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“Co salgado Neptuno o doce Tejo”. The iconography of water in Portuguese royal festivities (17th century)**

Oceans, seas, rivers and many other water-related motifs are frequent in the iconography of the Ancient World, adopting often the figure of gods, nymphs, monsters and mythological creatures. These symbolic images served perfectly the visual display of natural strength and divine power. In fact, water has always been an inspiring element for poetic imagination, but it also plays an essential role in the very survival of communities, providing routes for transport and trade, besides employment and leisure activities (Shewring 2016, 1). It is therefore not surprising that water elements assumed an eloquent role in allegorical representations of political power, metaphorically associated with monarchies and individual leaders.

It is well known that maritime discoveries had a significant influence on Portuguese artistic expression, with special reference to the Manueline style. And it must not be forgotten that the adventure overseas made Lusitania meet universal Fame and supplied the central theme of its national epopee, which celebrates the powerful people “whom Neptune and Mars dared not disobey” (Camões 2015, I.3)¹. In this context, Camões used water symbolism, in order to glorify political leaders and national heroes, suggesting they were accomplishing divine orders.

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1 “Que eu canto o peito ilustre Lusitano / A quem Neptuno e Marte obedeceram” (Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, I.3. 5-6).

The legendary origin of Lisbon was celebrated by poets and chroniclers, claiming that the location was named from Ulysses, who had founded the city after his long journey. It was therefore mentioned as a mythical place, inhabited by fantastical sea creatures and mythological figures². The historical facts reinforced the importance of water to Portuguese nation when the famous Portuguese navigators departed from Belém and therefore River Tagus became the symbol of the heroic discoveries and Lusitanian soul. Besides, the Alfândega (House of Customs) was located close to the river in order to manage the commercial traffic in the Atlantic, Africa and Orient. Additionally, from the 16th century on, the court moved to a palace in the riverside area, which definitely hosted the main stage for official events and royal entries. Lisbon dominated the maritime trade routes and this supremacy was naturally a perfect topic to highlight its power in royal festivals (Fernández González 2014, 414).

According to this perspective, a pertinent question can be raised: how did the victory of human skills over water inspired the representation of power considering the complex Portuguese political reality after 1580³? It was a period full of significant political events, which gave origin to spectacular court festivals, namely the royal entry of Philip II (1619); the royal wedding of Afonso VI (1666); the royal wedding of Peter II (1687) and the funeral ceremonies for Queen Maria Sofia (1699). These happenings were celebrated with huge, spectacular, sumptuous and very expensive public ceremonies, including a vast set of processions, triumphal arches, religious ceremonies, fireworks, waterborne events, vigil fires, dancing and popular shows (bullfighting, canes, competitions, comedies...).

The sumptuous battles in the river Tagus make evident that the iconography of water was related to rulers' propaganda in those circumstances. Waterborne events seem to have been quite popular during the Early Modern period, but there is still much

2 Damião de Góis (1502–1574) in his *Vrbis Olisiponis Descriptio* (1554) emphasized the cosmopolitan character of the city and he clearly mentions that a Triton had been spotted while singing on a beach near Colares, close to the banks of the River Tagus (Ruth 1996, 10–12).

3 After the disappearing of the young King Sebastian (1554–1578) in the battle of Alcázarquivir, leaving no heir, his uncle Henry (1512–1580) was led to the throne, but this short reign did not solve the dynastic crisis in Portugal. In spite of the local efforts to find an alternative sovereign, the Duke of Alba invaded the country and defeated Anthony (1531–1595), Prior of Crato, in the battle of Alcântara. On 16 April 1581, the Courts of Tomar recognized Philip II of Spain (1527–1598) as Philip I of Portugal, giving birth to the period known as the Iberian Union (1580–1640). The new ruler declared that Portugal would be governed by a six-member Portuguese council, maintaining the national courts and respecting all civil, military and ecclesiastical appointments. Besides, Philip I assured that the language, judicial system, coinage and military branches would remain autonomous from Spain. The consciousness of belonging to a common Iberian Culture made easier to accept the new circumstances and seduced a significant part of the Lusitanian nobility. Even so, a messianic cult related with the return of Sebastian (Sebastianism) arose and fed an important current of resistance, which was reinforced during the reign of Philip II (1598–1621), because this monarch did not respect the political conditions set by his father. The conflicts between the two countries became unbearable when Philip III (1605–1665) demanded excessive taxes and military support in order to face Spanish wars. In 1640, Portuguese independence was restored by the Duke of Braganza, later John IV (1604–1656). There is a long list of studies on this matter, among which Bouza Álvarez (2000) and Ramada Curto (2011) must be mentioned.

