

THE IMPORTATION OF ITALIAN SCULPTURES TO PORTUGAL: THE CASE OF THE DELLA ROBBIA

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The Portuguese bibliographical sources on the Della Robbia artworks date back to the late 19th century, when various publications identified these pieces, drawing attention to the issues of their conservation and underlining their high plastic quality in the context of the history of the Renaissance sculpture in Portugal.¹ Years later, it was the foreign authors who started to show interest in the Portuguese Robbiana, especially by associating these works with the Florentine sculptor Andrea Sansovino (1467-1529). Such was the case of George Huntley, Guido Batelli and Emilio Lavagnino in the various studies published during the 1930s and 1940s.²

Thanks to the thorough study conducted by Giancarlo Gentilini and published in the 1990s, it is now clear that other Florentine artists had used the technique consisting in glazing terracotta sculptures, including Sansovino, as recently

¹ Parts of this chapter are the English version of a recently published article: “Della Robbia em Portugal: o caso da coleção de D. Fernando II”, in *Artis – Revista de História da Arte e Ciências do Património*, n.º 2, Lisboa, Ed. Caleidoscópio, 2014, pp. 80-87. This chapter was developed in the framework of ROBBIANA – della Robbia sculptures in Portugal (PTDC/HIS-HEC/116742/2010) and DigITile Library: Tiles and Ceramics on line (PTDC/EAT-EAT/117315/2010), both research projects funded by FCT. It was firstly presented at Bologna University at the International Seminar “Dialogo artistico tra Italia e Portogallo” (a cura di Marinella Pigozzi). Acknowledgments to Sílvia Ferreira and Susana Varela Flor. Hanna Pieta-Cândido for the translation. This chapter is dedicated to Pedro Dias, who studied deeply Della Robbia sculptures in Portugal.

Cf. Joaquim de VASCONCELOS, “Conferências sobre a Exposição de Arte Ornamental”, in *Arte Portuguesa*, Revista mensal de Bellas-Artes, n.º 9, Porto, Typographia Occidental, 1882, pp. 78-79 e “Medalhão em Faiança”, in *Arte Religiosa em Portugal*, vol. II, Fasc. n.º 14, Porto, Emilio Biel & C^ª. Editores, 1914, pp. 210-211.

² George HUNTLEY, *Andrea Sansovino – Sculptor and Architect of the Italian Renaissance*, Harvard, 1935; Guido BATELLI, *Andrea Sansovino e l'arte italiana della Rinascenza in Portogallo*, Firenze, 1936; Emilio LAVAGNINO, *L'Opera del Genio Italiano all'Estero. Gli Artisti Italiani in Portogallo*, Roma, Lib. del Stato, 1940.

underscored (fig. 1).³ However, this does not allow us to assume that master Andrea was really the responsible for the Portuguese robbiana. Further laboratory tests should explain better whose workshop has produced the whole set of pieces in Portugal.⁴

More comprehensive studies on the importation of Renaissance works from Italy were published in the last quarter of the 20th century, offering a historical and cultural contextualization reception of Della Robbia sculptures, namely from Pedro Dias.⁵ More recently, studies by Anísio Franco and Maria João Villhena de Carvalho have provided relevant information on the history of these artworks, ranging from their integration in the royal collection to their exhibition in the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon. Recently, we rediscovered a Della Robbia's relief (Madonna and Child with two angels, Christie's) formerly belonging to the collection of King Ferdinand II, which had already been identified by Alan Marquand (fig. 2). We expect to develop in the near future further research around it, given the degree of novelty. The same will happen with a medallion depicting a St. Jude Thaddeus / St. Jerome (?) of a private collection, discovered during the investigation of the "Robbiana" project (fig. 3). The location of these pieces show how much there is still to be done in the field of Renaissance sculpture in Portugal during 15th and 16th centuries.

Contrary to what happened in other European countries, the importation of Della Robbia works to Portugal took place in the 15th century. Therefore, it coincided not only with the apogee of production and success of this workshop, but also with the prominent continuation of Gothic decorative models, both flamboyant and sober, the late characteristic of the end of 15th-century Portugal.⁶

Adding to this, it should also be mentioned that the importation of works of art was not limited to the Italian market. Accordingly, commissions were also received in Flanders (notably Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Tournai and, in later years, Antwerp) and corresponded to the pious spirituality of this period, dominated by devotional images, altarpieces and tapestries produced in this artistic centre of Europe.⁷ The

³ Cf. Marco CAMPIGLI, "San Rocco", in *Puro, semplice e naturale nell'arte a Firenze tra Cinque e Seicento*, Cristina ACCIDINI (coord.), Exhibition Catalogue, Firenze, Giunti, 2014, pp. 152-153.

