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## Banquets at the Portuguese Court in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries: Space, Place and Tradition

*The representation of meals and banquets in Portuguese painting from the Renaissance to the early modern period is almost exclusively linked to religious imagery that features meals as rites associated with the Eucharist and Biblical texts. The food that appears in paintings by Gregório Lopes, Francisco Henriques, Vasco Fernandes (Grau Vasco), Josefa d'Ayala, (Josefa de Óbidos) is symbolic. What the royal family and the upper classes ate, how they were served, and food preparation appropriate for a banquet was left to the written work of the cook who served nobility and presented banquets in the royal household. Domingo Rodrigues, whose Arte de Cozinha of 1690, was the first cookbook to be published in Portugal, should be read along with the paintings as a guide that confirms the formality and symbolic presentation of royal meals. His work, practical in its details, gives us a view of the specifics of the court banquet in Portugal of the time and is in direct contrast to paintings of the same period.*

The representation of meals and banquets in Portuguese painting from the Renaissance to the early modern period is almost exclusively linked to religious imagery that features meals as rites associated with the Eucharist, Biblical stories such as Christ in the house of Mary and Martha, and the banquet of Herod and Salomé. In all of these, painters documented their understanding of the spaces in which the meals were taken. They rigorously recorded the shapes of the tables, the utensils that were used, the decorations that ornamented the rooms with brocades and the elaborate architectural details. The food that appears in these paintings is as symbolic as the settings, with little detail on what was offered at the royal table. What they ate, how they were served, hygiene and the elaborate food preparation appropriate for a banquet was left to the written work of the cook who served nobility and presented banquets in the royal household. Domingo Rodrigues, whose *Arte de Cozinha* of 1680, was the first cookbook to be published in Portugal, should be read alongside the paintings that confirm the formality and symbol of royal meals.

Portugal, in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries was one of the most dynamic areas in Europe, a position which was the result of its « discoveries », the exploration of Asia, its growing empire, trade with Flanders and its dynastic links to the court of Burgundy. These aspects made Portugal strategically placed among European

powers, with specific influences from both Flemish and Italian painting and architecture at the Portuguese court<sup>1</sup>. There were contacts, too through marriages with Spain and Italy that resulted in cultural and artistic traces in Portuguese painting of the time. As Kate Lowe has argued, the view of the Italian Renaissance as the basis for cultural development in the period of 1400-1550 has obscured the contributions to culture that Portugal made. One of the difficulties of seeing the importance of these contributions rests with the notion that the Portuguese Renaissance was judged according to the standards and achievements of the Italian Renaissance<sup>2</sup>.

Italy's artistic influence has been claimed as dominant for Renaissance painting and sculpture in Europe, but for the Portuguese and other contemporaries, Flemish art was more greatly valued. The Portuguese court collected broadly, including Italian, Flemish painting as well as items from their overseas colonies. Visual evidence points to the importance attributed to northern engravings, especially those of Martin Schongauer and Albrecht Dürer, and to the Portuguese appreciation for a highly detailed rendering of individual figures, gesture, clothing, and interior architectural detail in painting. The northern emphasis on detail provided the Portuguese with an alternative to the classical tradition, especially in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Manuel I (1495-1521). The Manueline style, noted for its exuberant and rich transformation of vegetative form and nautical symbols was idiosyncratic when compared to contemporary decorative work in Italy and was a distinctively national style that incorporated Moorish and gothic elements, and functioned symbolically to claim and advance notions of the Portuguese empire.

The acceptance of Italian classicism eventually prevailed under João III (1521-1557), the successor to Manuel I, but was in continual competition with the preference for the Flemish and northern detail. The critical decade for change came in the 1530s when the term « al romano » appears in building records. Some of the credit for the spread of humanism in Portugal is owed to Miguel da Silva (1480-1556), whose was Portuguese ambassador to Rome, and later bishop and later cardinal there. His long-term residency in the eternal city resulted in the dissemination of new ideas from Italy. Baldassare Castiglione dedicated *Il Libro del cortegiano* to him, and he was recognized as having dual nationality. If we can point to one individual who changed Portuguese attitudes, it would most likely be da Silva<sup>3</sup>.

The spread of humanism and a classical style is especially notable in paintings where the banquet and court ritual are presented under the guise of Biblical stories. In 1539 Gregório Lopes, painter to the royal court, began work on the principle altarpiece in the Church of S. John the Baptist in Tomar, which included the *Beheading of John the Baptist*, and its companion piece, *The Feast of Herod*<sup>4</sup> (fig. 1). Here was

court life revealed within a spectacular story that reached across food, murder, and seduction, set in Portugal, but with thematic connections to the Orient. The gospel stories appear in Mark and Matthew in which Salomé dances, the king promises her any wish, followed by the decapitation of Saint John the Baptist. Mark records the story as follows :

When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests ; and the king said to the girl, « Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it ». And he solemnly swore to her, « Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom ». She went out and said to her mother, « What should I ask for ? ». She replied, « The head of John the baptizer ». Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, « I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter ». The king was deeply grieved ; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother <sup>5</sup>.

