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EDITORIAL

BAROQUE FESTIVALS BETWEEN THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE: EUROPE AND THE ATLANTIC

The number 10th of the journal *Série W* gathers a selection of updated and extended texts resulting from the communications presented at the International Conference *Baroque festivals between the sacred and the profane: Europe and the Atlantic*, organized by the Institute of Art History and the Institute of Studies of Literature and Tradition of the NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Municipality of Loures, between 17-18 October 2019. This conference was organized in partnership with the project *Baltasar and Blimunda Route*, a cultural and tourist route that, uniting three municipalities — Lisbon, Loures and Mafra — around the book of José Saramago, *Memorial do Convento*, revives the history of its main characters Blimunda and Baltasar, valuing the patrimonial and cultural resources of the three counties. The venue of the congress was the Palace of Correio-mor in the city of Loures.

As we know the feast, a cultural manifestation encompassing all civilizations and creeds, reached its pinnacle of magnificence and extravagance during the Baroque period (17th-18th centuries). Courts, along with religious institutions, were the main promoters and spreaders of grandiose scenographic events witnessed in this period of history. With models and fashions from European courts such as those of France, of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and of the Iberian

Peninsula fanning out to the rest of the Old World, the festive eccentricity of Baroque also reached the overseas territories of South America under the rule of the Iberian monarchies.

Ephemeral art, the visible expression of the festive spectacle, takes over and transforms spaces in dialogue with the perdurable arts and the soundscape. The hegemony of painting, sculpture and architecture blurs in the dialogue established with the so-called decorative arts and with the performative arts. The feast brings together arts, artists, commissioners, participants and the public. A brief jubilatory event, it is the expression of the imagination, of the amalgam of arts and peoples, the apotheosis of the concept of the total work of art that Baroque gave rise to and that Leibniz, in his *Monadology*, understood as the art of finding “the beautiful constructions”, that is, shaping imaginary worlds as possible as that in which we live.

The final composition of the festive display reflects the essence of Baroque: a play of multiple forms in dialogue with each other and in permanent unfolding: “la peinture sort de son cadre et se réalise dans la sculpture de marbre polychrome; et la sculpture se dépasse et se réalise dans l’architecture; et l’architecture à son tour trouve dans la façade un cadre, mais ce cadre décolle lui-même de l’intérieur, et se met en rapport avec les alentours de manière à réaliser l’architecture dans l’urbanisme” (Giles Deleuze, *Le Pli*, Minuit, 1988, pp. 167-168).

With these concepts in mind the Conference addressed the cross-disciplinary and plural studies on Baroque festivals in its several dimensions like baptisms, royal weddings,

MARIA JOÃO PEREIRA COUTINHO
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embassies, royal entries, canonizations, beatifications, and other solemnities within the civil and religious frames. With this broad scope the Conference focussed in significant areas of knowledge as art, literature and music. The birth and definition of models, the agents and leading subjects as the territorial impact were explored. Finally, it also encompassed the studies related to the 17th and 18th centuries as well as contemporary visions of the baroque festivals concept.

Given the diverse contributions that the arts bring to the Baroque Feast, such approach was necessarily interdisciplinary and considered the phenomenon in the 17th and 18th centuries from renewed viewpoints based on the latest research.

The following topics were suggested:

- Staging, codes and rituals: the arts of the table, christenings, weddings, acclamations, royal entries, embassies;
- Theatres, staging's, beatifications and canonisations, liturgical calendar processions, special devotions;
- Literature, books and prints: model dissemination and consolidation;
- Music and the sound element of the feast;
- The feast and the city: ephemeral scenography, its agents and impact on the urban scape.

The texts that hereby are published reflect some possible approaches to the theme of festivities expressed thorough investigations that resulted in recent readings on the topic that the Scientific Commission joined by other experts, validated.

The contributions are from: Alexandra Gago da Câmara (Universidade Aberta/CHAIA — Universidade de Évora) and Carlos Moura (Instituto de História da Arte da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas/Universidade NOVA de Lisboa); Andrew Horn (University of St Andrews); Axel Gampp (University of Basel); Isabel Yglesias de Oliveira (Palácio Nacional de Mafra); Laura García Sánchez (University of Barcelona); Mónica Martín Molares (University of Coruña-Spain); Paulo de Assunção (Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro); Susana Varela Flor (Instituto de História da Arte da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa); Teresa de Campos Coelho (CHAM — Centro de Humanidades/Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa).