⁴ Most of laboratory techniques applied nowadays to Della Robbia sculptures are described in *Della*

Robbia – dieci anni di studi – dix ans d'études, Anne BOUQUILLON, Marc BORMAND, Alessandro ZUCCHIATTI (a cura), Sagep Editori, 2011.

⁵ Pedro DIAS, *A Importação de Esculturas de Itália nos séculos XV e XVI*, Coimbra, Minerva, 2^a ed., 1987 e Ana Paula Goulão MACHADO, *Esculturas Italianas em Portugal nos séculos XV e XVI*, tese de mestrado em História da Arte apresentada à Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1995.

⁶ Cf. José Custódio Vieira da SILVA – *O Tardo-Gótico em Portugal – a Arquitectura no Alentejo*. Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1989, pp. 39-97. Paulo PEREIRA – *A Arquitectura Gótica*. Fubu Editores, 2009, pp. 63-72 e 105-113.

⁷ Cf. Pedro DIAS, "O brilho do Norte: Portugal e o mundo artístico flamengo, entre o gótico e a renascença, *O Brilho do Norte – Escultura e Escultores do Norte da Europa em Portugal*, Pedro DIAS (coord.). Lisbon: CNCDP, 1997, pp. 25-73. Conceição AMARAL (coord.), *Cortejo Triunfal*

preference given to the “Splendour of the North” does not mean that the interest in the sober contours and forms of sculptures from the Italian Peninsula should be ignored. Quite the reverse, one should not overlook the influence that the artistic boom originated in Florence and inspired by architectural, sculptural and decorative values of the Classical Antiquity, exerted in 15th-century Portugal.

As a consequence, the introduction of Italian Renaissance in Portugal had been gradual and was first heralded by the continual presence of works produced by transalpine artists, such as António Fiorentino or Master Jácome. The intensified political, diplomatic, economic and financial relations with main Italian cities contributed to the popularization of artistic interchanges. This increasing Italianization of the Portuguese art was accompanied by the presence of great merchant companies from Genoa and Florence, selling luxury goods and works of arts that catered for tastes and satisfied curiosity of many a client.⁸ Particularly noteworthy in this context was the European trading activity of Florentine merchants, a true network: commercial agents and branches of banking houses established in European cities simplified the transport and merchandizing of works of art.⁹ These mediators not only simplified commercial transactions but also created an efficient chain of distribution that involved the whole logistics of handling, shipping, transporting and delivering art commodities all the way from the supplier to the consumer. “La diffusione stessa dell’attività mercantile fiorentina nel vasto territorio europeo, la presenza degli agenti di commercio e delle filiali bancarie, se da una parte non poteva non favorire una produzione di manufatti di facile trasporto e di materiali difficilmente deteriorabili come quelli robbiani, dall’altra costituiva un efficace sistema di distribuzione attraverso operatori che dovevano curare gl’imballaggi, i trasporti, gl’imbarchi e infine le consegne”.¹⁰

com Girafas – animais exóticos ao serviço do poder, Catálogo da Exposição, Lisboa, FRESS/CHAM, 2009.

⁸ Cf. e.g., Virginia RAU, “Notes sur la traite portugaise à la fin du XV siècle et le Florentin Bartolomeo di Domenico Marchionni”, in *Miscellanea offerts à Charles Verlinden à l’occasion de ses trente ans de professorat*, Ghent, s.n., 1975, vol. I; Carmen M. RADULET, “Girolamo Sernigi e a importância económica do Oriente”, sep. *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra*, 1985, pp. 67-77; Virginia RAU, “Uma família de mercadores italianos em Portugal no século XV: os Lomellini”, in *Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa*, 1956, n.1, pp. 56-69; Nunziatella ALESSANDRINI, *Contributo alla storia della famiglia Giraldi, mercanti banchieri fiorentini alla corte di Lisbona nel XVI secolo*, in «Storia Economica», 3, 2011, pp. 377-407; Francesco GUIDI BRUSCOLI, *Bartolomeo Marchioni «Homen de Grossa Fazenda» (ca. 1450-1530). Un mercante fiorentino a Lisbona e l’impero portoghese*, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2014.

