

Díez del Corral Corredoira, Pilar (Ed.). *Politics and the Arts in Lisbon and Rome: The Roman Dream of John V of Portugal*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation/Liverpool University Press, 2019, 304 pp. ISBN: 978-1789620122.

António Filipe Pimentel¹

With the prestigious seal of the University of Oxford and included in the *Studies in the Enlightenment* series, edited by Pilar Díez del Corral Corredoira—a lecturer at UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia—Departamento de Historia del Arte), and a young but respected researcher into the cultural relations that existed between the Iberian kingdoms and pontifical Rome in the eighteenth century—an important anthology of studies was recently published, devoted to a particularly significant period in Portuguese history: the reign of John V (Dom João V), roughly corresponding to the first half of the same century (1706-1750).

As the introduction makes quite clear, “this book was conceived to highlight the role of John V and his particular obsession with Rome, in an attempt to better understand his cultural policy and the new image of Portugal that emerged during his reign” (Díez 10). In this sense, besides the editor of the series (who is responsible for the chapter dedicated to elucidating the complex history of the *Academia de Portugal* in Rome), the other authors of the texts in the anthology all belong to a group of researchers who were essentially recruited from what can best be described as ‘the new generation of historiographers’ from the areas of political history, art history and musicology.

The members of this group are David Martín Marcos (a lecturer at the same university, but in the area of early modern history), Marília de Azambuja Ribeiro (Assistant Professor of Early Modern History at the Federal University of Pernambuco), Danielle Kuntz (Assistant Professor of History of Music and Literature at Baldwin Wallace University—Berea, Ohio, USA), Cristina Fernandes (a full-time researcher at the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa—INET-MD), Fernando Miguel M. Jalôto (with a master’s degree in music and a PhD student in the same department), Giuseppina Raggi (a researcher at CES-Center for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra), and Iris Haist (with a PhD on the Italian Baroque

¹ Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal. *Email:* afpimuc@gmail.com

sculptor Pietro Bracci and currently the temporary curator of the Graphic Arts Collection at the Art Collections, in Chemnitz, Germany).

All of them started their research careers in the second half of the 1990s. They are also all united by the dynamic nature of their research, and especially by their common interest in the Portuguese political and cultural reality between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a whole, they reflect a new and important practice of networking, and the exchange of experiences at an international level. This work, defined as “a real cross-disciplinary publication” (as explained in the introduction), “does not pretend to cover all sides of that complex period but merely [to] offer the reader a glimpse of the most recent outcomes of new research,” as well as “to disseminate knowledge about this splendid king and the arts of his period among English speakers” (Díez 10)—and this is certainly not the least of its merits.

Indeed, despite the pioneering interest of American historian Robert C. Smith,² followed by George Kubler,³ the French Yves Bottineau⁴ and Germain Bazin⁵, the important contributions of Aurora Scotti,⁶ Marie-Thérèse Mandroux-France,⁷ and Pier Paolo Quieto,⁸ the impact of important international exhibitions, such as *Roma Lusitana—Lisbona Romana* (Rome, 1990-91)⁹ and *The Age of Baroque in Portugal* (Washington, 1993-1994),¹⁰ (whose catalogs also involved a major scientific collaboration), the notable collection *Giovanni V do Portogallo (1707-1750) e la cultura romana del suo tempo*¹¹ and, after the end of the millennium, the essential book by Angela Delaforce on the royal patronage of John V and the Portuguese elite of that period,¹² it is possible to state that “certain traditional interpretations, remnants of nineteenth and early twentieth-century history, allocate a peripheral role to Portugal, which is, to say the least, a complete misinterpretation of Portugal’s (historical) pre-eminence and

² “João Frederico Ludovice, an eighteenth-century architect in Portugal.” In *Art Bulletin*, Chicago, vol. XVIII (3), 1936; “The Building of Mafra.” In *Apollo*, London, vol. XCVII (134), 1973.

³ Kubler, George and Martin Soria. *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions, 1500 to 1800*. Middlesex, 1959.

⁴ “Le goût de Jean V: art et gouvernement.” In *Bracara Augusta*, Braga, 27:64 (76), 1973.

⁵ *Les palais de la foi, le monde des monastères baroques*, Fribourg, 2 vols., 1980.

⁶ “L’attività di Filippo Juvara a Lisbona alla luce delle più recenti interpretazioni critiche della sua architettura con una appendice sui rapporti Roma-Lisbona.” In *Bracara Augusta*, Braga, 27:63 (75), 1973.

⁷ “La Patriarcale du Roi Jean V de Portugal.” In *Colóquio Artes*, Lisbon, 2^a série (83), 1989; (with Preaud, Maxime), *Catalogues de la collection d’estampes de Jean V, roi de Portugal*, Lisbon and Paris, 3 vol., 2003.

⁸ *D. João V de Portugal. A sua influência na arte italiana do século XVIII*, Lisbon, 1990.

⁹ Roca, Sandra Vasco; Borghini, Gabriele; Ferraris, Paola (a cura di), Rome, 1990.

¹⁰ Lavenson, Jay A. (ed.), Washington DC, 1993, cat.