The second section of this issue presents the project “Baltazar and Blimunda Route”.

The editors would like to acknowledge the municipality of Loures for the support during the days of the Conference and to the owners of the Palace of Correio-mor for lending the space for the venue.

Our recognition also extends to the members of the Scientific Committee of the event and of the present *Série W* number, which, with its comments and suggestions helped us to select the communication proposals and the received texts for the publication.

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A ROMAN MODEL OF THE BAROQUE FESTIVAL IN LISBON. THE TILE PANEL OF THE MONASTERY OF SÃO VICENTE DE FORA AND THE CAVALCATA DI POSSESSO OF POPE INNOCENT XIII

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¹ Boiteux Martine. *Parcours rituels romains à l'époque moderne*. In: *Cérémonial et rituel à Rome (XVIe-XIXe siècle)* Rome: École Française de Rome, 1997, pp. 27-87 (Publications de l'École française de Rome, 231).

² Ibidem.

ABSTRACT

During the reign of King John V, festivities relating to the processional model reached an unusual splendour. Such splendour, associated with ephemeral art forms, greatly contributed to the overall formulation envisaged for this kind of aesthetic.

The ceramic panel reproducing the solemn parade for Pope Innocent XIII's coronation in Rome is therefore particularly important. This panel is part of the *azulejo* cycles found on the terrace of the cloisters of the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. Since it refers to an exclusive demonstration of Roman practices and ceremonial rites¹ (the *Cavalcata di Possesso*), its transposition to the Portuguese context, conveyed by an art form as quintessentially Portuguese as blue and white *azulejos*, amplified the exaltation of the possibilities of the Baroque feast and its re-enactment within a Portuguese context.

The existence of this tile panel has gone almost unnoticed, although it is briefly mentioned by José Queirós (1856-1920) and João Miguel dos Santos Simões (1907-1972) in the latter's *Corpus of 18th-Century Portuguese Azulejos*. Our research has already allowed us to identify the decoration's graphic sources and its likely authorship, as well as the extraordinarily rich implications and cultural exchanges between the Roman Baroque and the Portuguese artistic environment.

KEYWORDS BAROQUE FEAST, CAVALCATA DI POSSESSO, AZULEJO (GLAZED TILE), MONASTERY OF SÃO VICENTE DE FORA.

RESUMO

Durante o reinado de D. João V, as festividades relacionadas com o modelo processional atingiram um esplendor inusitado que, associado às manifestações da arte efêmera, muito contribuiu para a formulação global que esta estética pretendia.

Reveste-se por isso de singular importância o conjunto cerâmico reproduzindo o desfile solene da tomada de posse do Papa Inocêncio XIII em Roma, inserido nos ciclos azulejares do terraço dos claustros do Mosteiro de São Vicente de Fora. Tratando-se de uma manifestação exclusiva das práticas e ritos cerimoniais romanos² (a *Cavalcata di Possesso*), a sua transposição para o meio português, veiculada por uma disciplina artística tão representativa como o azulejo narrativo a azul e branco, significava a exaltação das possibilidades da Festa barroca, a par da sua concretização em ambiente português.

Tendo passado quase despercebida a existência deste núcleo, mencionado por José Queirós (1856-1920) e João Miguel dos Santos Simões (1907-1972) — este no seu *Corpus sobre a Azulejaria Portuguesa do século XVIII* —, temos vindo sobre ele a desenvolver uma investigação que nos permitiu identificar já as fontes gráficas e a provável autoria da sua execução, para além das riquíssimas implicações e cruzamentos culturais entre o barroco romano e a conjuntura artística portuguesa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE FESTA BARROCA, CAVALCATA DI POSSESSO, AZULEJO, MOSTEIRO DE SÃO VICENTE DE FORA.



Previous note

Our proposal, which is part of an ongoing research project, focuses on the study of a specific artistic object, namely a unique tile panel belonging to the repository of the Joanine period of the monastery of São Vicente de Fora, in Lisbon [Fig. 1].

As is widely known, the extensive series of tiled panels in the cloisters and upper terrace of the Monastery, which belonged to the Canons Regular of St Augustine, is the result of a decorative programme promoted under the patronage of King John V. We will focus on the narrative panel that depicts a long papal procession and has hitherto been overlooked by artistic historiography.

