the same year in Burgos where it was one of the first monographic books that talked about the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary siege; however the mythification process was started a while before.

Not many civil war events helped both sides with the same strength and validity to in their propaganda. According to the subsequent works after the war, one can say it was a "moral" victory for the National side; however, the truth is that during the fight but specifically after the Sanctuary's fall on May 1, 1937 (Spanish Labor Day), it felt like a Republican victory. On May 2 all the Republican newspapers celebrated with exaltation and praise the victory news. The siege and subsequent storming of the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary were known by all the Spaniards, and events were explained differently by each side's perspective and ideology, but the military victory was only for the Republican side that sieged and seized the Sanctuary. However the "political history" is not important to Spain, and it will be replaced by the "poetic history."

The General Queipo de Llano's radio propaganda, the National press' effort, the subsequent editions (especially Seville' ABC newspaper) articles, TV news, and Arturo Ruiz-Castillo's film were what turned a single event into a "heroic epic event," in Ruiz-Castillo's words.

Since the 1980s Arturo Ruiz-Castillo has been studied in an ideological and analytical way. The figure of Ruiz-Castillo, host and collaborator with the decorations of La Barraca, son of the founder of the New Library, cofounder of the book fair..., surprisingly had filmed so many movies with pro-Franco propaganda: *El Santuario no se rinde*, *Dos caminos* [Two paths] (1953) and *Los ases buscan paz* [Aces Seek Peace] (1954); along with movies with racist elements and behaviors such as *Obsesión* [Obsession] (1947) and *La manigua sin Dios* [The Godless Jungle] (1949). Those studies became an ideological

vindication; critics start treating Arturo Ruiz-Castillo as a leftist producer. The rumor was started by Ruiz himself in the IX Huelva's Ibero-American Film Festival, where he was talking about one of his more well-known narrative films *Pasión por el mar* [Passion for the Sea] (1957). Ruiz-Castillo said, "If the documentaries that I made for the Republic had been released, I could not have filmed again."

After Ruiz-Castillo's comment, many authors classify his works as leftist films. The excellent works by Carlos F. Heredero and Vicente Sanchez-Biosca, are two of the best texts written about the Spanish Civil War and his relation with the Spanish cinema, and they have established that *El Santuario no se rinde* narrates and tells the reconciliation between the two Spains. Exaggerating this idea and taking some references such as the ideological affiliation of Juan Marine, who was the film photography operator and Arturo Ruiz-Castillo himself, some historians and critics have declared that the feature film is in reality a Republican defense movie.

The hypothesis of this article is that *El Santuario no se rinde* does not have to be taken as a reconciliation film, but as pro-Franco propaganda, that even if it is far from the central works of the crusade genre, it shares with them a very fundamental point: the falsification of history so that a completely inexistent myth can be born, or in Pemán's words to create a "poetic history." The reconciliation idea as we will see is based on a solid argument: The analysis of the Republican notary character performed by Alfredo Mayo. This character is without a doubt, one of the few Republican characters in Spanish cinema with real attributes and brave behavior similar to those the real National protagonist had.

However, *El Santuario no se rinde* needs to be taken also as a text that tells the story of the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary's siege. Right here is where we are going to find out the true elements that make the movie became a pro-Franco propaganda full-length film and a crusade cinema film. Arturo Ruiz-Castillo, as many other Spaniards who lived during the Spanish Civil War, knows that there are many elements that change the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary heroic deed into a minor event or just a mock attack without any military interest. Ruiz-Castillo omitted and manipulated some of those elements in order to praise the Sanctuary defense. Arturo Ruiz-Castillo's story is one of the most propagandistic of all the ones that were made about the Sanctuary storming after the postwar.

Therefore, the present article will analyze the movie with all the text on this event that had emerged at that time and after the film, and they will be compared to show how the film constructs a poetic history of the event.

HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

In the late thirteenth century there was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the same place as Santa Maria de la Cabeza; since the fourteenth or fifteenth century a monastery was there; and in the sixteenth century a Marian pilgrimage to it took place. The *morena* (brunette) virgin attracted devotees from all regions of Spain. Like all the other *morenas* images of Europe, people attributed all kinds of healings and miracles to the images, and the faith in her grew continually. Without a doubt, the most illustrious chronicle

of the pilgrimage and the place was done by Miguel de Cervantes in the work of *Persiles and Sigismunda* (Book III, chapter IV):

There's the hill, or better say, crag and on its top the monastery which deposits in itself a holly image called de la Cabeza (head), which took the name from the crag that was called el Cabezo (the head), for been on the free plain and unfettered, and leading only to other mountains and cliffs that surrounds it, its height was up to a quarter of mile and circumference of a little bit more than half mile. In this space and enjoyable site has its seat, ever green and peaceful, because of the mood that is communicated from the Xandula River, which incidentally, as a reverence, kisses her skirts. The place, the crag, the image, the miracles, the endless people who came from near and far places make it famous around the world and renowned in Spain over many tales and the more widely memories are remembered.¹

The pilgrimage had been maintained and upgraded since Cervantes' times and during the Second Republic, despite the friction between secularization and the apparent conflict between church and government, the faith was alive and kept growing every day. Months before the July military uprising, the Sanctuary's prior, father Miguel, talked to the newspaper ABC and explained that the Marian devotion was kept alive, full and vigorous because of "the new brotherhood established in Seville and Madrid (...) once the pilgrimage ends, everything is dancing, singing and laughing under the heavenly serene majesty,"² in an article published on March 22, 1936 in *Blanco y negro* and signed by J. Muñoz San Román.

The Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary, as mentioned before is located in a mountainous area, surrounded by small rivers, and far away from roads and completely distant from urban or industrial centers. Its strategic and military interest was not valued at all. Its terrain could turn it into a defensive stronghold, but it was too isolated to have a defiant and decisive character in a state battle. However, its religious charge made it an extraordinary place: and thus ended up being a mythological icon during the Civil War.

The military uprising did not triumph in the region, neither did the Andújar battalions, nor the city closest to the religious site, nor the Jaen army, as we will see later; in other words none of the closest armies rebelled against the government. On the contrary, Andújar militiamen went to the monastery and forced the nuns to leave. Before being captured, the

¹ Original text in Spanish: "Allí está el monte o, por mejor decir, peñasco en cuya cima está el monasterio que deposita en sí una santa imagen llamada de la Cabeza, que tomo el nombre de la peña donde había, que antiguamente se llamó el Cabezo, por estar en la mitad de un llano libre y desembarazado, solo y señero de otros montes ni peñas que le rodean, cuya altura será de hasta un cuarto de legua y cuyo circuito debe de ser poco más de media. En este espacio ameno sitio tiene su asiento, siempre verde y apacible, por el humor que le comunican las aguas del río Xándula, que, de paso, como en reverencia, le besa las faldas. El lugar, la peña, la imagen, los milagros, la infinita gente que acude de cerca y de lejos lo hacen famoso en el mundo y célebre en España sobre cuantos lugares las más extendidas memorias se acuerdan".

² [Nuevas hermandades creadas en Sevilla y Madrid. (...) terminada la procesión todo es bailar y cantar, y reír bajo la serena majestad de los cielos]

soldiers hid the figure of the Virgin in a safe place in the basements. During July and the first days of August, the Sanctuary was empty and abandoned.

In those days the true Franco's icons begun: the Numantian resistance of Toledo's Alcazar, the resistance of headquarters of Simancas in Gijon and the headquarters of Montaña in Madrid. We already know that the last two were quickly taken and released by the Republican forces, militias and soldiers loyal to democracy. However, the Alcazar of Toledo's case was significantly different. In first place, there were a large number of soldiers and policemen, more than thousand; they had guns and munitions and the site's geographical conditions were excellent for defense. As we know, the Alcazar was one of the great victories of the early months of the Civil War and possibly the first victory that is still debated militarily today. The strength of the Alcazar of Toledo, colonel Moscardo's gallant attitude, the courage of the people who stayed in the buildings and especially in the building until it became a pile of waste, without surrender, was a hard hit morally and politically for the Republican side.

In the province of Jaen in the month of July, the uprising did not win. None of the military headquarters of the region, the traditionalist groups that existed, or the Falangists rose up or took to the streets. On the contrary, the Civil Guard leaders stayed away or at least "doubtful" as Francisco Cobo Romer has written. Lieutenant Colonel Pablo Iglesias, Commanders Ismael Navarro and Eduardo Nofuentes who will be fundamental in the subsequent Sanctuary plot, did not take part in the uprising. This aptitude, however, should not be taken as unconditional support for the Republican cause. The civil Governor Rios Zuñón and Alejandro Peris distrusted the Benemérita decision from the first beginning. Peris organized and led the Jaen militias in the early days to prevent the succumbing of the capital city as had happened in Seville and Córdoba.