⁹ Richard A. GOLDTHWAITE, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 2009, pp. 341-407.

¹⁰ Bruno SANNTI, “Una bottega per il commercio – Repertori, vendite, esportazioni”, in *I Della Robbia e l’arte nuova” della scultura invetriata*, Giancarlo GENTILINI (a cura), Exhibition Catalogue, Firenze, Giunti, 1998, pp. 87-96.

It should also be recalled that the growing private expenditure on interior decorating favoured the production of religious goods, resulting in a prominent expansion of the local market of luxury goods. “Altarpieces could also be acquired ready to be customized, with wings prepared for the insertion of donor portraits. Similar techniques for standardization were developed by the Della Robbia family (...). Clay could also be moulded to create replicas, a benefit that was increasingly taken up by Luca’s successors in the family workshop.”¹¹

In Florence such a salient demand for these goods was met almost exclusively by local manufactures: as an example “Piero de’Medici is known to have taken an interest in the latest ceramic technology, not least in commissioning Luca della Robbia to line his study with enamelled earthenware.”¹² The internal demand, for its part, gave rise to a mass production of religious goods of this kind, less onerous and intended for decorative purposes of private households, such as paintings, tabernacles and relief sculptures made in wood, gesso or terracotta. As noted by Donal Cooper, “the popular, colourful and relatively inexpensive, tin-glazed terracotta relief images of the Virgin and Child produced by the Della Robbia workshop must often have been set into interior walls. Fifteenth-century Florence saw the emergence of a new category of religious image, which seems to have been specific to the domestic interior: the circular tondo.”¹³

One of the manifestations of the Portuguese receptiveness to Renaissance models was the importation of sculptures produced by the Della Robbia workshop (led by Luca Della Robbia (1399/1400-1482), situated at the busy Via Guelfa in Florence. It is probable that in the end of the 15th century, the Portuguese turned to the workshop run by his nephew Andrea della Robbia (1435-1525) and the sons of the latter Girolamo della Robbia (1488-1566) and his brother Luca della Robbia the Younger (1475-1548), later both based in Paris and at the service of the French royal court.¹⁴ The missing Bacalhoa medallions (fig. 4), thought to be produced in the Parisian workshop, may have been produced elsewhere, considering the dates of production of these pieces, inspired on a first set of engravings from Titian’s

¹¹ Cf. Giorgia MANCINI, “Sculptural altarpieces in late medieval and renaissance Europe”, in *Medieval and Renaissance Art – People and Possessions*, Glyn DAVIES and Kirstin KENNEDY (coord.), London, V&A Publishing, 2009, p. 112.

¹² Luke SYSON and Dora THORNTON, *Objects of Virtue – Art in Renaissance Italy*, London, The British Museum Press, 2001, p. 205.

¹³ Donal COOPER, “Devotion”, in *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, Marta AJMAR-WOLLHEIM and Flora DENNIS (ed.), London, V&A Publishing, 2006, p. 194.

¹⁴ For more recent information the French production of these artists see Monique CHATENET, Florian MEUNIER e Alain PRÉVET – *Le Château de Faience de François Ier – Les terres cuites émaillées de Girolamo della Robbia au Château de Madrid (bois de Boulogne)*, Paris, Éditions du CTHS, col. Bulletin Archéologique, n.º 36, 2012. See Joaquim RASTEIRO, *Quinta e Palácio da Bacalhôa em Azeitão*, 1895.

series of paintings of Roman emperors (and their wives?) around 1537-38 for Duke Federigo Gonzaga (Mantova).¹⁵