The painting that illustrates this disturbing narrative shows the Tetrarch Herod Antipas seated at a rectangular table covered in white linen with his wife Herodias to his right. Before them is Salomé, richly clothed in a fashionable silk dress in red and black with slashed sleeves in the Italian style, and a brocade cloak. The kneeling courtier enters the space of the banquet from the left and offers the head of the Baptist to Salomé who delicately receives the platter that she moves towards the king and queen. Meanwhile, three young boys play with the figs that have fallen from the table and frolic on the carpet at the table's edge, oblivious to the event above them, but observed by a courtier to the right who has draped a white cloth over his shoulder. Beyond the banquet space, three courtiers enter from an adjacent loggia where there are four other figures who stand or sit within the opulently decorated loggia with Ionic columns that opens to a high wooden ceiling. The banquet room is luxuriously decorated with Oriental carpets that cover the floor, and heavy brocades are suspended behind the royal couple that covers a dresser on which plates and vessels of gold are placed. Above the royal table is a fringed canopy in heavy black velvet. The objects on the table are in woven baskets suggest not a meal, so much as a series of symbolic items that advance the narrative : the figs refer to the Fall and to the sin of nakedness and seduction in Salomé's dance<sup>6</sup>, the grapes to the sacrifice symbolized by the Eucharist, along with pears and a single knife that points toward John the Baptist. In addition there are bowls with sweets to be offered at the end of the meal to be read symbolically as the

'offering' at the end of the meal as the head of John the Baptist. The table is set, the banquet is to proceed, but it is a meal that records sin and sacrifice in what is to be consumed as well as its bloody outcome. Clearly this is no ordinary meal.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was no artist in Portugal so well suited to paint in detail the sensational links between the carnality of the feast and the intrusion into the sumptuous space of the gory remains that are evidence of murder. Gregório Lopes was fully engaged with a new understanding of a perspective space that launched the viewer into the distance and back, as well as a highly mannered gesture that matched the opulence of the architecture and its decorations. Artifice and refinement are set against sin and salvation.

The symbolic markers of the banquet are here, and they reveal the rituals and appearance of the court at the time. The shape of the table, the tapestries and canopies that designate the place of honor, the placement of the tablecloth and location and type of food are all used in paintings of royal banquets. In earlier representations of court banquets from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, tapestries and canopies are used to mark the space of the king. In *The Banquet of D. João I with the Duke of Lancaster*<sup>7</sup> (fig. 2), the king sits before long table under a canopied brocade with his coat of arms, his guests at his side. The courtiers come and go with plates of food, and the tiled room is hung with the coats of arms of those in attendance. This same use of textiles in paintings of the Last Supper appears repeatedly throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in Francisco Henriques' *Last Supper* done for the altarpiece in the cathedral at Évora of 1508, and again in 1535 in *Jesus in the House of Martha* (fig. 3) from the workshop of Vasco Fernandes where they are used to honor Christ and his celebration of the Eucharist<sup>8</sup>.

It is characteristic that the food on the table in these pictures carries symbolic meaning. In Lopes' *The Feast of Herod* (fig. 1) the figs recall the shame with which Adam and Eve covered themselves on their expulsion, but also as seeds to be sown in the multiplication of Christian followers as the word of the gospel was spread. Here the figs suggest sweetness and abundance as they appear on the king's table. The grapes are included as a reminder the sacrificial wine used in the Eucharist and are symbolic of the sacrifice of Christ. The pears, enclosed in a woven basket, were for Augustine of Hippo, a reminder of temptation, and mentioned in Book Two of his *Confessions* where he compares his sin to that of Adam. The pear appears frequently in Flemish fruit paintings from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and two rest on the marble dais in Carlo Crivelli's *Madonna and Child Enthroned* of 1472<sup>9</sup> where they are placed as substitutes for the apple, the temptation in paradise, and the Fall of Man. All of these items of symbolic food are placed on the banquet table that is covered with a white-fringed linen tablecloth with folds at

the edge, indicating great care, and the purity of the banquet brought into direct contrast with the bloodied head of John. *The Beheading of John the Baptist*, the companion panel to the *Feast of Herod*, shows a gruesome decapitation, where blood spurts from the Baptist's head as he kneels in chains and his head is carried away by the same courtier who enters the banquet room in the following sequence. The iconographic programme is rich, multi-layered and points to a knowledge of Italian and Flemish sources with a committed shift on the part of Lopes towards both a classicizing, mannered portrayal of the royal court and its participants.

There is one other aspect that forms an undercurrent for this picture that leads us to trade, exploration and contact with the 'exotic' Orient. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to travel south along the African coast, and then north to India in their search for spices. Their national identity was largely based on their pride in empire and their discoveries. « We are in search of spices and Christians », Vasco de Gama reported in his journal of 1498 that documented his arrival in Calicut on the Malabar Coast in western India. Gregorio Lopes painted a bearded Herod forty odd years later in a costume that combines the elaborate dress of a northern European king, and headwear that suggests the turban of an imagined East, with an unspecified sense of an exotic ruler and how he might appear.

By comparison, *Jesus in the House of Martha* (fig. 3) of 1535 by the workshop of Vasco Fernandes, is evidence of the links that the Portuguese had to northern trade and Flemish art, and to the engravings of Albrecht Dürer. It is likely that the work was commissioned by Bishop Miguel da Silva for the Chapel of St. Martha in the Bishop's Palace at Fontela, Da Silva's coat of arms appear on the plinths of the two columns that enclose the scene and it is likely that the visual and textual sophistication was in part due to his lengthy stay in Italy and his humanist contacts. It has been claimed da Silva appears as Lazarus, seated to the right of Christ, his face marked by nostalgia with details that are that of a portrait<sup>10</sup>.