Rios Zuñón and Alejandro Peris both had good reasons to be afraid. Since early in 1936 there had been contact between members of the Civil Guard, the Falange, the Traditional Communion, and the Provincial Federation of Farmers, even when all of them were unaware of the exact details of the possible coup and knew that the army was preparing an attack against the Republic. Inside the militia body the figures of Santiago Cortes and Rodríguez de Cueto had been profiled as potential rebels by the Republican authorities. Both men will be fundamental in the Sanctuary's poetic history. Following July 20, the situation in the capital city got worse. Alejandro Peris and his militias had the city and the Civil Guard under control, and the potential coup-makers were aware of the futility of organizing an uprising movement at that time.

The plan radically changes and considers that it is best to get as many guards as it can to the rebel zone and fight from there. The Republican authorities also became concerned with the situation. While most of the Civil Guard forces are in the capital city and in the major cities, they can easily been moved and organized for a flight to Córdoba or Granada. The arrival of columns of volunteers, militia and General Miaja's soldiers seems to fix things on the Republican side.

Miaja disarms a large number of Civil Guards and even enlists many of them to troops loyal to the government. However, the General's main goal was not to maintain the province of Jaen, but suddenly to face the National troops in Córdoba or Granada. The

situation got worse on July 28, when the column was set in Andújar; they are aware that reprisals and revenge from the Civil Guard and their families can occur at any moment. The mood among citizens and farmers was of total support to the Republican cause and only in this Andalusian city about 2000 men were enlisted to the columns.

General Miaja reached a strategic decision, he agreed that those civilian guards that were not voluntary enlisted, their families and relatives of those who were fighting in the front to defend the Republic, may take refuge in the place called "New Place," which was a few kilometers away from the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary. This decision would keep the Republican authorities calm, because it would keep potential insurgents and civilian guards seeing their lives safe from uncontrolled seizures. In early August, 65 policemen, 20 civilians, 231 armed elderly, children and women came to the "New Place" (the data is from Jaime de Urritia Echaniz, and was taken from Rodríguez Cueto).

The news of the move was seen as a great hope for the Falangists in hiding, the Civil Guard and the families of those in the province of Jaen. The situation in the capital city was getting tense. The Civil Guard had transformed the city in a defensive fortress, and the civil Governor feared an uncontrolled attack on the Benemérita. On the other hand, the most faithful sector to the uprising in the Civil Guard continues to develop an escape plan to the National lines. In mid-August a movement of 900 people to the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary was granted, as the New Palace Place was overflowing; according to Rodríguez de Cueto the Palace held 237 combatants (among them women, children, elderly and prisoners). For the trip they organized how to transport food, clothing, supplies, and sandals so they could stay there for a long period of time. While some people came in private vehicles, the majority traveled on the train until Andújar, and from there to the Sanctuary on roads provided by the Republican army. Those roads had been previously confiscated from the Civil Guard.

The move was realized in a peaceful way; there was no gunfire or attacks against the Civil Guards' families. On the contrary, when the people reached their destination, the Republic's tricolor flag fluttered over the Sanctuary. Nofuentes, as the highest authority of the Civil Guard, took charge and organized the camp. On August 23, Rodríguez de Cueto left the Sanctuary, leaving his family in there; he wanted to rescue them later. A day after Rodríguez de Cueto left, he joined García del Castillo, Reparaz and 202 Civil Guards as they abandoned the Republican side and joined the National army.

In September 1936, a month later from when the Civil Guards had arrived to the Sanctuary they had not been harassed or railed by the Republican troops. Even more, all sources -Franco supporters and Republicans- recognized exchanges and purchases with Andújar merchants. However, on September 14, Nofuentes anticipated that he could not control and stop Captain Cortes and his followers. Nofuentes traveled to Andújar and on his return on the fifteenth he was stopped by Cortes who took over. The Republican authorities ordered Cortes to release Nofuentes and to lay down the guns; however, the Civil Guards opposed. That same day the bombing of the premises by the Republican aviation started.