It was during a diplomatic mission to Siena in 1452, on the occasion of the royal wedding between Leonor (daughter of the Portuguese king Duarte I) and Frederick III (Holy Roman Emperor), that a representative of the Portuguese Crown, Afonso de Braganza (c. 1402-1460, Fourth Count of Ourém, later known as Marquis of Valença), had the opportunity to familiarize himself with the newest Renaissance trends that characterized the cityscapes of Pisa, Siena, Rome and Florence. As stated by John Pope-Hennessy, as early as in 1454, “7 chasse di lavoroj de terrachotta envetriata del Marchese di Valença” and “2 storie envetriate e Madonna Maria” had been shipped to Lisbon. These artworks had been commissioned by Dom Afonso himself and were probably kept in the crypt of Ourém’s private church.¹⁶ This is the first group of artworks of this kind known to be exported to outside Florence. This, in turn, bears witness not only to the limited European projection of these works in the 1450s, but also to the progressive taste of their commissioner, who saw in the Della Robbia pieces an excellent opportunity to affirm his economic and cultural authority.¹⁷

One of the reasons behind the widespread success of the Della Robbia productions, which ranged from Naples to London, Lisbon and Marseilles, had mainly been related to the organizational efficiency of this workshop, building on a logistic network and personal connections with financial agents, merchants and patronage. Besides, “the techniques of making and firing clay were highly developed, and from the fourteenth century Renaissance potters in many centers produced objects of the highest quality. (...) The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were, in fact, the golden age of pottery in the Italian peninsula.”¹⁸

What is more, the Della Robbia’s great capacity to meet the demand for their artwork led to the diversification of their pool of clients, especially considering that

¹⁵ This clue will be discussed after the laboratory tests, which will be made by the team involved at Robbiana’s Project from the Campus Tecnológico Nuclear do Instituto Superior Técnico da Universidade de Lisboa, under the coordination of Isabel Marques Dias and Isabel Prudêncio. Acknowledgments to Anísio Franco of the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (MNAA) and the Berardo Foundation for the assistance and access to Quinta da Bacalhoa. See *The Life of Titian by Carlo Ridolfi*, Julia Conaway BONDANELLA et al. (edited), The Pennsylvania State University, 1996, p. 86.

¹⁶ For information on Afonso V and the Queen Leonor’s wedding see Saúl António GOMES, *D. Afonso V*, Lisboa, Circulo de Leitores, 2006 and Humberto Baquero MORENO – *D. Afonso V*. Matosinhos, Ed. Quidnovi, 2009. For information on this art commission see John POPE-HENNESSY – *Luca della Robbia*, Oxford, Phaidon, 1980, pp. 73-78; Manuel Mendes ATANÁZIO – *A Arte do Manuelino*, Lisboa, Ed. Presença, 1984, p. 27; Alexandra Alves BARRADAS – *Ourém e Porto de Mós: a obra mecenática de D. Afonso*, 4^o Conde de Ourém, Lisboa, Ed. Colibri, 2006, pp. 153-167.

¹⁷ Cf. Alexandra Alves BARRADAS, cit., pp. 171-244.

¹⁸ Cf. Bruce COLE, *The Renaissance Artist at Work – From Pisano to Titian*, New York, Harper and Row, 1983, p. 129.

the workshop would produce not only altarpieces with large dimensions, but also small altarpieces that catered for private and religious tastes of commissioners.

The aesthetic and visual impact of works imported by Afonso de Braganza must have been significant, otherwise their reception in Portugal would have been impossible, given that the exporting capacity of the Della Robbia workshop was highly limited, due to the obvious difficulties in the transportation and installation of these delicate artworks (except for very specific cases).¹⁹

As a result, after the above-mentioned interesting episode involving artworks commissioned by Afonso de Braganza, the Portuguese importation of Della Robbia pieces was financed mainly by the House of Avis/Beja, notably by Beatriz (1430-1506), married to Fernando (First Duke of Beja and son of King Duarte I); between the last quarter of the 15th century and the first quarter of the 16th century this importation was sponsored mainly by her children, Queen Leonor (1458-1525, the wife of João II) and Manuel I (1469-1521).²⁰

It seems safe to suggest that Portugal has one of the most remarkable collections of Della Robbia originals outside Italy, which attests to its relevance in the historical and artistic national context. Importantly, this fact influenced the artists of that period. Therefore, the satisfaction expressed by the author of the panel entitled “The Arrival of the Relics of Saint Auta”, presently in the care of the National Museum of Ancient Art (formerly the Convent of Clares of Madre de Deus in Lisbon), is well visible in the way he portrayed the Della Robbia roundel set in the east façade. This portrayal can be considered as a reminder, yet not an exact depiction, of the presence of these pieces at the convent founded by Queen Leonor.²¹