The banquet scene is that of a simple meal in the house of Martha, who addresses Christ as she enters the room from the left. The table is covered in the white cloth of purity placed over an Oriental carpet ; there is only bread, a plate and two knives on the table, and as in other banquet scenes, the guest of honor is seated in front of hanging brocade, and under a canopy. Above the table, the space opens up to a coffered ceiling and beyond to a village typical of a northern landscape scene based on the partial use of Dürer's engraving of *The Prodigal Son* of 1494-1498. The banquet room has been elevated as a space marked off for that specific purpose, and a man to the right ascends the stairs with a basket of pears. Above him a picture (or an opening to the outside) shows a scene in which St. Martha tames a dragon that she takes to the village where the townspeople kill it, are converted to Christianity,

and name their town in Provence Tarrasque after the dragon<sup>11</sup>. To the far left, a man looks furtively from behind a door as he observes the scene from what appears to be another room where there is a dresser with silver vessels and clay pots.

Most importantly, is the contrast between Mary, the figure who sits in front of the table, and Martha, who stands to her right. Mary is the figure of melancholy, her pose a replica of Dürer's engraving of *Melancholia I* of 1514. This may be explained by the contrast between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. In 1508 Christoforo Landino published *Christophori Landini Quattuor* in which he debated the qualities of the contemplative and active life, using Mary, the contemplative, and Martha the active, as examples of his argument. He compares the idea of *iustitia* and *religio*, the principles of action and contemplation and claims that both conduct the soul to the highest degree of perfection. According to Landino both ways of being bring the practitioner closer to Christ. One completes the other but the preference of the author is inclined toward Mary the *religio* or contemplation, although he does not forget the importance of duty for humanity that an active life requires. If we consider the placement of the figures in which Mary appears in the foreground, the *vita contemplativa* also appears to be the preference of the artist, and arguably an aspect of Portuguese identity<sup>12</sup>. Melancholy, Vítor Serrão has written, is one of the most obsessive topics of Portuguese identity. The theme recurs in literature poetry, music and art. How are we to study, José Saramago has asked, and to go beyond the visceral pain, and this fundamental melancholy of the Portuguese<sup>13</sup>. Never in Portugal was an engraving used with so much intention as that of Vasco Fernandes and his adaptation of Dürer's *Melancholia I*<sup>14</sup>.

What the court consumed at the royal table, how it was presented, and how these differed according to the occasion is not immediately apparent in the paintings that concentrate on religious themes. Nevertheless, the space of the banquet, the decorations of the room set aside for that purpose and the vessels and containers are contemporary with royal practice. For visual representations of the actual appearance of foods, especially the convent sweets that were pervasive at royal tables, one looks to Josefa d'Ayala, also known as Josefa de Óbidos, who worked in the 17<sup>th</sup> century at approximately the same time as Domingo Rodrigues, who cooked in the royal household. Her work has that sharp realism so characteristic of Spanish painting and the bodegones, which comes from the influence of her father Baltasar Gomes Figueira who was trained as a painter in Seville. He returned with his Spanish wife and daughter Josefa de Óbidos who spend her life painting convent altarpieces and small devotional scenes, first in Coimbra and then in and around Óbidos where she lived until her death in 1684. For the observer of items on the table, Josefa renders

a luscious and fragrant picture of the products in which nuns specialized (fig. 4). Yet these are not simply presentations for the pleasure of the eye and the temptation of the palate. They issue from a deeply spiritual well that draws on the objects of daily life as a manifestation of the generosity and abundance of the divine. Without exception, Josefa's paintings register her belief in goodness and plenitude. When she paints a scene of the banquet of Herod and Salome, she locates the figures in the luminosity of candlelight typical of the baroque period, and includes none of the carnality typical of other representations of the scene<sup>15</sup>. In a simple scene of the Holy Family at table, she links every item to its symbolic value: the salt and its link to Jesus as the salt of the earth, the fish, the knife that points to Jesus, and a melon split into two as double sign of a premonition of sacrifice, with its many seeds that will produce followers of the resurrected Christ<sup>16</sup>. This symbolism extends to the still lives of baskets of food surrounded with flowers in which the precise placement of the food on the table attests to its importance.

In *Still Life with Bread Rolls and Tablecloth* (fig. 4), the bread is covered with a napkin edged with lace, a Eucharistic reference to the bread on the altar. The cloth has a dual purpose. It covers the food, and it covers a part of the table, where it works to remind the viewer of the divine provider. When the cloth covers the food, it is divinity that does so as a shadowy presence<sup>17</sup>. In everything, Josefa saw the hand of God and simple objects are invested with a power that shows a symbolic reading of the world. Ana Hatherly has shown the extent to which these still lives are linked to the contemporary Baroque poetry of Soror Maria do Céu, where food and flowers are both valorized as earthly, and spiritualized as other worldly. In Josefa's painting, flowers surround the basket filled with bread and sweets, and are persistently used as an « archetypal figure of the soul at the center of the spiritual where carnations are emblematic of conjugal love, and poetry is matched to painting »<sup>18</sup>. Smell, taste, dark and light, all served to illuminate the mysterious illusory world. Josefa's paintings of delectable treats served as reminders of the sensory pleasures to be replaced by spiritual delights.