The Sanctuary was a fundamental and strategic place for the Republican and the National side. In opposition, the two enemy armies concentrate their troops on the other side

of the Guadalquivir River near the Lopera town where one of the most important battles took place -December 1936.

From the first week of October, specifically on the 8th and 9th when the National planes gained the desired view they started a sky bridge. Capitán Haya, who was an inventor, and a professional pilot before the war started, was the one in charge of organizing and conducting a large number of these flights, many of them in the company of Rodríguez de Cueto. His heroic deeds as a pilot and his support to the people in the Sanctuary make him a National army icon.

Starting in October, the Republican side intensified the attack on the barracks and made an aerial bombing and artillery attacks too. But, the attacks eased during the preparation of the Lopera battle. In December 1936, the international brigades tried to take the city of Lopera, which was a fundamental vertex for a possible attack on Granada or Cordoba later on. However, the fight ended with the defeat of the brigades who lost a great number of men and prestige to the point of having some accused and sentenced to death for being spies.

It would not be until April 1937 when the final siege to the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary was considered. According with the data of the Republican army provided by Antonio Cordon, the numbers of attackers was 2944, and the majority of them were members of Brigade 32.

Every heroic act requires a key moment, a “high point” as Stefan Zweing said. At that time the hero or heroes make a daring gesture or attempt the unreachable for the other men.

The highlight moment in the Santa Maria de la Cabeza Sanctuary’s siege took place on April 30th and May 1st 1937. But as a strike we have to say that, the event was interpreted in a different way by the Republican and the pro-Franco press. Today, many years later, the majority of historians agree with the following story, but the press, and the pro-Franco text and Republican opinions are also provided.

The majority of the actual historians believe that the Republican army set siege and attacked the Sanctuary with a total of 2000 men and about 10 tanks. On May 1st, they reached the Sanctuary’s buildings. Captain Cortes was severely wounded and, aware of the triviality of the defense and the danger to noncombatants, he decided to hoist the white flag, but some women opposed. Finally, the militants entered the basements and bunkers, and the fighters surrender. Cortes and others were transported in ambulances to the Hospital de la Sangre de la XVI Brigade in Andújar, where after being operated on, he died. According to pro-Franco historians and Republicans the number of survivors was the following: Military and civilian soldiers who were slightly injured or uninjured: 142; injured and bedridden combatants in the Hospital de la Sangre of Andújar were 132; a total of 274.

However, newspapers and the books published at that time tell the happening of these events in a very different way. Queipo de Llano said on the radio that the attack was with at least 5000 men, and 600 men and women survived; he does not specify how many fighters died, but he suspects that more than one hundred (Marín). Rodríguez de Cueto in 1939 says that the number of unharmed combatants was over 80, to which we must add the injured (Rodríguez de Cueto, 1939). The most dramatic story is Raparaz’s; he said that 40 soldiers came out unharmed plus many that were injured and dying, in total around 100

(Raparaz). On the Republican side, there are reports of 1200 survivors without specifying if they were soldiers or women, but the numbers were twice the number offered by Queipo de Llano; even more, the ABC newspaper still refers to the Queipo's interview and still gives data to deny it. So, if there are 1200 survivors (out of 1300 that had been between New Place and the buildings of the Sanctuary), we can ensure that there were about 300 fighters surviving. Both sides exaggerate their data: the survivors among the civilian guards and combatants range between 100 and 300. The figure is not anecdotal, as we shall see later.

Neither is the place and manner of Captain Cortes' death. According to all consulted texts, from both the Republican and the National sides, even the pro-Franco press, Queipo de Llano's interview, captain Cortes died at the Hospital de la Sangre de Andújar. In other words, he got there alive, gravely wounded, left the Sanctuary and was helped by the assailants.

After the surrender, or as the Francoists claim the occupation, what happens to the civilians and the Civil Guards who fought at the sanctuary becomes another tool for propaganda. While the National side talks about retaliation, the Republicans present proof before the Red Cross of the treatment that is being given to the detained Civil Guards, and of the settlement for their families in the province of Ciudad Real.