However, we would argue that the prominent portrayal of the roundel set in this façade, supported by a decorative corbel formally resembling the base of the tabernacle located inside the church, is not an exact depiction of a circular form that actually existed. Today’s detailed knowledge of the convent’s Della Robbia

¹⁹ Cf. Gino CORTI, “New Andrea della Robbia Documents”, in *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 112, n.º 812, Nov. 1970, pp. 749-752; Bruno SANTI, “Una bottega per il commercio: repertori, vendite, esportazioni”, in *I della Robbia e l’arte nuova della scultura invetriata*, Giancarlo GENTILINI (coord.), Firenze, Giunti Gruppo Editoriale, 1998, pp. 87-96.

²⁰ The roundel “Madonna and St. John the Baptist”, originally coming from the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, had been commissioned by D. Beatriz, who bequeathed this artwork to this convent. See also Pedro DIAS – *A Importação de Esculturas de Itália nos séculos XV e XVI*, Coimbra, Minerva, 2ª ed., 1987, pp. 51-69.

²¹ On issues raised with regard to the original façade of the Convento da Madre de Deus in Lisbon, see João Miguel SIMÕES, “O modelo arquitectónico das duas primeiras casas coletivas portuguesas: os Mosteiros de Jesus de Setúbal e da Madre de Deus de Xabregas - Mosteiro de Jesus in Setúbal and Mosteiro da Madre de Deus in Xabregas”, in *Casa Perfeitíssima – 500 anos da Fundação do Mosteiro da Madre de Deus (1509-2009)*, Alexandra CURVELO (coord.), Lisboa, IMC/Museu Nacional do Azulejo, 2009, pp. 65-74. This work provides arguments that are difficult to counter in as much as it reconstructs the original floor plan of the convent church, with additional construction works carried out between the 1530s and 1540s by the architect Diogo de Torralva.

collection leads to a conclusion that there had been no roundel that would resemble the one portrayed in the abovementioned panel.

As pointed out earlier, the presence of a common denominator, namely the royal family, is evident in the identification of the Portuguese corpus of Italian glazed terracotta sculptures. This is particularly the case of Queen Leonor, strongly influenced by the charitable spirituality of the Order of Saint Clare, who put her efforts in providing assistance to the poor and needy by founding a charitable institution known as the Santa Casa da Misericórdia. In turn, the close religious and spiritual liaison that she kept with the Santíssima Annunziata convent in Florence surely facilitated contacts between the Portuguese Crown and Florentine artists, consisting in the distribution of alms, artistic donations and influential visits by a merchant and banker Bartolomeo Marchionni.²² Also noteworthy is the direct collaboration between the Della Robbia workshop and the Monastero delle Murate, whose nuns considered the whiteness of ceramics as a symbol of purity and exemplarity adequate for the religious and cloistered life they led.

Queen Leonor had thus shown interest in the preservation of arts, in particular painting and jewellery. This is why after her death in the first quarter of the 16th century the treasures from her lifetime collection were considered among the most remarkable in the Portuguese history.

Her special devotion to the Order of Saint Clare resulted in the foundation of the important Convent da Madre de Deus, located by the Tagus river, in the western part of Lisbon. The donations to this convent made during her lifetime included: four roundels with images of Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John);²³ the Portuguese coat of arms and an emblem with an image of a pelican;²⁴ a bust figure of a warrior (Dario? – fig. 5); a tabernacle;²⁵ and, finally, two ceramic

²² Cf. Ivo Carneiro de SOUSA, “A Rainha D. Leonor e as Murate de Florença”, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras: História*, série II, vol. IV, 1987, pp. 119-134. See also Francesco GUIDI-BRUSCOLI, “Bartolomeo Marchionni: um mercador-banqueiro florentino em Lisboa (sécs. XV-XVII)”, in *Le nove son tanto e tante buone, che dir non se pô – Lisboa dos Italianos: História e Arte (sécs. XIV-XVI)*, Nunziatella ALESSANDRINI, Pedro FLOR, Mariagrazia RUSSO e Gaetano SABATINI (ed.), Lisboa, Cátedra de Estudos Sefarditas “Alberto Benveniste”, 2013, pp. 39-60.