While paintings show us the surroundings of court banquets, and visually describe particular dishes, serving implements and table coverings, a cookbook of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, written from the point of view of one who prepared banquets, directed the placement of dishes on the banquet table, and observed strict etiquette, gives us the specifics on the court banquet in Portugal of the time. In 1680, thirty years after La Varenne published his cookbook in France, Domingos Rodrigues presented the *Arte de Cozinha* to the 8th Count of Vimioso whose father Rodrigues had served as cook in the north of Portugal for twenty-nine years (fig. 5). The first edition of the book was divided in two parts. The first book addressed methods of cooking meat, making



preserves, pies and tarts. In the second the writer included ways of preparing fish and seafood, fruit, vegetables, and sweets, and most importantly, ways of preparing banquets for any time of year. Rodrigues offered a variety of possibilities that included banquets for ambassadors, appropriate banquets for Lent and significantly, how these should be presented in a sequence that would please the palate as well as the eye. Rodrigues shows himself to be a competent and demanding master of cuisine whose many years in service provided him with a vast compendium of recipes, knowledge of regional products and how to prepare them.

This was the first printed cookbook in Portuguese and it shows the wide experience that Rodrigues had in presenting banquets and mounting memorable festivities. In his list of dishes, his emphasis on hard work and cleanliness, he demonstrates an awareness of what it meant to be a 'modern' cook. He was encouraged by the French emphasis on the natural taste of food and as a result he diminished the heavy spices of the Middle Ages. How he came to know of the precepts and culinary revolution of *Le cuisinier françois* is linked to power relations, court intrigue, and a catastrophic moment in the succession of the Portuguese kings. Through it all, Rodrigues continued his mission of providing spectacular meals for noble households consisting of many dishes in a clean and well-ordered kitchen.

In his prologue, the writer gives his reasons for publishing the book, saying that « men should not keep their knowledge to themselves because in doing so, they bury the talent that God gave them ». They should communicate that knowledge so that others might learn what they don't know<sup>19</sup>. Rodrigues, like other cooks of the time who published their recipes and manners of conducting proper rituals at table, communicated the knowledge that he had and in doing so located cooking as a civilizing force that could take its place among the arts. Naming his book the *Art* of cooking was an intentional means of placing his work within a literary and printed context.

Cooks, especially those who worked in aristocratic houses or for royal courts, were placed in a position of power, albeit one that was below stairs. As manager of banquets, Rodrigues played an important role in presenting his patron in the best light possible by providing a variety of dishes in a preconceived order. He was employed both to create and satisfy appetites, and to do so in a manner that impressed the guests with the wealth and sophistication of the host. But he also was intent on placing himself within the context of new ways of cooking that moved beyond the heavy spices and seasonings of the Middle Ages. Taste and the enjoyment of dishes that were balanced were to take precedence over the ostentatious display of plumed swans and pheasants eaten cold. What was new, was a service at table that included a thoughtful menu, the delivery by individual

waiters of hot food, all of these shaped in accordance with French rules.

Creating an appetite was still linked to the display of dishes for guests, and to this end the presentation of *cobertas* was managed by a parade of the dishes that was carried to the table with great ceremony. Looking was still an important part of eating, and the placement on the table was to be beautiful, impressive, and delivered with a theatricality meant to convince the guests of the status and wealth of a host who could convey his status through rare ingredients that were perfectly prepared. Rodrigues was responsible for making his employer shine in the eyes of others, and to do so, he needed knowledge of what he was to serve, including the best times of year to present meat or certain kinds of fish, which featured in the observation of Lent. On fish, for example, Rodrigues observes that seasonality is essential, and he gives a list of a variety of fresh and saltwater fish, and precisely when they should be consumed, some only in January and September, others only in April and October, with twenty recipes for preparing them.

As a teacher, Rodrigues gives a clear idea of the importance of the rituals of the banquet. He gives two directives, the first on how to prepare the meal according to the number of guests, and the second, how it should be served. Here was a ritual that was 'new'. In the Middle Ages, all dishes were placed on the table at once. Now, the presentation was successive. Here, for example, is his advice on a banquet for an ambassador in which he presented six courses in order to demonstrate the structure of a French service. At the center of the table he placed the most important dish, with eight dishes surrounding it in a circle. The middle sized ones were then surrounded by the smallest at the extremes. This pattern gave guests access to various dishes, though one could not possibly eat everything. Such an elaborate meal suggested the pleasure of seeing the dishes more than it implied a hefty appetite. Even so, stimulating the appetite both visually and physically was a requirement provided by the master cook.

Once the course had been consumed, the dishes were removed and the next course served, and so on until all six courses had been set before the diners. The new and more 'modern' approach to the banquet, which differed from that of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was that each course was meant to correspond to a specific treatment of the food. A Banquet for Ambassadors would certainly be one of the most elaborate banquets and the following presentation shows Rodrigues at his best. Variety, he said, was paramount, since it « made the table brilliant »<sup>20</sup>. Here was the possibility of showing all that the cook and his assistants could do.

Course 1 : Fried dishes. Salad. Achars (a type of preserve in brine or vinegar probably adapted from Portuguese Goa and Indian cuisine.) Ham, melons and oranges.