In the 1970s, following the inventory and research work carried out by João Miguel dos Santos Simões, it was possible to locate a graphic source akin to this picture, which soon came to be identified as depicting a papal procession. This ceremony, as much profane as it was religious, was portrayed for the court of John V ('the Magnanimous') in *azulejos*, a distinctive and expressive medium typical of the Portuguese Baroque.

Following our research, we now know that this depiction refers to the *Cavalcata di possesso* – so named upon the inauguration of Innocent XIII's Pontificate on 16 November 1721. It was a procession of great magnificence, with the train moving towards the Basilica of St John Lateran and incorporating the main dignitaries of the Church, the city and their representatives, as was customary after the election of a new pope.

Context | Papal Procession at the Baroque Festival

The main features of the parade depicted on the ceramic panels of the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora (St Vincent Outside the Walls) leave no room for doubt. What is shown is an opulent Baroque feast, one of the many held in Rome to commemorate important events – in this case Pope Innocent XIII's "possession ride" (*Cavalcata di Possesso*), as we will see



shortly. Following the inauguration of each new pontiff, this celebration confirmed his role as bishop of the Eternal City in canonical and civil terms.

Elected on 18 May 1721, the then Cardinal Michelangelo Conti [Fig. 2], son of the Dukes of Poli, chose the name Innocent to evoke the splendours of medieval Christianity associated to the figure of Innocent III, his ancestor. Having been steered towards an ecclesiastical career, he studied at Rome's Jesuit College, where he became widely cultivated, especially in subjects related to theology, jurisprudence and history, and where he acquired a taste for book collecting that would accompany him throughout his life.

FIG. 1. The cloister terrace of the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. Tile panels on the north wall. Photographic credits ©Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Teresa Verão.



FIG. 2. Michaelangelo Conti, Pope Innocent XIII, 1721-1725. *Constitutiones Summorum Pontificum Innocentii XIII et Clementis XII ad Portugalliae, & Algarbiorum Regem ac ad Patriarcha, necnon ad Patriarchalem, & Archiepiscopalem Ecclesias Ulixbonensis Occidentalem, & respectivè Orientalem pertinentes* | Romae: Typis Rev. Cam. Apost., 1738, Res. BNP.

After serving as prelate in Ascoli, Frosinone and Viterbo, his qualities and diplomatic skill earned him the appointment of nuncio to the Swiss Confederation in 1695, and to Lisbon three years later. There he held the office for a relatively long period, between 1698 and 1710, a time that saw the transition from the reign of King Pedro II to that of King John V. During this period he was appointed cardinal.

As someone close to the Portuguese royal family, the court and the highest ecclesiastical spheres, Cardinal Conti became a popular figure among the common people, especially in Lisbon. After moving into a house owned by the Marquis of Távora, in the parish of Mártires, he was frequently recognised on the street.

Thanks to his Baroque upbringing and mentality, he was admired for the “acuteness of his discourse and the clarity of his expositions”, in the words of one of his most notable friends, Francisco Xavier de Menezes, the 4th Count of Ericeira¹ (*Panegírico*, 1721, 15), whose exquisite library in the Palace of Anunciada, Lisbon, was undoubtedly used by the cardinal.

His knowledge of the country’s problems and affection towards the Portuguese led John V to appoint him, while still in Lisbon, as Cardinal Protector, even though the holder of the office, the Frenchman César d’Estrées, Camerlengo of the Sacred College, was still alive. With this new appointment, he left behind the only serious conflict we know of, which took place during the brief regency of Catherine of Braganza. Siding with the Society of Jesus in the quarrel concerning the payment of the quinquennial tribute to the Holy See, the queen regent went so far as to forbid the nuncio from entering the royal palace, and nearly decreed his expulsion from the kingdom.