THE POETIC HISTORY NARRATED IN *EL SANTUARIO NO SE RINDE*

When at the end of the 1940s Arturo Ruiz-Castillo begins to write the film's script, more than ten years have passed since the events that happened in the Santuario. The majority of the Republican documents are inaccessible; however, the director and scriptwriter had fought with the side that was loyal to the Republic and therefore should have remembered all the events and news of it. He knew that much of the after-documentation was laudatory towards the role of the National army and the regime. His construction of the story is quite interesting. The main character of the film, like in other movies, will be a Nationalistic woman who confronts a handsome and brave Republican man. In this case, just like in other movies, the male protagonist is a Republican that slowly discovers his mistake and ends up accepting the Nationalistic views and fighting with the rebellious army "hasta el ultimo cartucho" (until the last cartridge). All this is also found in *Rojo y Negro* and even in *Raza*.

It is true, just like Carlos F. Heredero, Sánchez Biosca and Imanol Zumalde have observed, that never before had the National cinema presented a Republican character so complex, interesting and honest like the one Alfredo Mayo plays in this movie, the local notary. He will defend, protect and take the young protagonist despite her political thinking being diametrically opposite of his. This character is thus presented as an intelligent and humane Republican, but just like in all anti-communist propaganda films of the 1950's, all communists and Republicans must pay a high price for their conversion: sacrifice (an exception to this is *Murió hace quince años* [1954, Rafael Gil]).

It's evident that in the construction of the script, Ruiz-Castillo tried to avoid the propagandist, fascist and Nazi-affiliated elements from the early 40s. There is no appeal to Masonic or Jewish conspiracies in *El Santuario no se rinde*, neither are liberal democracies

criticized, although the brigade members do speak French.

Another important piece of information is that the fictional part of the story begins describing not the military uprising but rather the taking of arms by the militiamen from Jaen.

In *El Santuario no se rinde* reality is inverted. It can be understood by watching the movie that it is the leftist militia who has organized itself to have a revolution, and are now trying to overthrow the legitimate defenders of the Sanctuary: the rebels become the harassed, and the harassed the attackers.

Ruiz-Castillo was a cultured and educated man: painter, interior designer, writer, columnist, producer, scriptwriter and film director. His universe was influenced by foreign masterpieces and by the poetry of great authors. In all his films there is a strong vocation of authorship. In many of the files that are preserved in the Filmoteca Española and the Residencia de Estudiantes, his defense of authorship and the personal character of his works are very much perceived. It was common, then, that not only was he the director and scriptwriter of his movies, but also the set decorator and producer: a complete "cinematographic author."

The script of this film is co-authored in the following manner: literary script by Amado and shot list by Ruiz-Castillo. This shouldn't be understood as if Amado was responsible for all the dialogues and the storyline, rather that he was possibly only in charge of devising the plot while Ruiz-Castillo wrote almost all of the script. His cinematographic taste can be perceived in the film; the beginning evokes *Las inquietudes de Santi Andía* and the voiceover structuring clearly resembles *Obsesión*.

The construction of the "poetic history" of the place is quite interesting. According to Ruiz-Castillo, a series of events in the Sanctuary happened that no other historian, writer or novelist (Franquista or Republican) have talked about, the following are some of them:

The first is that the sanctuary is a refuge to which the supporters of the uprising spontaneously and dangerously flee. The protagonists go in to the sanctuary and are treated as refugees, as the "others." In order to get there, they risk their lives and come across an endless list of problems: they are persecuted by the militia, are shot at by the members of the brigade, and have to crawl to avoid getting hit by the bullets of the Republican army troops.

The second is that in the sanctuary only 38 soldiers are left. The voiceover insists in the final scenes that only 38 combatants are left alive and the rest have died. Given such a low number, the communist captain asks: "¿Dónde están los demás?" [Where are the rest?].

The third has to do with the image of the virgin of Santa María de la Cabeza. In other words, the reason why the procession began was to protect her and "save" her from the atheist troops. At the beginning of the movie, a reproduction of the image is shown without explaining that it is actually a copy because the original was lost.

The fourth one is that the date of the final victory is never mentioned; the first of May, Labor Day is a fundamental date on the Republican calendar.

The last and most significant is that Captain Cortés dies in charge rather than having left the sanctuary. His death reaffirms the motto of the defense of the place: the Civil Guard dies but never gives up.

