

The photojournalist as a myth: Robert Capa and Agustí Centelles against the backdrop of the Spanish Civil War

*El fotoperiodista como mito: Robert
Capa y Agustí Centelles ante la guerra
civil española*

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Eighty years after the modernisation of the myth of the war photographer through the figure of Robert Capa during the Spanish Civil War, this article will examine its development and the process of mythification, drawing parallels with Agustí Centelles during the transition to democracy. From that period onwards, media comparisons between the two have been constant, overshadowing the other professionals who covered the conflict, which was ground-breaking from the perspective of visual communication.

KEYWORDS: Photojournalism, Robert Capa, Agustí Centelles, Spanish Civil War, Myth.

Ochenta años después de la modernización del mito del fotógrafo de guerra con la figura de Robert Capa durante la guerra civil española, analizamos su evolución y el proceso de mitificación por analogía en torno a Agustí Centelles en la Transición. Desde entonces la comparación mediática entre ambos es constante, eclipsando al resto de profesionales que cubrieron aquel conflicto, innovador desde la perspectiva de la comunicación visual.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Fotoperiodismo, Robert Capa, Agustí Centelles, guerra civil española, Mito.

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THE CAMERA GOES TO WAR

War has been a constant feature throughout history and it has been depicted in the arts at particular times, using different techniques and with differing agendas. The medium of photography was no exception, although, as Monegal and Torres (2004) have shown, it soon became clear that the result would be different from classical pictorial representations of war.

The first photographs of war taken using daguerreotypes were of the 1846 conflict between the USA and Mexico over the occupation of Texas. But it was the Crimean War (1853-1856) that was considered to be the first in which the press showed an interest in photography, publishing images taken by Roger Fenton (Sousa, 2003, p. 32). It is worth noting that, according to Freund (1999, p. 97), some of them were censored so as not to frighten the families of the soldiers. In 1863, over 300 photographers captured the American Civil War on camera, although “many fell into oblivion because their photos were attributed to Matthew G. Brady” (Newhall, 2002, pp. 88-89). From 1898 onwards, during the Cuban War of Independence, the American mass media made “abundant use of the images, including forged, staged, and unreliable photographs, thus contributing to the fever of war and to the circulation of the newspapers themselves” (Sousa, 2003, p. 34).

It was in the context of the new century, as Lebeck and Von Dewitz assert (2002), that photojournalism as narration developed in illustrated magazines, with the images being organized both chronologically and thematically, usually provided by a photographer whose name began to be included at that time. With regard to the content, the pages were filled with disasters, leisure activities, panoramic views of life in the cities, and technological and sporting achievements.

Among of the mythological creations constructed by the mass media, some related to the profession of journalism itself. One of the most popular was that of the war correspondent, usually imagined—thanks to cinematic and literary fiction—as a photographer or operator of a television camera. Barthes states in *Mitologías* [Mythologies] (2000), that the myth is a message, a means of signifying. If we consider the war photojournalist as a myth, the message is a strong, adventurous, elegant, seductive man, who is constantly risking his life.

The Cuban War of Independence was significant for photojournalism because, as Gervais (2010) points out, it saw the birth of the myth of the war photographer in the press, evolving “from the status of artist to photographer”, and the construction of a sequential narrative of war, starting with images of the front and ending with the transport of the wounded. Gervais examines the work of James Hare (1856-1946), who was sent by *Collier's* to cover his first war, although he also sent photographs to other American newspapers and European illustrated magazines such as the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* or *L'Illustration*. According to Roth (1997, p. 227): “His coverage of the Spanish American War elevated him to the top ranks of the photojournalism of his day” (Gervais, 2010). The worldwide fame that Hare enjoyed a century ago bears no relation to current knowledge of him; a fact that makes him an obvious example of Barthes' (2000) idea that there are no eternal myths, since mythology can only have a historical foundation.

This article was borne out of a recurring question: why, eighty years on, has the profession of photojournalism in the Spanish Civil War been reduced to just one or, at most, two individuals? This research focuses on the figure of the war photographer as a mythical creation of the media. Its objective is to examine the causes of the modernization of this myth in the context of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), when Robert Capa was named as the world's best photographer. The public figure of this photojournalist, whose identity was fictitious, and his presence for several decades as the sole point of reference will be considered based on a bibliographic review, which is necessary in order to show his influence on the process of the creation and popularization of the photographer known as the “Spanish Capa” or the “Catalan Capa”, Agustí Centelles (1909-1985). This work will undertake, for the first time, a comparative analysis of the two; at the same time, it will reveal previously unpublished evidence concerning the process of Centelles' mythification, based on an analysis of journalistic resources comprising 52 articles from the Spanish press (newspapers and magazines) published between 1978 and 1982.² These form part of the study of this

² Works relating to exhibitions and books on Centelles published during the same period have also been consulted, as well as three television pro-

public figure, started by the author with the editing of his memoirs and her research into his period of exile in France.