The conclave that placed the new pope, Innocent XIII, on the throne of Saint Peter in the spring of 1721 was a brief one. The War of the Spanish Succession, which had coincided with the long pontificate of his predecessor, Clement XI, had come to an end, and the ensuing historical situation, defined by unresolved issues such as the Jansenist movement, called for a compromise. Of the four warring factions, the most

¹ *Panegyric on the election of the Supreme Pontiff Innocent XIII*, delivered by the Count of Ericeira at the Royal Academy of History, of which he was the director, on 5 July 1721.

important were the Bourbon bloc, later the French-Spanish bloc, and the Austrian party, supported by the Viennese Habsburgs, aligned with the imperial politics of Charles IV, John V's brother-in-law. The election of the former nuncio to Lisbon therefore amounted to a unanimous compromise. Moreover, given his age and the fragility of his health, it was an attempt to buy time through a calm and presumably short pontificate (Pastor, 1962, 413-486).

Baroque celebrations were hugely important and considered an essential part of the inauguration of a new pontiff. The election, coronation and appropriation of Rome had both a religious and a civil dimension to them that were only fully recognised through the lavish festivities held in the city over the space of a few days.

These festivities were a global phenomenon, as noted by a leading expert on the subject, Maurizio Fagiolo Dell'Arco, but they were also a mass event, according to José António Maravall's social characterisation of Baroque culture. They were about suspension and attraction, which required wealth, skill, a surprise effect and a short duration (Maravall, 1987).

Although the *Possesso* festivities were closely related to other parades, namely the reception rides of foreign ambassadors, European sovereigns or senators, they were considered a religious celebration. As such, like other similar celebrations held to mark different occasions — holy years, beatifications, canonisations or the consecration of churches, to name but a few examples — they benefited from Rome's legendary grandeur.

But for such splendour to outlast these ephemeral celebrations and become known all over the world, wherever missionaries preached St Peter's spiritual authority, it had to be recorded and promoted. It was thus immortalised in images, enabled by the reproducibility of engravings, and in written accounts, in a short publication describing the details of the parade, the participants and the architecture of the arches along the way.

As we reveal here for the first time, these elements are shown in the engraving [Fig. 3] signed by Giovanni Girolamo Frezza (1659-1741), a well-known engraver from the first half



of the *Settecento* and the disciple of Arnold van Westerhout, a Flemish artist of some importance, whose discreet influence can be felt in this work. Depicting the parade's journey from the Vatican to the Basilica of St John Lateran, passing through the Castle and across the Bridge of Sant'Angelo, the Capitulum and the Colosseum, the narrative wends its way along seven winding rows, moving upwards from the lower right-hand corner to the upper left-hand corner. At the centre of the composition, i.e. at the intersection between the St Peter-Lateran diagonal and the Sant'Angelo-Colosseum diagonal, located in the middle of the third row from the

FIG. 3. Engraving of the *Cavalcata di Possesso* of Pope Innocent XIII (1721) by Giovanni Frezza (1659-1741).



FIG. 4. *Relazione distinta della solenne cavalcata, con la quale il Sommo Pontefice Innocenzo XIII. si portò a prendere il possesso della sacrosanta Basilica di S. Giovanni in Laterano nel giorno di domenica 16. novembre 1721 [...].* Rome: Nella stamparia di Pietro Ferri..., 1721.

bottom, we find Innocent XIII, carried apotheotically upon an open litter.

Along the way, we see two of the temporary structures that were usually created for such ceremonies, made of perishable materials.

This iconographic solution can be traced back to the fresco depicting Sixtus V's *Possesso*, in the Sistine Hall of the Vatican Library, part of the magnificent late Mannerist decorative programme carried out in 1585-89 under the supervision of Giovanni Guerra and Cesare Nebbia. This decoration, which served as a testing ground for many figurative solutions explored during the Catholic Reformation, was the starting point for a vast series of depictions of parades and horse rides during the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the detailed report of the *Relazione*² [Fig. 4] that was published immediately afterwards, in 1722, we find 23 long pages of information concerning the engraving: the route followed on Sunday 16 November; the atmosphere in the streets, which were adorned with precious tapestries; the social and institutional make-up of the participants, including a description of the homages paid by the Hebrew community; the figure of the Pope and his outward appearance; the triumphal arches with their inscriptions; the arrival at the Lateran Basilica; and the names of eminent cardinals, cardinal bishops, cardinal priests and cardinal deacons, as well as other participants.