²³ See Maria João Vilhena CARVALHO and Anísio FRANCO, “São João Evangelista, São Lucas Evangelista, São Marcos Evangelista, São Mateus Evangelista”, in *Casa Perfeitíssima* ..., p. 221.

²⁴ See IDEM, “Os Della Robbia da Rainha D. Leonor: imagens florentinas do Mosteiro da Madre de Deus de Lisboa”, *Casa Perfeitíssima – 500 anos da Fundação do Mosteiro da Madre de Deus - Casa Perfeitíssima - (1509-2009)*, Alexandra CURVELO (coord.), Lisbon: IMC/Museu Nacional do Azulejo, 2009, pp. 133-144. In addition to this study, see also Miguel Metelo de SEIXAS, “As armas e a empresa do rei D. João II. Subsídios metodológicos para o estudo da heráldica e da emblemática nas artes decorativas portuguesas”, in *As Artes Decorativas e a Expansão Portuguesa – Imaginário e Viagem*, Isabel MENDONÇA e Ana Paula Rebelo CORREIA (coord.), Lisbon, FRESS/ESAD, 2010, pp. 46-82.

²⁵ Cf. Pedro DIAS, cit..., pp. 62-67; Maria João Vilhena CARVALHO, “Imagens milagrosas e obra dourada: a escultura e a talha [Miraculous images and gilded artworks: sculpture and woodcarving]”, in *Igreja da Madre de Deus: História, Conservação e Restauro*, Lisbon, IPM/IPCR/MNAz, 2002, pp. 63-81.

fences with later added marble medallions, all of which are now part of the collections of the National Museum of Ancient Art. As has already been stressed by the Portuguese and foreign historiography, the comparison of these works with the works of similar typology existing in Italy confirms the Della Robbia's authorship. Nevertheless, more recent studies have hypothesized that the authorship of the "Dario" roundel might belong to Andrea del Verrocchio, considering the iconographic similarities with other works of this important Florentine artist (along with Leonardo).²⁶

Although there is no certainty as to the exact location of these works in the Convent, they are known to have typically decorated the walls of churches. As can be observed in the Baroque iconography of this building, this was the case of the "Dario" and the "Portuguese Coat of Arms" medallions. The same cannot be said about the tabernacle, incomplete and with hardly determinable top ornaments, in which case the comparison with intact works dating from the same period lends itself to various possible hypotheses. In addition to this example, it should also be mentioned that the four Evangelists are likely to have decorated pendentives supporting the dome of the no longer existing original Madre de Deus Church. Incidentally, this was the most common solution used by 15th-century Florentine architects and sculptures.

The remaining part of the Portuguese Robbiana includes: the painting of a "*Mater Dolorosa*" from the Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Graça in Palhais (though it may have been installed in this church at a much later date);²⁷ a low-relief representation of the *Virgen de la Antigua*, greatly venerated in Seville, nowadays built into the wall of the lateral nave of the Igreja de São Lourenço in Azeitão, on the left side of the altar, whose Della Robbia's authorship has been recently questioned;²⁸ and, finally, two medium-sized sculptures in the round from the Igreja de São Jorge in Sarilhos Grandes (one "Mary Magdalene" and one "Candelabrum-Bearing Angel"), showing similarities with the works of the Buglioni workshop, a rivalling Florentine studio between the late 15th and 16th centuries.²⁹

²⁶ Cf. Andrew BUTTERFIELD, *The Sculptures of Andrea del Verrocchio*, Yale University Press, 1997 and Martin CLAYTON, *Leonardo Da Vinci – The Divine and the Grotesque*, London, The Royal Collection, 2002.

²⁷ Cf. João Miguel dos Santos SIMÕES, "Os 'Della Robbias' do Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga", *João Couto - in Memoriam*, Lisbon, 1971, pp. 171-189; Pedro DIAS – cit., pp. 71-74.

²⁸ For recent information on artworks from the Igreja de São Lourenço in Azeitão, see Rui André Alves TRINDADE - *Revestimentos Cerâmicos Portugueses*, Lisbon: Ed. Colibri, 2007, pp. 151-153 e n. 32, p. 273. The iconographic identification of the relief in question, with which we agree, has been proposed by Alfonso Pleguezuelo in his unpublished lecture given during the Jornadas Azulejería y Cerámica en Portugal en la Edad Moderna (siglos XVI-XVIII), held in Seville (4-5 October 2013).