ROBERT CAPA: THE ENDURING MYTH OF THE MODERN WAR PHOTOGRAPHER

From a communications perspective, it can be said that the Spanish Civil War was widely covered by the global media, set a standard for the Second World War, and saw a pioneering use of radio and sound film for propaganda. In the golden age of photojournalism, it was the battle in which the camera became the protagonist in representations of the war. The press was at its peak and in both foreign and national publications, the photographer's bravery and the reference to the exclusivity of his images formed part of the journalistic narrative (Adam, Antebi, Ferré, & González, 2015).

According to Colombo (1997), a new relationship emerged between photographer, camera and tragedy:

The human point of view appears (participation, passion, compassion), which connects the author with the event, and the technical point of view (which also includes the *aesthetic vision*), which connects the author with his instrument and which is expressed in the frame, in the contrast, in the choice of the *perfect* moment and in the *beauty* of the opportunity (p.140).

On a technical note, it is worth noting that small cameras were being used for the first time in war, although, according to López Mondejar: “the almost complete absence of universal standard negatives meant that many photographers were forced to revert to their old plate cameras” (1997, p. 299).

The worldwide media sent correspondents to what appeared to be a *coup d'état* that would shortly be put down by the government. Meanwhile, photojournalists from Madrid and Barcelona, hubs of

grammes, one of which concentrated solely on Centelles. A representative sample of the material will be cited here.

media production and distribution, took to the streets camera in hand from July 1936 onwards.

The working conditions of these photojournalists during the conflict are a key aspect that has not been studied in any detail. It is important to move away from the supposed solitary hero and to understand that they would have been granted permission to work, and were subject to the control and censorship of the authorities, as well as having to respect the laws enacted by the government in December 1936 which meant that they were obliged—among other things—to register any photographic equipment in their possession (Adam, Antebi, Ferré & González, 2015; Hernández Pin, 2010).

Of the dozens of foreign and Spanish professionals who covered this war—most of them in the republican zone—only one became well known: Andrei Friedman (1913-1954),³ known internationally as Robert Capa. Towards the end of 1938, the English magazine *Picture Post* proclaimed him “the world’s best war photographer” for his report on the Battle of the Segre, which followed his reports on events in Madrid, Aragon and the Battle of the Ebro, among others (Whelan, 2007). He was 25 years old and this was his first war. Thus, the myth of the war photographer was modernized through a media that was in a constant state of technological development and a public that was fascinated by images reproduced technically in mass society.

Unlike Hare, the modern myth was born out of a fictitious identity. The pseudonym Robert Capa was created in 1934 by Friedman and his companion Gerta Pohorillye (1910-1937)—who would later change her name to Gerda Taro—with the intention of selling their photos at a better price using the name of this fabricated North American photographer (Schaber, 2006; Whelan, 2003). Their careers were in their infancy and as well as using this name, they used one another’s equipment. Furthermore Friedman soon monopolized the pseudonym—which later became his name—and Taro died prematurely, in 1937. As a result, it is now difficult to attribute many of the images taken during the civil war to one or the other.

³ Biographical works about him are: his official biography, Whelan (2003), the work by Kershaw (2003) and the memoirs of Capa himself (2009).

The couple, which arrived in Barcelona as correspondents in July 1936, also went to other regional capitals such as Malaga, Valencia and Madrid. In September, in Andalusia, Capa put his name to what would become the iconic image of the conflict: the picture of a militiaman taken at the moment at which he has been supposedly killed at the front; *Falling Soldier*. The image was published for the first time in the French weekly publication *VU*⁴ and immortalised in the North American publication *Life*.⁵

Knightley started the debate around this image (1976). It has lasted several decades and culminated in recent years. Doménech's contribution (2005, pp. 379-449) is key to understanding that the controversy had no academic basis until the time of its analysis.⁶ As well as considering whether it was staged or spontaneous, the debate revolved around the location, an element discussed by Susperregui (2016), while Arroyo (2010) called into question its authorship. Finally, Lavoie (2017) has summarised the various contributions.