Course 2 : Potages. Sopa a la francesa ; chicken soup with chicken pieces ; rabbit

soup ; veal and beef ; fricassé a la romana.

Course 3 : Roasts. This was the main service. Roast chicken, roast turkey, roast hare, roast pork loin. Even when the method of cooking was not roasted, the terminology remained.

Course 4 : Savory pies and tarts, often with rare birds such as pheasant or grouse.

Course 5 : Desserts and hot or cold sweets.

Course 6 : Fruits that varied with the season<sup>21</sup>.

These courses were carried by a procession of servants who entered the room one by one in an organized manner as they brought the dishes from the kitchen, the largest dish first, followed by the middle and then smaller ones. Movement, scent, and display preceded taste in a theatrical demonstration aimed to impress and to consolidate political links.

These, however, were difficult times for the Portuguese court, both financially and what has been called a catastrophe of succession. This has a direct bearing on the knowledge that Rodrigues had of French cuisines, since the queen to be, D. Maria Francisca de Sabóia who was married both kings, first to Afonso VI and when he abdicated, to his brother, Pedro II. She had brought with her La Varenne's *Le cuisinier françois*. Born in Paris, and the daughter of the Duke of Nemours, she was well versed in fine cuisine. She was a beautiful twenty-year old, with fair hair, white skin and a fine figure according to a report of the time, and the marriage to Afonso VI secured a political alliance between Portugal and the France of Louis XIV against Spain<sup>22</sup>. With her, D. Maria Francisca also brought the Marques of Saint Romain, secret envoy of the French king who was to aid the future queen in linking the two countries. There was, however a problem, and one that had far-reaching consequences. The king, D. Afonso VI, had suffered a severe fever at the age of four, and was paralyzed on the right side of his body, preventing the consummation of the marriage. A year and a half later, the queen fled to a convent, the government requested and was granted an annulment by the Pope, and once the king abdicated and was exiled to the island of Terceira in the Azores, she remarried his brother, now King Pedro II<sup>23</sup>.

D. Maria Francisca had arrived in June 1666 in a beautiful carriage, hand painted with her portrait and brought an entourage with her<sup>24</sup>, as well as a highly sophisticated palate and eye for the appropriate presentation of banquets. Her family had a direct link to La Varenne (François Pierre de la Varenne) who had left the House of the Count D'Uxelles to serve in the House of Nemour, the same house of the parents of D. Maria Francisca de Sabóia. Alfredo Saramago notes that a few scarce documents describe the Portuguese court and its eating habits of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century that differ from menus and banquet descriptions in the *Arte de Cozinha*<sup>25</sup>. The practice

until the arrival of Domingos Rodrigues seems to have been medieval, and only with his innovations did both menu and etiquette change<sup>26</sup>. Rodrigues published his book at the very moment of transition from the medieval to the modern and brought new kitchen practices to Portugal.

What was new was largely a result of the influence of D. Maria Francisca and her French tastes. Butter replaced olive oil ; vegetables of many kinds were introduced, and the sweet and sour that had earlier predominated was reduced along with an excessive use of sugar on almost every dish. Cloves, nutmeg and cardamom that attested to the wealth of the host, were now reduced in quantity but still used in almost 80% of the dishes. Curry, saffron and cinnamon, however, continued as a feature of Portuguese cooking, which was less characteristic of the French. Even as he seemed to wish to belong to a generation of new cooks serving the court, Rodrigues showed his understanding that tastes change slowly, and continued to incorporate prior preferences in his book. Sweetness endured in the Portuguese kitchen, due to a partiality for baked desserts, and a long tradition of convent sweets, based on milk, quantities of sugar readily available from the colonies, and almonds<sup>27</sup>. From La Varenne, Rodrigues took ideas for preserved fruits and marmalade, making fruits that had been previously seasonal, now available around the year. He also made sure that dishes were still 'sour enough,' and used lemons and verjuice, sometimes in the same dish. Some 70% of his recipes include wine, vinegar, sour lemons or red currants to maintain this Portuguese preference for acidity. By comparison, other European cuisines, including the Italian and English had reduced acidity to less than half.

The visual appearance of the banquet had also changed, largely owing to French influence, changing fashion, and Queen D. Maria Francisca's desires. Gone were the liturgical traces that linked dining to the sacramental meal, with the canopy over the head of the king, and the placement of the king and queen at separate tables<sup>28</sup>. Earlier banquets had been symbolically linked to the religious contexts of the Eucharist, and attention had long been assigned to the meanings of the physical space where the banquets occurred. In the generation preceding King Afonso VI and later King Pedro II, dining was formalized by placement of the table on a fine carpet, with a canopy over the royal person. In 1605, a banquet was described in which the dishes were delivered to the dining space that was set apart by four wooden columns on which were suspended rich hangings<sup>29</sup>. Paintings of the time provide a visual analogue of dining, where images of the Last Supper are housed in similar architectural spaces. Rodrigues, in keeping with the shift away from these liturgical links, did away with these constrained spaces, but kept the formality of delivery by procession. He suggested that a round table

might be used in order to reduce hierarchies and to place the guests on an equal footing, though he found this too problematic to implement since the round table could neither accommodate the large numbers of people often entertained, nor the numerous dishes expected.