¹¹ Roca, Sandra Vasco; Borghini, Gabriele (a cura di), Rome, 1995.

¹² *Art and Patronage in Eighteenth-century Portugal*, Cambridge, 2002.

of its magnitude” (Díez 11). And all this in spite of the parallel movement developed by Portuguese historiography (with particular emphasis on the contribution made by the history of art, through the study of the great royal enterprises) following the publication of the pioneering work by Ayres de Carvalho,¹³ and especially since the last decade of the twentieth century,¹⁴ culminating, in recent years, in the monumental exhibition *A Encomenda Prodigiosa. From the Patriarchal Basilica to the Royal Chapel of St. John the Baptist*,¹⁵ in the important collective work *The Chapel of St John the Baptist in the Church of Sao Roque: The Commission, the Building, the Collection* (published in Portuguese, English, and Italian Editions),¹⁶ and in the no less relevant exhibition *From Rome to Lisbon: An Album for the Magnanimous King*.¹⁷

In this context, and given that “for many reasons, this interpretation is still quite dominant in our disciplines” (history, art history, and musicology), the objective of the work can be defined as follows: “to conduct a more balanced assessment of the true value and importance of John V’s Portugal and its role in the artistic milieu of eighteenth-century Europe,” thereby stimulating “new researchers to tackle Portugal’s history, art and music” and, naturally, leading to a reinforcement of the attention paid to the subject “in English-speaking countries” (Díez 11). Stating, without reproach, that “the (Portuguese) royal court was one of the most brilliant and flamboyant in Europe during the reign of John V,” the book seeks to demonstrate this premise, deliberately leaving outside its field of analysis the large royal enterprises (the Palácio da Ribeira, Mafra, the Royal Chapel of St. John the Baptist, the Aqueduto das Águas Livres, or the Patriarchal Basilica, as well as the important role played by the architect Ludovice), as these are already sufficiently analyzed by the historiography of the previous generation. Neither claiming to be “an exhaustive account or a ‘companion’ for the period of John V” (Díez 12), the book instead focuses on areas that are less frequently addressed: thus, it is more innovative and, above all, more illustrative of the possibilities offered by “deeper research into this fascinating period” (Díez 11).

¹³ *A Escultura em Mafra*, Mafra, 1950; *D. João V e a arte do seu tempo*, Lisbon, 2 vols., 1960-1962.

¹⁴ Just to mention the most important ones: Pereira, José Fernandes (ed.), *Dicionário da Arte Barroca em Portugal*, Lisbon, 1989; Rossa, Walter, *Além da Baixa, Índícios de Planeamento Urbano na Lisboa Setecentista* (Master’s Degree dissertation, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1990); Pimentel, António Filipe, *Arquitetura e Poder: o Real Edifício de Mafra*, Coimbra, 1992 (2nd ed., Lisbon, 2002); Saldanha, Nuno, *João V Magnífico: a Pintura em Portugal no Tempo de D. João V (1706-1750)*, cat., Lisbon, 1994; Pereira, José Fernandes, *Arquitetura e Escultura de Mafra: Retórica da Perfeição*, Lisbon, 1994; Moita, Ana Paula (et al), *Lisboa e o Aqueduto*, Lisbon, 1997, cat.; Vale, Teresa Leonor M., *A Escultura Italiana de Mafra*, Lisbon, 2002.

¹⁵ Pimentel, António Filipe (ed.), Lisbon, 2013, cat.

¹⁶ Vale, Teresa Leonor M. (ed), Lisbon, 2015 (London, 2017).

¹⁷ Vale, Teresa Leonor M. (ed), Lisbon, 2015, cat.

Organized in two parts—*Rome, paradigm and propaganda* and *Lisbon: creative reappropriation*—it brings together in the first part, in addition to the aforementioned contribution by Pilar Díez del Corral on the *Academia de Portugal*, texts by Martín Marcos (on the mechanisms of the construction of the Roman image of the Portuguese monarch), Marília de Azambuja Ribeiro (who deals with the use of the press by the Portuguese Crown, as an instrument of Roman affirmation), and Danielle Kunz (who delves into the allegorical representation of the Portuguese king and court, within the framework of the Roman Arcadian cultural circle and the specific framework of the musical order of Alessandro Scarlatti). The second part of the book, in turn, includes texts by Cristina Fernandes (looking at the relationship between music, ceremony, and architecture from the point of view of adapting the Roman models to the physical space of the Patriarchal Basilica of Lisbon), Fernando Miguel Jalôto (reconstituting the quite exemplary biographical path of the Neapolitan singer, composer, librettist, and poet Antonio Tedeschi between the court of John V and that of Joseph I), Giuseppina Raggi (underlining the active role of Queen Maria Anna of Austria in defining the artistic policy of John V through his protection of the opera as a musical genre and his responsibility in the construction of aulic theaters), and, finally, Iris Haist (who focuses on the monumental order of the Italian statues of Mafra, a process that she reconstructs in detail, proposing new attributions for the authorship of the group of unsigned images).