The procession covered almost three Roman miles (roughly 4.5 km) along a route that can be retraced on a map of the city today. It was conceived as a *sacro trionfo*, in which the Rome of Christianity would upstage the lavishness of the pagan city. The route was probably set out during the pontificate of Gelasius I, in the late 5th century, and comprised four stages: the *exitus*, or departure from the Vatican; the climb, or *adscensus*, to the Capitolium; the descent, *descensio*, to the Forum; and the *adventus et introitus*, or the arrival at the Lateran Basilica.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the autonomous edition of two engravings showing the arches built for the parade: one in the Capitolium and one in the Roman Forum.

² *Relazione distinta della solenne cavalcata, con la quale il Sommo Pontefice Innocenzo XIII. si portò a prendere il possesso della sacrosanta Basilica di S. Giovanni in Laterano nel giorno di domenica 16. novembre 1721: con la descrizione degli archi trionfali, eretti in onore di Sua Santità e di tutte le pompe e feste, che in tal funzione si sono ammirate.* Rome: Nella stamparia di Pietro Ferri..., 1721.



The former was commissioned by the Senate, following the Corinthian order and displaying different allegorical figures: Victory, Fame, Justice and Charity. The second arch, commissioned by the Duke of Parma, also displayed allegorical figures such as Prudence, Charity, Justice, Religion, Wealth and Magnificence. They were designed by the architects Pompeo Aldrovandini and Alessandro Specchi, a disciple of Carlo Fontana, who was very experienced in this kind of work. Fontana would later be appointed by Innocent XIII to work at the *Fabbrica di San Pietro*.

The tile panel's narrative

Let us return to the analysis of this tile panel, which was apparently created by the hand and workshop of the tile painter Valentim de Almeida (1692-1779) and installed by the

mestre ladrilhador José da Costa in 1737 (as the documentation confirms).³

We find ourselves looking at a visual route that centres on the experience of space as a support for wall painting, and on specific dimensions of pictorial representation: the papal procession, the space of the architectural structures, the meaning of the path that is taken and the figures represented in the parade.

We do not know how the entire image began and ended, as the oldest photographs reveal that it was truncated by a doorway, which is currently covered. [Fig. 5]

Working our way from left to right and scrutinising the image closely, the aforementioned engraving by Giovanni Frezza (1659-1741) is likely to have been a printed source that the painter followed in certain aspects.

The figure of the Pope sitting in an open litter marks the centre of this extensive composition. [Fig. 6] The piece is unified by a continuous, exuberantly jagged border in the Joanine style, with various decorative motifs: cartouches, shells and cherubs.⁴

Analysing the different sections of the panel, we tried to determine how the tile painter interpreted this graphic source and the idea of a papal procession, in a fantasised image of Rome with altered proportions and synthesised figuration.

The first tiles of the procession, to the left of the observer, show the beginning of the trajectory, punctuated by a tree (a device commonly used in tile imagery of this period to demarcate scenes and narrative rhythms). This tree hides a fortification that resembles the Castel Sant'Angelo, a landmark along the *Via Papalis*.

We have highlighted the figure of the *timbaleiro* playing the cavalry drum — which closely replicates the one in the engraving — and the trumpeters further ahead, in the middle, with a group of several feathered knights, two of them carrying pontifical banners [Fig. 7].

FIG. 5. The Monastery of São Vicente de Fora, Lisbon [Graphic material] / photographs by João Miguel dos Santos Simões (1907-1972), negative, 1960-1970, Art Library | FCG.

³ It seems that José da Costa was the *ladrilhador* responsible for laying the tiles of the cloisters of São Vicente de Fora, as documented by a 1736 receipt: “*E no que se deu ao ladrilhador Joseph da Costa, de assentar quatorze mil e quinhentos e vinte e hum azulejos nos sobre claustros, a rezam de dez mil reis cada milheiro, cento e quarenta e sinco mil duzentos e dez reis*”. This reference to the document was published by Soromenho, Miguel (2010) — “*Hum dos Mayores e Magnificos Templos não só de todo o Reyno mas da Europa: a Obra Filipina*”: in Saldanha, Sandra (coord.), *Mosteiro de S. Vicente de Fora. Arte e História*, Lisbon: Centro Cultural do Patriarcado Português, pp. 129-153.

⁴ It is important to consider the figurative repertoire of the wider pictorial programme for terrace decoration that forms the context for this panel. Such spaces often record everyday scenes from the 18th century.