There was also a shift away from the monarch who dined in public. D. Pedro II generally ate alone, unlike his father who presented himself for public observation<sup>30</sup>. For the queen, “private” meals were taken in her rooms sometimes accompanied by the ladies-in-waiting or by children when they were minors. The meals consisted of breakfast, with lunch as the main meal between ten and eleven, *merenda* in the afternoon and dinner before nightfall. (Rodrigues’ recommendation for *merenda* was soup and bread, or a *potagem a francesa*, as he said, « good for *merenda* ».

By contrast, some sixty years earlier, Queen Margaret of Austria as consort to Philip II of Portugal, dined in public according to the following description : « The Queen ate in public in this manner : she sat beneath a canopy of brocade with three of her ladies in waiting with her food delivered and eaten with liturgical solemnity. The dishes were passed from the hand to hand, finally reaching the Queen, much as might be practiced by the priest in the celebration of the Mass, from acolytes to deacons »<sup>31</sup>. The later changes signaled a slow move away from the Middle Ages to a new era.

Twelve years after Pedro II had taken the throne with D. Maria Francisca as his royal consort, Rodrigues published his book, and even before 1680 he most certainly performed banquets for the Royal Household. His reputation, skill in constructing menus and educating others on the proper form of the banquet are all evident in his book. Whether Rodrigues was fully employed as chief cook by the Royal Household of the Braganza family has recently been reconsidered. As Ana Marques Pereira argues, there is an insufficient amount of biographical information confirming his service<sup>32</sup>. However, Rodrigues certainly had a close link to the Royal Household, and named one of his dishes, Chicken a la Fernão de Sousa, after the man who arranged for guests and organized the banquets for the Royal Household. As Marques points out, it was common practice for aristocratic houses to send their cooks to other houses and to the Royal Household for major banquets when needed. In an earlier letter an offer to send help from one household to the next appears as follows : « If cooks are needed », the letter states, « we will gladly provide them for your Excellency »<sup>33</sup>, a document that suggests the grandeur of banquets and the need for a large contingent of kitchen staff and cooks with experience in procuring ingredients and planning menus that were appropriate for a large number of guests.

In other ways, Rodrigues demonstrated a full understanding of the religious requirements for Christmas and Lent. For the latter he offers a list of items that could be

eaten at a banquet during Lent, with plates paired in four large quantities and twenty small ones : « four plates of fava beans with eggs, twenty small plates of eggs and shrimp ; four plates of roasted shad, twenty plates of stuffed sole ; twenty small plates of roasted flounder with capers and other herbs ; four plates of grouper or pickled porgy ; four dishes of bake sole or any other fish, twenty small plates of seafood cakes, and four dishes of carp a la Fernão de Sousa, and so on ». Quantities were adjusted according to the numbers of diners and varied, with the fish as the focus of the menu.

The survival of Rodrigues' text is evidence of the importance attributed to him, both in his own time, and in our own. The book had enormous success and was reprinted for over 169 years in up to nineteen editions<sup>34</sup>. When the Portuguese court fled Napoleon in 1807 to resettle in Rio de Janeiro, they took with them the *Arte de Cozinha* which provided the basis for ceremonial banquets, European habits and customs, and its 300 recipes were followed as a guide on how to eat well and serve at table<sup>35</sup>. Although Rodrigues wrote his book for the elite, in many instances the preparation of food is similar to that found in Portugal today.

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- 1 K. LOWE, *Understanding Cultural Exchange Between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance*, in *Cultural Links Between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance*, p. 2. Links with Flanders are the topic in J. EVERAERT *As Feitorias Portuguesas na Flandres*, in *No Tempo das Feitorias : A Arte Portuguesa na Epoca dos Descobrimentos*, pp. 69-83. In 1429 the daughter of João I, Isabel, married Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy. Cf. J. PAVIOT (éd.), *Portugal et Bourgogne au XVe siècle : recueil de documents extraits des archives bourguignonnes (1384-1482)*.
- 2 LOWE, *Understanding Cultural Exchange*, pp. 5, 11.
- 3 S. DESWARTE-ROSA, *Il « Perfetto Cortegiano » D. Miguel da Silva*, Roma 1989, p. 177, n. 13.
- 4 Only six of the panels of the altarpiece remain. For problems on the reconstruction and the classicizing influence, cf. J. A. S. CARVALHO, *Gregório Lopes*, Lisboa 1999.
- 5 Mark 6 : 22-28. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Matthew 14 : 6-11.
- 6 The Italian *fica* refers to the fig, the female genitalia that lead to the downfall of Adam and Eve. Cf. L. STEINBERG, *Eve's Idle Hand*, « Art Journal », 35/2, 1975-1976, pp. 130-135.
- 7 Master of the Vienna and Copenhagen Toison d'Or, *Miniature of the duke of Lancaster dining with the king of Portugal*, 15th century, London, British Museum, British Library Royal MS 14 E IV f. 244v.
- 8 Francisco Henriques, *Last Supper*, 1508, Lisbon, Museu de Arte Antiga ; Workshop of Vasco Fernandes, *Jesus in the House of Martha*, 1535, Viseu, Museu de Grão Vasco.