OPINIONS OF CRITICS, THE DELEGATES, AND THE SPANISH CENSORSHIP BOARD (JUNTA DE CLASIFICACIÓN DE CENSURA)

Few Spanish directors from the 1940s painstakingly saved and well-kept their documents like Ruiz-Castillo did; today we not only have his official documents, but also personal letters, post cards, games, non-published articles, transcribed radio interviews, written thoughts...Furthermore, the Archive Archivo General de la Administración keeps a large amount of documents about his films and scripts. And while much has been lost, what remains is a treasure compared to whatever is left of other contemporary directors of Ruiz-Castillo.

The documentation preserved on *El Santuario no se rinde* is therefore very rich and complete, especially to help us to ideologically understand the movie. We have the review of at least eight provincial delegates, more than twenty newspaper critiques, and of course, the statements from the Censorship Board. In other words, there is a great amount of information.

Imanol Zumalde in *Antología crítica del cine español* states that Ruiz-Castillo was very worried about the repercussion or acceptance that the film could have from the authorities. He also states that Franco asked to see the film. The fear that Ruiz-Castillo felt was soon dissipated; the reader of the script was already talking about a movie that reflects at its best the National heroism, and all the members of the Censorship Board added that it is an invaluable portrait about a heroic event. This is how the reader, J Cunets, describes it:

Cinematographic value of the script:

Impeccable. The script is well-kept, its planning very well done, and with big possibilities from a cinematographic point of view. Literarily correct. Dramatic emotion is present and a simple diffusion in the dialogues.

Political and Social Nuance:

Politically fair. Risk is avoided by making proper differentiation amongst the defenders of both political ideologies. It is by doing this that the film is saved, with elegance and political tact, from falling into an old cliché of giving a propagandist lecture.

General statement of the reader:

After the political, literary and technique analysis, we have found nothing to be censored, quite the contrary, we feel this as a serious and well-balanced attempt at presenting a Spanish heroic deed to the film industry public.³

³ "-Valor cinematográfico del guión: Técnicamente impecable. El guión está cuidado, muy bien hecha su planificación y con posibilidades amplias desde un punto de vista cinematográfico. Literariamente correcto. Hay emoción dramática y una sencilla difusión en los diálogos.

-Matiz político y social: Políticamente, justa. Se evita el riesgo de recargar las tintas al hacer las diferenciaciones de los defensores de ambas ideas políticas. Ahí se salva, con elegancia y tacto político, el posible bache de la crudeza, el latiguillo y la trasnochada arenga propagandística.

The review of the censor Jato in the Censorship Board is more resounding: "Almost an epic." It is true that, amongst its members, there was some rejection towards the film, but it was always about something in the technique or rhythm and style of the movie, but never for its political ideology. None of the Censorship Board members ever accuses Ruiz-Castillo, Juan Mariné or any of the other team members of using the film to manifest old political affiliations. Quite the opposite, one after another, the censors and readers celebrate that they (the film team) dared to do such a piece of work. And that is the reason they awarded the film a category one rating, a step lower than the highest "National Interest" category.

When Ruiz-Castillo and the film's producers demand that its category be moved to "national interest," they write the following statement where they maintain that the film has been made with a strong national and political character in mind:

After being submitted to the Censorship Board for consideration, the film has been classified as category one. This classification supposes an acceptance that the noble intentions that encouraged the making of *El Santurio no se rinde*, where it was hoped to praise the spiritual Spanish values through one of the most heroic and exciting episodes of our Crusade, was indeed accomplished. The spiritual and artistic quality of the movie, its moral background and the values it entails has moved us to petition from V.I., that it be declared of National Interest.

The *Junta* convenes again and the film is elevated unanimously to "National Interest" category. The members yet again insist on the edifying character of the film. Furthermore, the *Junta* takes only one day in resolving and answering the statement, something that is quite shocking of such department. The changes of the *Junta* would regularly take weeks or months; therefore such a positive and fast decision was done because the film was ideologically akin to them.

All the delegates, whose statements are still preserved, maintain that the film is a work that defends and portrays the events in a laudatory light. None of them questions or sees resentment or political nuances in the film. Of this the delegate from Huelva writes: "taking to the theater one of the most extraordinary epics of the war of liberation, with all fidelity and patriotic sense." The delegate from Avila writes: "jump-starting from a true historical event, it keeps an unquestionable accuracy;" and the one from Granada says: "it is an excellent national production, magnificently attained and because of the importance of its subject and for having evoked such a historical event, they deserve only praises."