It should be noted that the timbale has an embroidered cloth bearing Pope Innocent's coat of arms, which has already been decoded.

The procession continues with more horsemen and the introduction of an empty coach drawn by horse teams, a new element in the engraving. Here, in line with the printed source, we also see the Roman Colosseum, another of the symbolic landmarks on this route [Fig. 8].



FIG. 6. The cloister terrace at the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. Tile panels of the north wall. The Pope's Procession. Innocent XIII on an open litter. Photographic credits: ©Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Teresa Verão.

FIG. 7. The cloister terrace of the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. Tile panels on the north wall. Detail of the *Timbaleiro*. Photographic credits: ©Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Teresa Verão.

At this point, we would emphasise another highly prevalent detail: the birds in flight all over the panel. This provides a delicate and atmospheric sense of space that is absent from the engraving, which is limited to the condensed depiction of the procession.

Further on, and just ahead of this group, we see a litter or chair carried by two men, escorted by the Pope's halberdiers.



This is followed by the central scene, the most important of the panel, concentrating on the Pope's private retinue of grooms.

Two long-capped figures astride a pair of horses seem to be directing the papal procession and setting the pace. They are followed by a mounted cardinal with a raised cross, who is explicitly identified in the engraving: *Monseignor Auditori di Ruote chi porte la croche avanti la Santita* [Fig. 9].

In the background, a knight wearing a large feathered hat and holding a staff is accompanied by a large group of knights in long cloaks, along with some servants on foot. The endless, winding line of princes, barons, Roman grandes and foreign dignitaries marks the route that has been traversed.

Once again, the painter is referring to the engraving (which he certainly knew) but eliminates most of the figurative elements while seeming to capture and synthesise the most important scenes and moments. The architecture appears to



be that of an imaginary landscape, suggesting an invented Rome with elements of the countryside or wilderness.

Finally, in the last section before the door abruptly cuts off our view, we see the suggestion of a fortification that is remarkably similar to Castel Sant'Angelo, which we first encountered in the company of several armoured cavalry soldiers [Fig. 10].

The structure has been interrupted by the addition of doors, windows and annexes that truncated different sections, and damaged by the installation outdoors and a lack of protection. Sadly, it is in extremely poor condition and requires urgent intervention.

Iconological interpretation

Given that this is a seemingly unique depiction in *azulejos* of the parade following the enthronement of a Roman

FIG. 8. The cloister terrace of the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. Tile panels on the north wall. Detail of the Colosseum. Photographic credits: ©Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Teresa Verão.

FIG. 9. The cloister terrace of the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. Tile panels on the north wall. *The Monsignor Auditori di Ruote carrying the Cross.* Photographic credits: ©Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Teresa Verão.



pontiff, it is important to clarify its meaning and iconological implications. The personality of the nuncio who would become pope, the interests and the strategy pursued by King John V with regard to his election and the symbolic projection of this fact, in line with the Baroque mentality, are all promising areas for art historians to explore and elucidate.