²⁹ Thanks are due to Paulo Almeida Fernandes for drawing our attention to the artworks from Sarilhos Grandes. The study of these pieces has been developed under the ROBBIANA project.

The two latter artworks, still largely unknown in the historiography of glazed terracotta sculptures, had been commissioned by Rui Cotrim de Castanheda, the influential and well-off nobleman, captain of the Second India Armada headed by Vasco da Gama and, as of 1504, the pantryman on the Royal Court.³⁰ Incidentally, these works had been incorporated in an altar dedicated to the Nossa Senhora da Piedade, decorating the funeral chapel of Rui Cotrim de Castanheda himself, of which remained only the “Mary Magdalene” and the “Candelabrum-Bearing Angel”.

The Portuguese Robbiana also encompassed four sculptures in the round (St. Jerome, St. Leonard and Madonna of the Stars) pertaining to the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos and the National Museum of Ancient Art and allegedly offered to Manuel I by Pope Julius II.³¹ Significantly enough, the providence of these sculptures still calls for a sound confirmation. It is known that they arrived in Portugal in 1514, when the workshop production was dominated by Andrea and Giovanni della Robbia, only rivalled by the Buglioni studio. Again, the laboratory tests carried out under the project “Robbiana: Della Robbia sculptures in Portugal” will soon shed light to the actual artistic origin of this group of figures.

The presence of Della Robbia works in Portugal during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance bears witness to the close relations between the two regions. The relationships with main Italian city-states established during these periods were reinforced by economic, commercial and financial activity that increased during the Age of Discoveries in the Atlantic Ocean and the Expansion in the Indian Ocean. The intensive trade in wine, olive oil and various fabrics (velvet and brocade) came to further include works of art (jewellery, paintings, illuminations and ceramics), typically exchanged for gold, sugar and spices. Furthermore, the strong links established with Rome, as well as frequent embassies and diplomatic missions to Italy, contributed to the growing Italianization of Portuguese arts.

Whether for economic, religious or diplomatic reasons, the Italian Peninsula attracted the Portuguese artists and commissioners, while the clear echoes of Italian art (initially inspired by Florentine and afterwards by Roman models) could be found from the final year of the reign of Manuel I (1521) onwards, and especially during the reign of João III. The 16th century witnessed the importation not only of luxury artworks with Renaissance features, but also of humanistic and classical aesthetics, clearly visible in the use of classical models in architecture, the

³⁰ Cf. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Chancelaria de D. Manuel I, Liv. 23, fl. 7 – Provimto no cargo de uchão a Rui Cotrim de Castanheda, fidalgo da casa del-Rei. See also *Archeologo Portuguez*, vol. 20-21, 1915, pp. 95-141. About Rui Cotrim de Castanheda's tomb see Paulo Almeida FERNANDES, “Igreja de São Jorge e Ermida de Nossa Senhora da Piedade” -

www.patrimoniocultural.pt (acedido a 21 de Setembro de 2014).
³¹ Cf. J. M. Cordeiro de SOUSA, “Os Medalhões Della Robbia do Museu das Janelas Verdes”, in *Boletim do Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga*, vol. IV, n.º 2, 1960; Pedro DIAS – cit., pp. 76-84; José MECO, “A Azulejaria e a Cerâmica Escultórica nos Jerónimos”, in *Jerónimos. 4 Séculos de Pintura*, vol. I, Lisbon, 1993, pp. 108-123.

popularization of grotesques evoking the Antiquity as well as in the taste for glazed ceramics both in the interior and exterior of buildings.