It is true than some delegates complain and disagree with the film, but this is due to the technique, that turns out to be so poor and paltry in rhythm, that they feel that it is too slow or that the production is not on a par with such a heroic deed. The delegate from

-Informe general de lector:

Analizada técnica, literaria y políticamente no encontramos nada censurable, antes al contrario estimamos fue un intento serio, solvente y equilibrado de presentar una gesta española al gran público del cine".

Salamanca wrote: "The producer's intentions have, probably, not been on a par with their wishes. (...) And that is why the film with its realism and beautiful photography, manages to touch but not excite"; and the delegate from Cáceres wrote: "It is considered that the essential dramatic quality of the historical event, one of the most prominent of the National Crusade, remains insignificant due to the limitations of the script, devaluating all the emotion from the defense."

The provincial delegates and the Censorship Board coincide in feeling that the film is not a drama or historical film but rather it belongs to a new genre: the military epic. This term is found in the documentation presented by the producers, and that is how Ruiz-Castillo refers to the film in interviews and private documents such as personal diaries and letters (Filmoteca Española library). The film, claims the director, is the story of an "epic deed." Critics share the same opinion; the vast majority of articles and reviews present the film as being loyal to the regime. All of them explain and praise the Nationalistic and patriotic vision of it.

It can be summarized that of all the censors, evaluators, readers, critics and delegates that saw and wrote about the film, none of them found a dissonant element with the official approach of the regime. Furthermore, all of them repeatedly praised the film's ideology. The delegate from Oviedo, who assesses the film as "successfully magnificent," explains the absence of Asturian audience:

This movie has been well-received by the public, something that would have been totally different if its showing would have been closer to the end of our Crusade. The older generation public is already tired of movies of this kind...⁴

Likewise, in more than twenty newspaper articles and reviews, contemporary critics and press praise how well it portrays a historical truth. On February 18, 1950, *El Adelantado* said, "it offers a firm and emphatic view of the event. [ofrece una visión firme y rotunda del suceso.]" On the second of March of 1950, the *Baleares* newspaper wrote: "this comes to pay a debt that the film industry owed to a handful of Civil Guards that locked themselves in the hermitage...[viene a pagar una deuda que en lo cinematográfico, se debía a aquel puñado de Guardias Civiles que se encerraron en la Ermita...]" Also that day, in the *Correo de Mallorca* "It was not easy to evoke that glorious episode that during the Liberation war, in the Sanctuary of Santa Maria de la Cabeza, was brought up to life. However, it was done with extraordinary discretion and tact by Arturo Ruiz-Castillo."⁵

⁴ "Esta película ha sido acogida por el público, de un modo completamente distinto al que hubiese sido si su proyección coincidiese con fechas más recientes de la terminación de nuestra Cruzada. El sector del público correspondiente a los mayores está ya cansado de películas de este matiz ..."

⁵ "No era fácil evocar aquel episodio glorioso que durante la guerra de Liberación, en el Santuario de Santa María de la Cabeza, cobró vida. Sin embargo, la tara ha sido realizada con extraordinaria discreción por Arturo Ruiz-Castillo".

THE MYTHS OF *EL SANTUARIO NO SE RINDE*

Spanish cinema, like very few others, is a cinema of survivors and heroes. Antonio Lara wonderfully explained it in this heroic act (García Fernández):

The filmmakers born into this uncomfortable bull's skin deserve our most sincere admiration-all of them: good, bad and even the out-of-necessity mediocre, and let's not forget the few noble authors that are around- because they have fought and continue fighting against all odds, possessed of a strange, incurable obsession, that drives them to give up other artistic fields that are economically more stable, to dedicate themselves to the passion of exposing celluloid strips that holds strange and surprising stories.

One of these heroes is Juan Mariné, photography director, inventor, contributor, restorer, and even today works with dedication in the basements of ECAM (Escuela de Cine del Audiovisual de la Comunidad de Madrid) and welcomes with fondness the students who seek advice from him. Mariné directed the photography of *El Santuario no se rinde*, and for that reason, I interviewed him. He assured me that they had tried to do the film ideologically softer. I am convinced that he spoke from the heart and with certainty. However, the film contains the most exaggerated pieces of information about the defense of the Sanctuary of Santa María de la Cabeza. No other text or work from the postwar is more laudatory towards the figure of Cortés and the soldiers' bravery. Let's see some of this information.