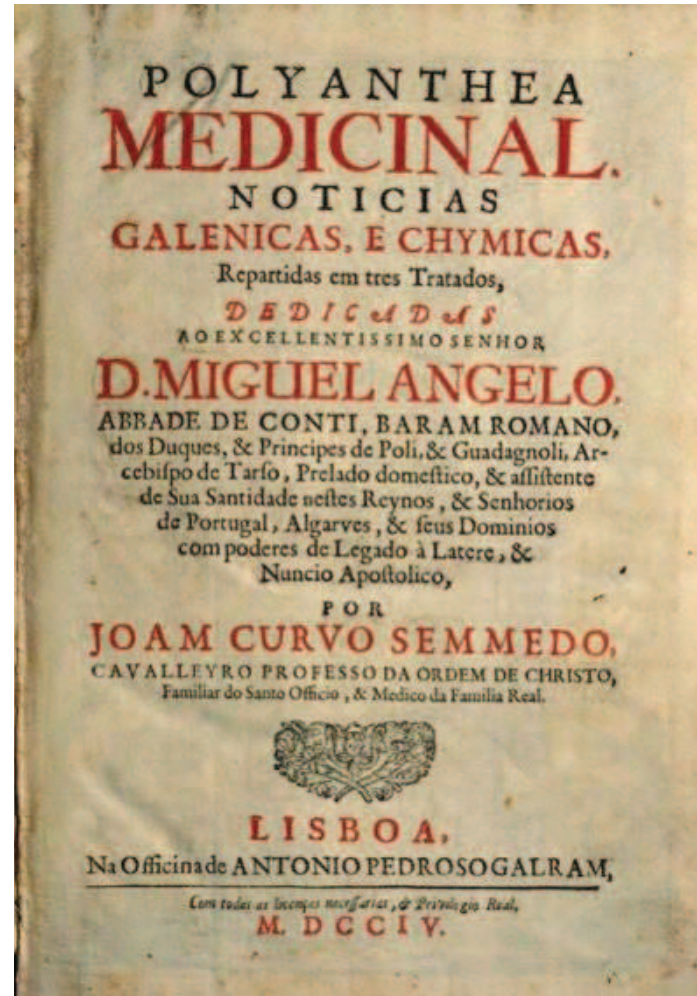


FIG. 10. The cloister terrace of the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. Tile panels on the north wall. Fortification, very similar to the Castel Sant'Angelo. Photographic credits: ©Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Teresa Verão.

FIG. 11. *Polyanthea Medicinal. Noticias Galenicas e Chymicas Repartidas em três Tratados, Dedicadas ao Excelentissimo Senhor D. Miguel Angelo, Abbade de Conti, Baram Romano [...]*, 1704.

At the centre we find Michelangelo Conti, a Roman baron and member of the illustrious family of the dukes and princes of Poli. He was apostolic nuncio and “assistant to His Holiness in these Kingdoms and Lordships of Portugal”, as stated in the dedication of *Polyanthea Medicinal*,⁵ a monumental treatise

⁵ *Polyanthea Medicinal. Noticias Galenicas e Chymicas Repartidas em três Tratados, Dedicadas ao Excelentissimo Senhor D. Miguel Angelo, Abbade de Conti, Baram Romano [...]*, 1704.

on medicine published in 1704. Written by João Curvo Semedo, this treatise [Fig. 11] was one of the most read therapeutic and pharmacological works during this period and reprinted several times. The fact that one of its editions was dedicated to the Italian prelate is proof of the high regard in which he was held (Flor, 2013, 135-158; Raggi, 2014, 107-129).

Yet it is the panegyric delivered by the Count of Ericeira at the Royal Academy of History, less than two months after the election, that best illustrates the impact of the event in Portugal, duly enhanced by the kind of discourse and oratory that were typical of the Baroque period. In a Lisbon that, according to the author, imitates Rome with its seven hills, people rejoiced at the news, bells rang out and lights were strung up to decorate buildings. The celebrations culminated in a solemn *Te Deum* sung at the Patriarchal Church before the king and the whole court.

Ericeira argues that the newly acclaimed hero, although born into a family whose oldest branch moved from Preneste to Rome at the time of the Republic and held religious and political offices there for twenty centuries, should nonetheless be regarded as a Portuguese pontiff. This supposedly deep-rooted nationality is borne out by his affection for the Portuguese, his proficiency in the Portuguese language and the fact that he resided in the kingdom for a decade as Cardinal Protector.

But there is more to be said about Innocent, whose name is identical to that of the pope who recognised King Afonso Henriques as the founder of Portugal. He was christened Michelangelo and his coronation ended on 18 May, the feast day of St Michael the Archangel, leader of God's heavenly army. Worshipped since the Early Middle Ages in the Gargano mountains, in Puglia, St Michael became popular after appearing above Hadrian's mausoleum during a procession in Rome led by Gregory the Great. The end of the terrible plague epidemic during that same period consolidated his popularity in the papal city, and the angel, with a sword in his hand, became a protective figure. This was the thrust of the panegyric delivered at the Academy.

Crowned on the day of the apparition, Cardinal Conti identified, above all, with the angel, who was also the custodian

and first protector of the kingdom of Portugal. Having appeared in the sky to ensure the victory of Portugal's founding king in Santarém, the saint had inspired various temples, chapels and altars, as is well documented in Friar Bernardo de Brito's *Chronicle of Cister* and Jorge Cardoso's *Agiológio Lusitano*. King Manuel, who was also committed to celebrating St Michael as the kingdom's guardian angel, obtained the permission of Pope Leo X to hold an annual procession in his honour on the third Sunday of July.