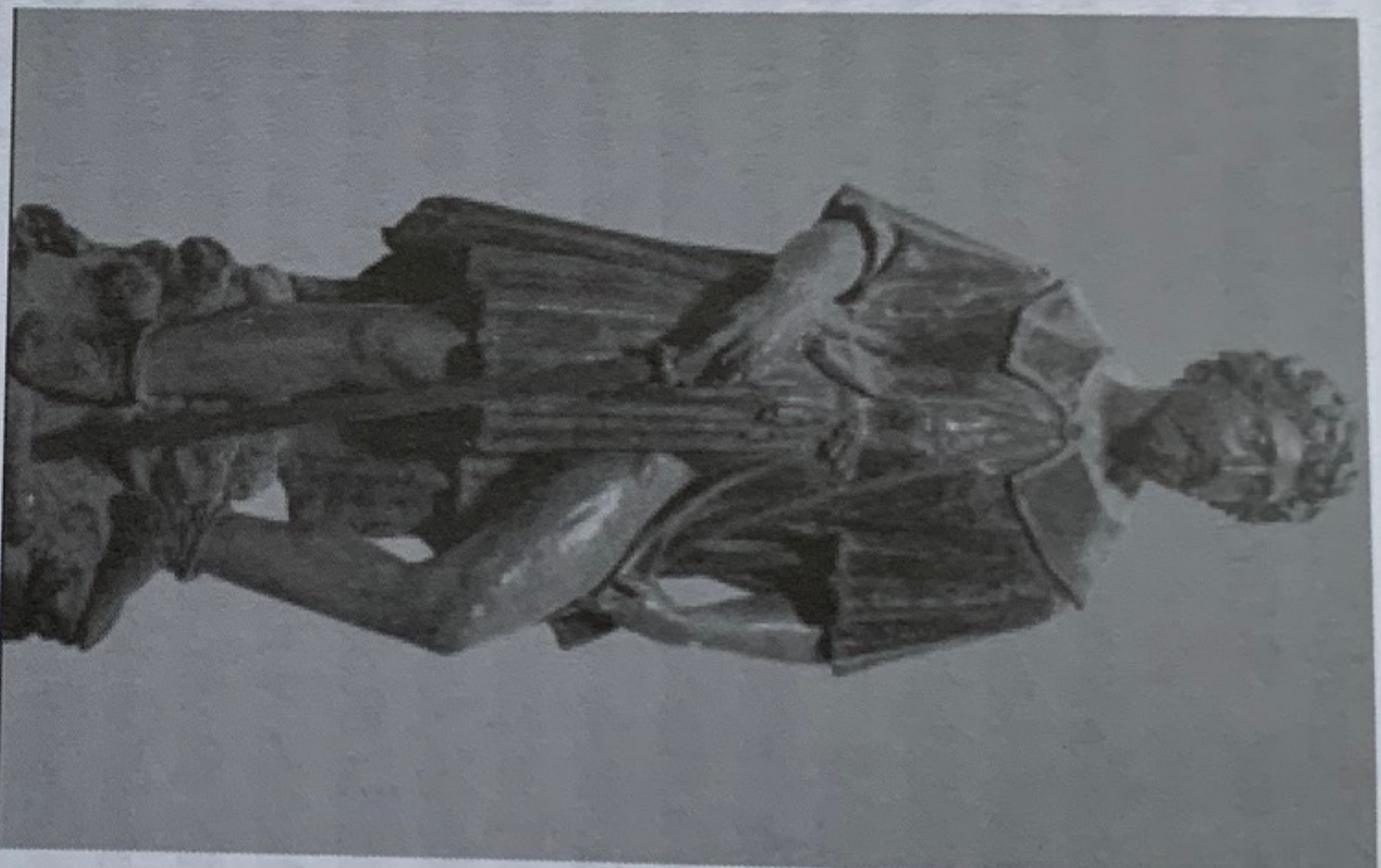


Fig. 1 – Andrea Sansovino, *Saint Roch*, c. 1528 Chiesa dei Santi Quirico e Giulitta (Arezzo)



Fig. 2 – Andrea della Robbia (atrib.), *Madonna and Child with two angels*, 1st quarter 16th century, Private Collection



Fig. 3 – Della Robbia workshop, *Saint Judas Thaddaeus* (?) c. 1520-30, Private Collection



Fig. 4a / b – On top the Bacalhao medallion and below Sadeler's engraving of Pompeia, Caesar's wife (detail) (drawing from Joaquim Rasteiro – end of 19th century; engraving from Private Collection)



Fig. 5 – From left to right: Della Robbia (atrib.), *Warrior's profile (Dario ?)* first quarter of 16th century?, MNAA; Buglioni after Verrocchio's model, c. 1475-80, Staatliche Museum (Berlin); Leonardo Da Vinci, *Warrior*, c. 1475-80, British Museum