- 9 Carlo Crivelli, *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1472, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 10 S. DESWARTE-ROSA, *D. Miguel da Silva, bispo de Viseu*, in *Grão Vasco e a pintura europeia do Renascimento*, exhibition catalogue (Lisboa 1992), ed. by F. F. Paolino and A. Correia, Lisboa 1992.
- 11 The legend appears in Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, ca 1260, as part of the readings of the saints ; J. DE VORAGINE, *The Golden Legend : Readings on the Saints*, trans. by W. G. Ryan, Princeton, 2012.
- 12 DESWARTE-ROSA, *Il « Perfetto Cortegiano »*, pp. 265-269.
- 13 V. SERRÃO, *A Trans-Memória das imagens. Estudo iconológico de pintura portuguesa, (Seculos XVI-XVIII)*, Chamusca 2007, p. 57.
- 14 For the circulation of Dürer's engravings in Portugal, cf. D. L. MARKL, *Vasco Fernandes e a gravura do seu tempo*, in *Grão Vasco e a pintura europeia do Renascimento*, exhibition catalogue (Lisboa 1992), Lisboa 1992, pp. 261-279.
- 15 E. J. SULLIVAN, "Herod and Salomé With The Head Of John The Baptist" by Josefa De Ayala, « Source : Notes in the History of Art », 2.1, 1982, pp. 26-29.
- 16 Josefa d'Áyala, *Holy Family*, 1674, Lisbon, Museu de Évora.
- 17 M. D. DUARTE, "Sacrum convivium". *Formas e conteúdos da ceia do rei de Portugal na Idade Moderna a partir das figuracoes icónicas*, « De Arte », 4, 2005, pp. 89-120, has analyzed Josefa d'Áyala's work in relation to contemporary documents and other paintings of the period.
- 18 A. HATHERLY, *As Misteriosas Portas da Ilusao : A proposito do Imaginario Piedoso em Soror Maria do Céu e Josefa D'Obidos in Josefa de Óbidos e o Tempo Barroco*, ed. by V. Serrão, Lisboa 1991.
- 19 Henry Notaker lists the following editions : 1201.1 Lisboa : João Galvão, 1680 ; 1201.2 Lisboa : João Galvão for Manuel Lopes Ferreira, 1693 ; 1201.3 Lisboa : Manuel Lopes Ferreyra, 1692 (listed by G. FREYRE, *Casa Grande e Senzala*, Rio de Janeiro 1979 (1933). There is no other known reference to this edition) ; 1201.4 Lisboa : Manuel Lopes Ferreyra, 1693 ; 1201.5 Lisboa : Manuel Lopes Ferreyra, 1698. Other editions followed until 1849, in *Printed Cookbooks in Europe, 1460-1700 : A Bibliography of Early Modern Culinary Literature*, Newcastle, Delaware, 2010.
- 20 D. RODRIGUES, *Arte de Cozinha*, Lisboa 1680.
- 21 There were no drinks on the table, and guests were required to request wine from the steward and his assistants who entered, delivered the wine as required and retreated.
- 22 D. A. Caetano da Sousa, cited in A. ÁLVARO DÓRIA, *A Rainha D. Maria Francisco de Sabóia. Ensaio biográfico*, Porto 1944, p. 21.
- 23 The king was unable to see from his right eye or hear from the right ear and had difficulty moving his right hand or foot. In a letter of 1667, Robert Southwell, Ambassador of Great Britain to Portugal, attributed the severity of his condition to the lack of experience of his physicians ; C. CASTELO BRANCO, *Preface*, in *Vida d'el-rei D. Affonso VI, escripta no anno de 1684*, Porto 1873. The disturbing story of the king's condition, the annulment, exile and return to Portugal is covered in J. V. SERRÃO, *Historia de Portugal (1640-1750)*, Lisboa 1994. D. Maria Francisca was married to Pedro II on 27 June 1666.
- 24 António de Oliveira de Louredo, *Portrait of D. Maria Francisca* (posthumous), ca 1700, Lisbon, Museu Nacional dos Coches.
- 25 A. SARAMAGO, *Preface*, in D. Rodrigues, *Arte de Cozinha*, Sintra 1995. Saramago does not document these « scarce documents ».
- 26 The only known record of a book of recipes in Portuguese prior to Rodrigues' book, was the ma-