This brings us to the coat of arms of the Conti family, which bears an eagle with the crossed keys of Saint Peter. The eagle is both an imperial bird and the symbol of St Michael the Archangel, as well as a general reference to the figure of the pope – the watchful pastor, the magnanimous prince, an example of wisdom, prudence and virtue. The eagle, as the queen of all birds and the enemy of vice, conveys several different meanings, which the director of the Academy's remarkable Baroque erudition does not fully cover. The bird has therefore been deliberately chosen for its symbolism to form part of the tile decoration.

Moreover, the composition evinces a political agenda. It can be seen as a homage to the Cardinal Protector, but also as an evocation of an idealised Rome, which the *Joanine* clergy sought to emulate. Created around 1736, twelve years after the pope's death, at a time when the conflict regarding the different nuncios had already been settled, the decoration illustrates a successful diplomatic move by the Portuguese authorities, committed to what Borges de Macedo described as the achievement of diplomatic parity within the Holy See (Macedo, 1987, 259-263).

Going through the list of participants in the *Possesso* ceremony, we find two Portuguese cardinals, Nuno da Cunha de Ataíde e Melo and José Pereira de Lacerda, who were sent to the conclave with the instruction of voting for "the Portuguese candidate". However, they were unable to do so, as they arrived after the election. There is a partial record of their activities afterwards, but no information regarding the unforgettable event in which they took part.

Likewise, nothing seems to have been written by Father Manuel de Campos, the Jesuit who accompanied the two cardinals and the author of a series of 29 letters filled with relevant artistic information, recently studied by Teresa Leonor Vale (Vale, 2018, 387-393).

It is tempting, therefore, to picture these men as part of this composition, albeit in a vague, merely indicative way — the *azulejo* was never particularly suited to portraiture. Could these cardinals have been responsible for such a unique commission? There is no indication of this, apart from the work's richly allusive depiction of a Baroque parade. Public festivities acquired an added brilliance with the inclusion of the nuncios and, above all, the magnificence that became typical of the Corpus Christi procession from 1719 on.

Regarding this decorative panel, two paintings originally found in São Vicente de Fora are currently on display in the Museum of Aveiro. Possibly of Italian origin, they show St Peter's Square and a view of the Corpus Christi procession. There must have been several other related works, but it is impossible to determine how many. In any case, the vast sequence of images depicting this imaginary Rome represents a unique case in the artistic history of Portugal and Europe, given its transposition to a medium as unexpected as the *azulejo*. The centre is occupied by the majestic profile of Innocent XIII blessing the crowd — and, in a way, the kingdom of Portugal, as the gesture was perceived at the time.

Understood as an opulent display of power, the Baroque feast combines its public dimension with the communicative potency of art, and exhibits a complex visual culture supported by ephemeral architectural structures. This is made particularly clear in António Bonet Correa's important study on this period, highlighting the social and urban aspects of such events, as well as their clear symbolic dimension (Correa, 1990, 5-32). The feast, imbued with religious dogma, was a practical coagulation of the period's institutional verticalism, whose primary function was that of a meta-discourse, as noted by Fernando R. de la Flor in his book on Baroque representation and ideology in the Hispanic world (Flor, 2002, 163-165).

Due to its double significance, both religious and political, the papal *Cavalcata* was embraced by Portugal's absolute monarchy as a celebration of the kingdom and the international politics of its king, guided by Catholic interests. Translated into the narrative processes employed in tile decorations, directed at the select few who could admire them on the terrace of the Monastery, this event tends to lose its documental value as being linked to a specific historical event, and acquires instead a somewhat generic appearance due to its similarity to many of the compositions produced during this period. Hence the failure to identify the subject matter, aggravated by the lack of a caption, and the need for the historical investigation now being presented.

The theme of the enthronement of Pope Innocent XIII is of remarkable artistic and cultural significance and brought to the cloisters of São Vicente an image of Rome that was not entirely faithful to that of the actual city in 1721, when the papal celebrations took place. This was also known as the year of all wonders, when Alessandro Scarlatti's cantata *La Ninfa del Tago*, commissioned by Cardinal D. Nuno da Cunha, was premiered to celebrate King John V's name day. This work was recently rescued from oblivion by the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra (2018), evoking Rome and its inhabitants seen from the river Tagus, painted in blue and white.

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