It is true that when somebody reproduces a historical event, they must change and mix up the facts in order to build a good plot. The plot, however, that Amado and Ruiz-Castillo make ends up being completely unsustainable. According to the film, the two protagonists flee and, fearful of the militia, they seek refuge in the Sanctuary. This fact is historically incorrect since nobody went in voluntarily to the Sanctuary after the organized convoy. But, most important is that the facts of the events are manipulated. By not explaining that Republicans and Civil Guards have negotiated the situation of the place, it appears to be a new Alcázar de Toledo, when in fact they should not be compared. During the first days of the "siege," the Sanctuary of Santa Maria is neither attacked nor bombed. This, in the movie, is narrated quite differently since it explains that the Civil Guards are "able" to escape.

Until the release of the film, and even after it, all articles and books published claimed that at least more than a hundred soldiers survived, while the movie mentions the survival of just 38 men. The message is clear; they try to show that the soldiers have been brave and courageous and have not given up. Ruiz-Castillo's wise move is that the surrender, which completely destroyed the heroes' myth, disappears from the film because instead of more than 200 soldiers surrendering to the "Republican enemy," only 38 are left to do so in the film. The number of 38 soldiers is 5 times less than what it really was. Furthermore, this is reinforced by the fact that in the film there are decomposed and wounded soldiers. To go even further, in an excellent script idea, Ruiz-Castillo shows the bravery of the soldiers who, even after being captured, have not given up, and so when the Republican

captain yells and orders them around, none of them obeys, and they keep themselves proudly in place, moving only when a seriously injured National sergeant orders them to.

The same as above happens with the death of Captain Cortés. All consulted texts, both Republican and National, assert that the captain died in the Hospital de la Sangre de Andújar after being treated for wounds there. In other words, he either surrendered or was captured. This is denied by the film and is further affirmed when the hero is seen falling over the sign that says that the Civil Guard dies before giving up. That motto was an emblem of fascism. As is well known, for Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism surrendering was considered a great offense, and it meant repudiation and capital punishment for doing so. That is why the Russian soldiers would shoot at their fellow soldiers who were withdrawing from Stalingrad, and also why the Nazi marshal Paulus began yelling that he had been captured and not surrendered when Russian troops entered in his bunker. In the same manner, Falangism and Fascism considered surrendering a complete disgrace. Urrutia and all the Francoist and Falangist writers, maintain that Captain Cortés was apprehended, but they insist that he tried to commit suicide by drinking water to further worsen his wounds.

Likewise, it is quite interesting how Arturo Ruiz-Castillo makes the selection of the material he uses to present the attack on the Nationalist refuge. As we have seen before, the majority of the attackers in the film are French. This is indeed a historical fact since international members formed the XVI Brigade; many of them had fought, a few months before, in the battle of Lopera. But, it is also true that in April 1937 important Republican figures, such as Miguel Hernández, were present in that same place. Despite the fact that including the poem that the poet had read to the besieged through loudspeakers on April 14, 1937 would have gone completely against the purpose of the film, it is nonetheless quite shocking that the fact that a prominent figure was part of the Republican army at that time was not mentioned in the film.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have tried to relate the siege of the Sanctuary of Santa María de la Cabeza that is shown in *El Santuario no se rinde* and to compare it with the texts, articles, novels and stories that were published before the film was done. The film not only does not present the story from a less-propagandistic point of view, rather it exaggerated by enlarging the merits and virtues of the defenders of the Sanctuary.

El Santuario no se rinde is the only work that maintains that the great majority of soldiers died defending the Sanctuary; it is also the only text or story where Captain Cortés dies in his command position, and also the only one that maintains that the number of survivors is 38.

The story and the film were set out as a praise of the Civil Guard and their motto: the Civil Guard dies but never surrenders. To keep up this idea, Arturo Ruiz-Castillo and José María Amado ignored the available documentation on the matter, and instead made up events that manipulated and changed completely the historical events and their meaning.

Translation by Melissa Morín and Alicia Zavala

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Editors' note:

In order to facilitate the reading of the text, during the translation of the original article, all quotations in Spanish from the film's script have been translated and presented only in English.