- nuscript of medieval dishes which were prepared with heavy spices, compiled under the guidance of Dona Maria de Portugal in 1480 as the *Livro de Cozinha* : Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Códice português.I.E.33. For a discussion, cf. G. MANUPPELLA, *O Livro de Cozinha de Infanta Maria*, Lisboa 1986.
- 27 Studies on convent sweets include among others, A. SARAMAGO, *Doçaria Conventual do Norte : História e alquimia da farinha*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Sintra 1997 ; A. SARAMAGO, *Doçaria Conventual Do Alentejo : As receitas e o seu enquadramento histórico*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Sintra 1994.
- 28 For a detailed analysis of the royal meal and its symbolic liturgy, cf. DUARTE, «*Sacrum Convivium*», pp. 89-120.
- 29 Cited in DUARTE, «*Sacrum Convivium*», p. 109, from T. P. DA VEIGA, *Fastigimia*, Facs. 1911, Porto, Biblioteca Publica Municipal, s. 1., 103.
- 30 «“Dom Pedro II deixou de ceiar em public...” na verdade, mesmo certas praticas tradicionais, que constituíam momentos altos do ritual aulico no tempo de D. João IV, parecem ter caído em desuso » (“Dom Pedro II no longer ate in public,” and in reality certain traditional practices that made up the high moment of ritual in the dining hall of D. João IV, fell into disuse) ; in A. F. PIMENTEL, *Arquitectura e Poder*, Coimbra 1992, pp. 89-90.
- 31 DUARTE, «*Sacrum Convivium*», p. 25, n. 146.
- 32 A. MARQUES PEREIRA, *Mesa Real : Dinastia de Bragança*, Lisboa 2000, p. 28.
- 33 Letter dated 1599, in MARQUES PEREIRA, *Mesa Real*, p. 28.
- 34 The numbers of editions differs according to those recording the editions : J. QUITÉRIO and M. REGO (ed.) *Livros Portugueses de Cozinha*, Lisboa 1998, list nine ; C. COUTO, *Arte de Cozinha : Alimentação e dietética em Portugal e no Brasil, séculos XVII-XIX*, São Paulo 2007, lists nineteen. Each edition included additions and alterations made by the printers. For a discussion of editions, cf. M. DA GRAÇA PERIÇÃO and M. I. FARIA, *Arte de cozinhar/Domingos Rodrigues. Leitura, apresentação, notas e glossário*, Lisboa 1987.
- 35 P. PINTO E SILVA, *Preface*, in J. P. Ferro, *Arqueologia dos hábitos alimentares*, Lisboa 1996, p. 32.





fig. 1 : GREGÓRIO LOPES, *Banquet of Herod*, 1539-1541,  
oil on panel, 235 x119 cm, Tomar, Igreja de Sao Joao  
Baptista



fig. 2 : MASTER OF THE VIENNA AND COPENHAGEN TOISON D'OR, *John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, dining with the King of Portugal*, late 15th c., London, British Library, Royal 14 E. IV, f.244v



fig. 3 : WORKSHOP OF VASCO FERNANDES, *Jesus in the House of Martha*, ca 1535, oil on panel, Viseu, Museu de Grão Vasco



fig. 4 : JOSEFA DE AYALA, also known as Josefa de Obidos, *Still Life with Bread Rolls and Tablecloth*, ca 1660, oil on canvas, 61 x 50,5 cm, Lisboa, Private Collection



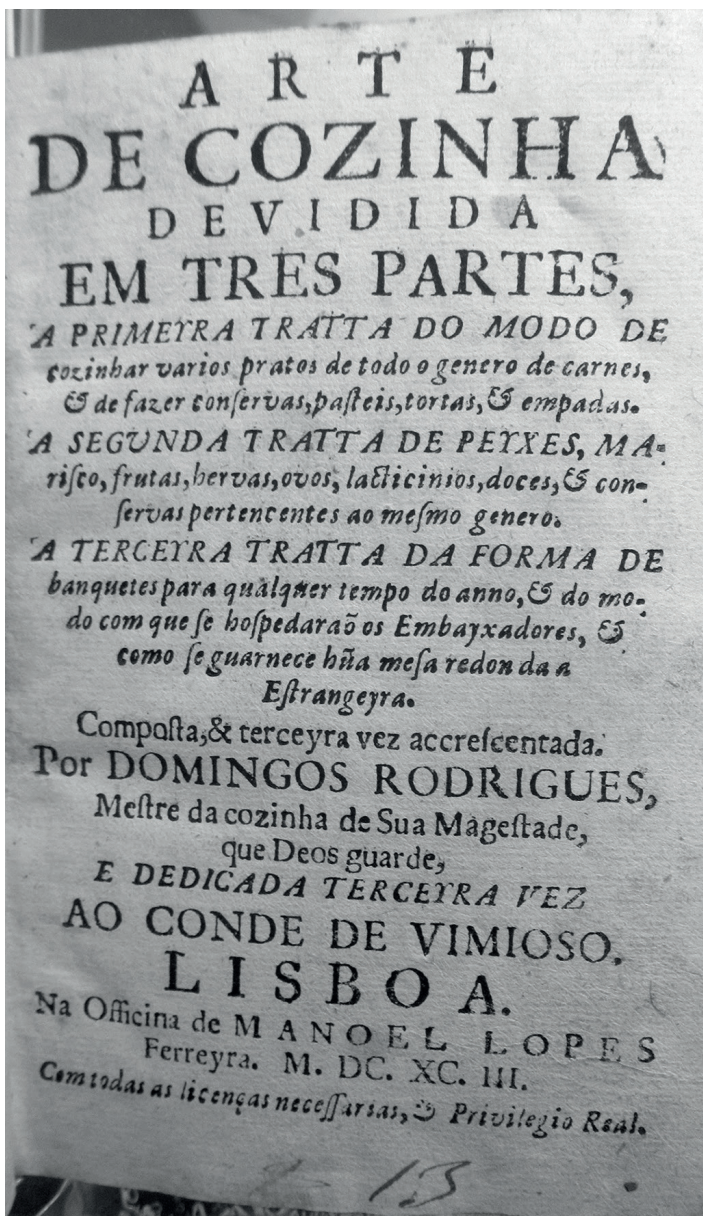


fig. 5 : DOMINGOS RODRIGUES, *Arte de Cozinha*, Lisboa 1693, Frontispiece, Washington, D.C., Library of Congress