The main conclusions were that the picture was staged, the person depicted is not the militiaman whose name was reported in the global press in the late 1990s, and it was not taken at Cerro Muriano but in Espejo. The extensive debate on the most reproduced iconic image of the Spanish Civil War and the first success that the young Hungarian capitalized on has, academically, come to an end without having damaged its popularity.

Capa's professional career during the 1930s also covered the conflict in China and, of course, the Second World War, immortalized in his "slightly out of focus" report on D-Day, which was the inspiration for the title of his memoirs. After 1945, his fame spread to many contemporary reporters and his lifestyle meant that he managed to make graphic journalism somewhat sexy and glamorous (Kershaw, 2003).

However, since 2014, the acclaimed series of images of the Normandy Landings has been called into question with the investigation

4 [La guerre civile en Espagne \(1936, 23 September\), *VU*.](#)

5 [Death in Spain: The Civil War has taken 500 000 lives in one year \(1937, 12 July\), *Life*.](#)

6 [As well as a chapter in a thesis, it was turned into the documentary *La sombra del Iceberg* \[The Shadow of the Iceberg'\] \(2010\).](#)

Alternate History: Robert Capa on D-Day, an unfinished project that will need to be followed in order to find out whether it will put an end to the long-standing myth that still persists.

The culmination of the myth of the modern and committed war photojournalist was reached after Capa's death in 1954 when he stepped on a mine at the front during the conflict in Indochina, while his popularity as a public figure is the result of his brother Cornell's wish to protect and preserve his legacy, with the creation in 1974 of the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York.

With regard to the Spanish Civil War, André Friedman—by that time already Robert Capa—as a photographer of the conflict, was the foundation of the myth which was publicly created in 1938 and still exists eighty years later, overshadowing other correspondents; in particular those native to Spain. His fame together with Francoist repression erased those who worked in the republican zone, with the exception of those who embraced the regime. Thus, names such as the Madrid-born Alfonso Sánchez Portela (1902-1990), Luis Ramon Marin (1884-1944) and José Ma. Díaz Casariego (1897-1967), crucial for our understanding of the history of Spanish photojournalism from decades prior to the war, had gone almost unnoticed as photographers of the conflict until 2010, when the project *Héroes sin armas* [Heroes without weapons] appeared. Meanwhile, the media appears to have been unable to report on it without referring to the myth: “La historia de los otros Robert Capa” [The story of the other Robert Capas], reported *El País*. A year later, the subject of the Hungarian photographer emerged once again with the discovery of a new photographic legacy of the civil war: “Guillermo Zúñiga: ha nacido otro Capa” [Guillermo Zúñiga: another Capa is born] reported the newspaper *Público*. These are a few recent examples of a phenomenon of mimicry that has affected one key figure for decades, the so-called “Spanish Capa” or “Catalan Capa”.

AGUSTÍ CENTELLES: THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL MYTH, FORTY YEARS AFTER THE END OF THE WAR

In early 1978, Agustí Centelles was a grandfather on the verge of retirement after decades spent working as a photographer in industry and advertising. The reporter from Spain's republican period had long

since been left behind. At first, his photography was self-taught, until he attended a course at the Agrupació Fotogràfica de Catalunya [Catalan Photographic Association]. In 1927, while working in the studio of the newspaper *El Dia Gráfico*, he met the reporter Josep Badosa (1893-1937), who would be his teacher in the field of photojournalism (Centelles, 2009). Centelles worked with him until 1932, when he began working as an assistant to Josep M. Sagarra (1885-1959) and Pablo Luis Torrents (1893-1966), two of the best-known photojournalists at that time. In 1934, he began to work for himself; a year later, his work appeared regularly in the Barcelona press and he worked on some projects with the press in Madrid.

Following the coup d'état in July 1936, he continued to work as a photojournalist, covering the rear-guard in Barcelona and the Aragon front as part of the first journalistic expeditions. However, in 1937 his situation changed radically when he was called up to serve in the Comisariado de Guerra in Lerida [War Committee], where he continued to develop his work in the propaganda section. As a result, from then on his work cannot be considered as that of an accredited photojournalist like any other, since he was a soldier under military discipline.

In addition, it is essential to point out that in December 1937 he joined the DEDIDE (Departamento Especial de Información del Estado) [Special Department for State Information] and later, in March 1938, he was appointed Head of the Photographic Studio of the SIM (Servicio de Investigación Militar) [Military Investigation Service] of the Republican government (Centelles, 2009; Ferré, 2005b). In January 1939 he was evacuated from Barcelona with the staff of the SIM, taking with him a suitcase containing over 4000 negatives.