Conceived like a mirror, the two groups of texts find in Rome their point of union: in the *sui generis* appropriation of the ceremonial and festive model provided by the papal city for the benefit of a Caesarean (regalist) conception of power that would, in turn, serve as a model for the city of Lisbon. The subtitle chosen by Díez del Corral for her own text on the Portuguese Academy—“emulation and strategy in the papal city” (Díez 93)—sums up perfectly the general framework that guides this work, which has its starting point in the introduction entitled “*il viaggio mancato: John V and the origins of his vision of Rome.*” It is in the ambitious (and failed) program of the Portuguese sovereign that the whole of this perspicacious anthology finds both its historical (in the sense of historiographical) anchor and its literary anchor as an effective and seductive narrative.

The king’s plan was most likely conceived even before the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), in which Portugal was to participate from 1703 onwards, precisely in an attempt to strengthen its international role after the long period of oblivion corresponding to its dynastic union with Spain (1580-1640) and the complex cycle that followed the Restoration (1640-1668). Although it was finally thwarted (following the strong

opposition that it encountered both internally and from the European powers, who feared the consequences of such a prolonged absence of the young king, amid the expansionism of the new Spanish dynasty and the historic turbulence of the still fragile monarchy of the Braganza), this plan had, in fact, been meticulously drawn up between the monarch and the small group that surrounded him and enthusiastically supported the project at the court (Díez 3-4).

For two years, the monarch (traveling incognito) and his impressive entourage proposed to visit Flanders, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy (from Naples to Rome, without forgetting Venice—where he was to spend his carnival—Florence, and Turin), France, and finally Madrid, from where he would return to Portugal, crossing Andalusia. For that purpose, the illustrious Theatine Manuel Caetano de Sousa wrote a detailed guidebook, in which he developed 210 questions designed to guide the royal traveler in his inquiries about the “moral and natural state” of the powers with which he would come into contact. As stated in Díez del Corral’s contribution to the anthology, “looking at the detail and extent of the plans he laid out for his European tour (*Kavalierstour*), one cannot ignore how that *viaggio mancato* affected his whole life” (Díez 1).

And indeed, it was not, objectively, accidental that the long tour focused on the set of states on which the Portuguese strategic interests were focused: in addition to England (a former ally, with which the controversial Treaty of Methuen was signed in 1703), Flanders, and the Netherlands (to which Portugal was linked by cultural and commercial ties), the group of countries visited also included the German Empire, France, and Spain: the three Catholic powers said to be of the first magnitude, and whose inner circle the monarch was determined to join. And also Italy, from north to south, at the center of which was Pontifical Rome: a shining diplomatic stage that precisely defined the hierarchy of the Catholic powers.

Once the plan had been thwarted, John V concentrated his diplomatic efforts in Rome from 1716 onwards, where, thanks to the impressive financial resources that Brazil’s gold and diamond mines had provided him with, he was able to project an affirmative image of the Portuguese Crown, which would radiate throughout Europe, precisely through the (direct and indirect) channels of diplomacy. Thanks to this publicity operation, Portugal would effectively position itself as a first-rate Catholic power in which, as this book demonstrates, the arts and the panegyric would play an instrumental role.

But it was this same national reality (as a Catholic power) and Portugal’s own dimension as a Christian empire that stimulated the internal use of the aura that would be consecrated in the pontifical treatment of the Most Faithful Majesty. The concession of this

title, in 1748, crowned the work of his reign in a purely Caesarean fashion through an open declaration of enlightened regalism. With the construction of what we would today call a prodigious database (cultural, artistic, festive, and ceremonial), Lisbon thus became an extraordinary and creative reappropriation of Rome (imperial and papal), being simultaneously a paradigm and the main focus of investment in terms of Portuguese advertising. Precisely because the ideological basis of the Portuguese Monarchy itself deterred any literal appropriation, an extension was imposed on a European scale (France, England, Spain, the Netherlands, and, it is now known, also Germany) of this obsessive search for a prodigious source of information that would instruct the city's construction within the framework of a diplomatic network of true choice.

In 1755, five years after the monarch's death, the tragic Lisbon earthquake destroyed many examples of his efforts, turning the work of the modern historian into a task of genuine archaeology. Likewise, a peculiar process of *damnatio memoriae* would soon take place, melding together the readings of historiography throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century—perhaps because, as Russell-Wood said (quoted by Díez del Corral at the end of her introduction), “whatever he undertook, Dom João V did in great style.”¹⁸ And that is yet another obstacle that the historian has to surmount.

But the year should not end without mention of another illustration of the benefits of promoting deeper research into this fascinating period: Angela Delaforce's equally remarkable book, *The Lost Library of the King of Portugal*,¹⁹ a monumental reconstitution of the central core where all the information underpinning the monarch's reformist work would be brought together, forms a notable diptych with this book. Above all, they complement one another in their (clearly achieved) goal of “disseminating knowledge about this splendid king and the arts of his period among English speakers”. And both will surely stimulate new and enriching research about the true value and importance of “John V's Portugal and its role in the artistic milieu of eighteenth-century Europe”.

¹⁸ Russel Wood, Anthony J. R., “Portugal and the world in the age of Dom João V.” *The Age of the baroque in Portugal*, p. 28.

¹⁹ London, 2019.