After crossing the border, he was detained in February in the concentration camp at Argelès-sur-Mer, and between March and September in the concentration camp at Bram, about which he left a personal diary (Centelles, 2009) and around 600 images showing the daily lives of the refugees. This legacy (Ferré, 2005b, 2010) is one of the most unique testimonies in European concentration camp literature, since it is exceptional for its inclusion of photographs as well as text. With regard to his career path as a photojournalist, it represents his journey from photojournalist to documentary-maker. He was freed in

return for starting work as a photographer in a studio in Carcassonne, where he lived until 1944, when he returned to Catalonia. Before leaving, he left his negatives with some French friends.

Months after the death of Francisco Franco, during the transition to democracy, he travelled back to retrieve this material. This coincided with the beginnings of the debate around the photograph of the militiaman and the ICP's early efforts to promote Capa's legacy.

The figure of Agustí Centelles as the "Catalan Capa" or the "Spanish Capa"⁷ therefore emerged as a stereotype created from a mythical reference which, as will be shown, was also fabricated by specific actors: the media, within the specific historical and political context of the reclaiming and rediscovery of the past, forty years after the success of Capa, who died in 1954. We can pinpoint the public discovery in February 1978, following the opening of his first exhibition, held in Barcelona, when the various strands of the media (newspapers, magazine, radio and television) covered the story of the photographer and his work.

The first article found with a reference to the "Catalan Capa" was written by J. Moya Angeler, possibly the source of the nickname, and published in the magazine *Destino* on 23 March 1978 with the subheading: "En los años 30 este fotógrafo, el Kappa [Capa] catalán, fue pionero del Nuevo concepto de reportaje" [In the 1930s this photographer, the Catalan Kappa [Capa], was a pioneer of the new concept of reporting]. Just one month later, *Cambio 16*⁸ defined his photos as "real gems that have earned him the nickname the *Spanish Capa*". In June, the magazine *Flash Foto* also referred to him as the "Catalan Capa". As late as December, the magazine *Papel Especial* dedicated an article "to the Spanish Robert Capa, as he has been known lately". Following this initial period that we can pinpoint to 1978, most

⁷ This is not considered to be an appropriate place to discuss Spanish and Catalan identity and all that goes with it. In the case of Centelles, his statements and the autobiographical documents studied, as well as his political militancy in the PSUC, suggest a clear belief in support of Catalanism.

⁸ With reference to periodical publications of the end of the Francoist era, and the transition to democracy.

journalistic articles on Centelles referred to Capa, either by his alias or in some other way; evidence of the media as creators of the myth around this Spanish photographer. The most paradoxical example is from 1982 in the newspaper *ABC*, advertising an exhibition of the work of the Catalan photographer using the photograph *Falling Soldier*.

The fact that Centelles was present to narrate his own testimony also contributed greatly to his rapid rise in popularity through the media.⁹ That said, it is essential to note that the process of mythification of this photographer was based on an analogy; i.e. Robert Capa already existed and, as we have seen, is considered to have been the foundation of the myth.

However, Centelles had something that made him unique and that distinguished him, not only from Capa but from the other photojournalists of the war: his suitcase; a symbolic object that set him apart from the stereotype and meant he could be viewed as a mythical figure in his own right. The anecdote of the suitcase in which he carried the negatives into exile while fleeing the repression of the Francoist regime is undoubtedly the best known of his life. The discovery of this archive also saw the emergence of a visual heritage relating to an essential period in Spanish contemporary history. It represented the metaphor of a journey, not only of the photographer, but also of a part society that had been silenced for several decades. References to the suitcase are common in the press articles consulted, with even Centelles himself recognizing that: “the truth is that the story of the suitcase with the archives has been somewhat mythified” (Ministry of Culture, 1983, p. 94).

Following this first stage —when the reclaiming of the legacy of Centelles was a current news story— the comparison between them did not disappear. Instead, its mythification entered a second phase. This phase may be called ‘institutionalization’, and its beginnings can be traced to 1983, when the Spanish Ministry of Culture published the catalogue of the first large exhibition dedicated to the civil war. As part of this, Centelles was interviewed and introduced as the “Spanish Capa”.

⁹ The programme *Imágenes* [Images], an interview broadcast by the channel TVE in 1979, is of great importance.

The use of this name by Spain's highest cultural authority, together with the fact that other types of public and private organizations in Catalonia and the rest of Spain defined him in relation to Capa, meant that the nickname was established and maintained over time.

But what was Centelles' opinion of Capa? In the media sources consulted just one reference was found, in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*:

— F. Pujol: Is Capa's photo of the militiaman falling backwards, dead, authentic?

— A. Centelles: No, it was set up. (Quickly, justifying it). But that doesn't mean anything, because it has a strength that is (raises voice) tremendous!

It is not surprising that the photographer appeals to the image's expression and justifies its staging, or what he calls setting up, since his own best-known photograph *Guàrdies d'assalt al carrer Diputació*, taken on 19 July 1936, was also staged. Thus, as Ferré states (2005a, pp. 18-26), Centelles was ahead of Capa in the previsualization or conscious creation of an iconic image, which he carried out as though capturing an instant in battle when the battle was over. In addition, with this image it is important to distinguish between the one that appears in the negative and the one that has passed into history. This is due to the use of reframing—which varies the number of subjects and the depth of the field—meaning that we find ourselves looking at a new image, which is reproduced and forms part of the collective imagination.

TWO PHOTOGRAPHERS AND A NEVER-ENDING CONNECTION

After forty years of the photographers being linked to one another and the joint dramatization of their success, there have been no studies that have carried out a comparative analysis of the two.

Leaving aside their private lives (although from an educational point of view their experiences were different, with the Hungarian photographer briefly attending university while Centelles barely attended school) the two worked in a profession that allowed them to belong to the category of the 'self-made man' who rises through the social ranks on his own merit, representing the triumph of the working

classes. In the case of the Catalan photographer, because he came from a poor family and, in the case of Capa, because prior to the summer of 1936, he was scraping by as an exile in Paris.

To this first commonality we may add their anti-fascist ideology and commitment to the republican cause during the civil war, the event that catapulted them into their careers, with both achieving the dissemination of their work on a global scale, as well as the creation of an early iconic work that would remain in the collective imagination and be reproduced for decades afterwards.

But the ways in which they entered the war were very different: Capa arrived from Paris as a correspondent, in common with many others who came to Spain. He was a reporter, sent to report on a foreign situation, although he had travelled previously for other professional assignments. On the other hand, Centelles and the other Spanish photojournalists became *de facto* war photographers, without the option to choose and with the additional plight of a fratricidal war that would affect them deeply. The end of the war was also different for each of them: after 1939, the Catalan photographer was prevented from resuming his work as a photojournalist, while Capa continued to work as a war photographer until his death.

To the mythification of the photographers—now viewed as personalities—two fetishized objects must be added. The first, intimately related to the profession, is the Leica camera: the legendary equipment used by both men during the civil war. In the case of Capa, although often associated with its use, he only used it (and not exclusively) until 1938, when he switched to the brand Contax (Whelan, 2003). With regard to Centelles, he claimed in the press during the 1960s that it was his ideal camera, and some articles stated that he was the first photographer to use it in Barcelona, adding weight to the innovativeness of his character (Bonet, 1979; Pons Prades, 1980). Despite the media claims, other Catalan professionals had used it before him and documents relating to the *Agrupación de Periodistas* [Association of Journalists] during the war clearly show that he owned five cameras, four of which were plate cameras.¹⁰

¹⁰ Nettel (6½x9, number 395955), Nettel (9x12, number 331793), Voigt-

The second fetishized object is the suitcase: the item that has grown in importance in recent years. As we have seen, it was this item that made Centelles unique and was key to his mythification. However, decades later, in 2007 fate intervened and this object fell into Capa's orbit when a suitcase containing 4 500 negatives of the civil war arrived at the ICP. The "Mexican suitcase"¹¹ contained work by Capa, Taro and David Seymour (1911-1956) (known as Chim) and re-ignited the legend, not just of Capa but also of Taro, as well as revealing Chim's contribution to the general public.

Thus, when the exhibition arrived in Barcelona in 2011, it was almost inevitable that Capa and Centelles would be linked again. And indeed it was once again the press who fuelled the myth, reporting a meeting of the two men during the Battle of Teruel when a photograph of Centelles appeared in a negative found in the Mexican suitcase.¹² The relationship between the two was still occupying space in the media the following year, when it was reported that Capa had been captured in a photograph taken by the Catalan photographer during the farewell to the International Brigades in Barcelona. In 2013 another person was added to the myth: Gerda Taro. "Las relaciones desconocidas de Centelles, Capa y Taro durante la guerra civil" [The undiscovered relationships between Centelles, Capa and Taro during the civil war], was the title of an article in the newspaper *El Diario*, written for the opening of an exhibition about Centelles. The body of the article shows these relationships to be non-existent, since it proves that they simply happened to be in the same place.

It is obvious that Centelles, Capa and the photographers from Barcelona and Madrid or other countries would have found themselves

lander (4½x6, number 872694), PresmanGraflex (8½x10, number 111342) and Leica (24x36, number 133931).

¹¹ The collection is housed in the ICP:http://museum.icp.org/mexican_suitcase/catala/historia.html. An exhibition was organized in New York, later travelling to different cities.

¹² Despite this, when a report was published in the magazine *Life* on 24 January, 1938, the editor reframed the image, leaving out the Catalan photojournalist.

in the same place at times during the war, such as on the Aragon front or in Barcelona. The presence of numerous professional journalists at a newsworthy event is intrinsic to the routines of production and agenda setting, both in war and in peace, whether in the 1930s or next week. As a consequence, many of the images of the civil war, both of the front and the rear-guard, depict the same events and the same people, and even from almost the same framing. The fact that eighty years later the media publish articles such as those mentioned above is clear evidence of their discursive reductionism and in the case studied here, of their perpetuation of the myth of the photographer as a personality, whether that is Capa or Centelles.

Thus, while Robert Capa persists as an international myth, in Spain the importance of Centelles is undeniable, to the extent that he has achieved the same degree of fame as Capa.¹³ Since the transition to democracy, his work has erased two generations of Catalan reporters who were active during the war, with the additional issue that he was much younger. As a result, it appears that the Catalan tradition of photojournalism did not begin until 1934, with his appearance on the scene. Nothing could be further from the historical reality, or from the existence of Brangulí, Merletti, Pérez de Rozas and Sagarra, photojournalists from the beginning of the century. At the same time, reducing the visualisation of the civil war to the work of the archive kept by Centelles as has, generally speaking, happened, excludes all of the fronts and places to which he did not go, some of which are of great significance. These include the Battle of the Ebro and, incredibly from a historiographical point of view, the Madrid front. As a consequence, the photojournalists who worked in those places are also excluded.

CONCLUSION

During the Spanish Civil War, a conflict that is a reference point for the study of visual communication in the twentieth century, the myth of the

¹³ Agustí Centelles' name reappeared in the media following the sale of his archive by his descendants in 2009. This sparked an unprecedented political-cultural controversy which is worthy of a detailed study in itself.

war photographer was modernized in the form of Robert Capa. Despite the large numbers of photojournalists who have worked and continue to work in war zones, eighty years later the media continues to fuel what is now a long-standing myth that still persists and paradoxically, grew out of a mere fabrication.

This has taken place on an international level, as well as within Spain's borders, where it persists as a reference point and is constantly reinforced. As a result, every time the work of any other photojournalist who worked during the civil war is published, the media invariably invoke Capa. Meanwhile, the latest contributions in research continue to undermine the perfect story around this figure, while the latest studies—both in relation to the photograph *Falling Soldier* and the D-Day series—have yet to diminish his popularity with the general public.

In addition, from the time of the transition to democracy in Spain, the myth of this Hungarian photographer has been the basis of the creation, also through the media, of the so-called “Spanish or Catalan Capa”: the photographer Agustí Centelles, a figure who has also been mythified through the symbolic object of the suitcase-archive and who for several decades has overshadowed various generations of graphic reporters, both from Barcelona and from Madrid.

Far from disappearing, the link between the two has been reignited in the media in recent years, following the discovery of the “Mexican suitcase” and its inclusion in Capa's story. This has reinforced the legend surrounding him, leaving behind the distinctive feature that for almost 50 years had made the Catalan photographer unique.

From a global perspective, and after eight decades, it appears that the photographic heritage of the Spanish Civil War continues, unfortunately, to be reduced to a correspondent and a Spanish photojournalist. It is, therefore, historically unjust and culturally impoverishing that absolutely nothing is known—and not just at a popular level—of the dozens of professionals who documented the conflict. In this sense, as has been developed in the course of this article, it is clear that the media was and continues to be responsible for the reduction of a profession to two individuals, who have been converted into personalities. It also clearly demonstrates the lack of research and interest in the history of

photography in Spain, which, if it existed, would reach public opinion through the media. The rich past of war photojournalism during the period 1936-1939 would then be examined from the perspective of the plurality of actors, in order to shape a complex collective memory that is closer to reality.

Finally, despite the fact that the two have been linked over the decades by numerous published sources, and according to the testimony of Agustí Centelles, he and Robert Capa never knew each other personally.

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