work to do on this research area, in order to study whether or not the water iconography reached a particular meaning in the context of ephemeral art related with Iberian empires, regarding the fact that both of them conquered and built a New World overseas. Spain proved to be an exception to the widespread practice of waterborne spectacles⁴. Portugal, on the contrary, organized some spectacular festivities on water, and two of them were specifically prepared for the royal entry of Habsburg monarchs, in 1581 and 1619⁵. This was definitely a great challenge taken by the political propaganda of that period.

The ceremonial entry on 29 June 1581 pursued the main purpose of showing the image that the ruler wished to exhibit through artistic display⁶. On the one hand, Philip I (1527-1598) wanted to convey the idea of a just, peace-seeking king. On the other, he needed to intimidate the recently dominated kingdom. Analyzing the festival, Fernández-González (2015, 95) states that "the heroic connotations of the water festival on the Tagus therefore aimed to present the prestigious sea force of Iberia and their domination of the Atlantic, now put to the service of King Philip." Even though the performance of sea battles in contemporaneous festivals was recurrent, the investment on the waterborne parade in that occasion emphasized the Spanish control over Portugal.

Some months after the battle in Alcântara and still recovering from a civil conflict, Lisbon sponsored a festival that the first ruler of the Iberian Union really enjoyed, keeping a painted memory of it in the Alcázar in Madrid. Adapting an official procedure already applied on other circumstances in Spanish territories⁷, the magnificent entry of Philip I into Lisbon (1581) definitely changed the layout of royal celebrations in Portugal. The iconographic programme included symbolic and emblematic devices, following the trend of political propaganda in Renaissance and Baroque festivities through Europe⁸.

The use of logo-iconic compositions in festival ephemeral art was widely spread abroad and triumphal arches had already been introduced in Portuguese celebrations, but the lack of records suggests that the entry of Philip I might have been pivotal to

4 Shewring 2016 presents a great diversity of spectacles and locations, discussing the political, social and cultural reverberations of such events in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe.

5 The River Tagus had already welcomed the ceremonial entries in the occasion of the reception of Queen Eleanor of Habsburg (1498-1558) in 1521. A similar event took place when prince John (1537-1554), the eighth son of King John III (1502-1557), married Joanna of Castile (1535-1573), in 1552. The official accounts however are not explicit about waterborne events, but they briefly mention naval inventions imitating sea creatures. The River Tagus represented the 'soul' of Lisbon and the epicenter of the Portuguese global empire, so it was the perfect aquatic stage for official receptions. See Fernández-González 2015, 89-95.

6 Contemporary accounts were printed in order to divulge the triumphal entry, namely due to Escobar (1583) and Velázquez Salmantino (1581). On this matter, see Alves (1986), Bouza Álvarez (2000), Fernández-González (2015, 87-114) and Megiani (2004).

7 On the manifestations of Spanish culture through Habsburg festivals in the territories of the whole empire see Ruiz (2012) and Checa Cremades (2015).

8 On Renaissance and Baroque festivals, see: Cholman (2015), Jacquot (1956, 1960, 1975), Landwehr (1971), Mínguez (2016), Mulryne and Goldring (2002), Mulryne (2004), Rodríguez Moya (2013), Strong (1984) and Watanabe-O' Kelly and Simon (2000). Consult also *The Renaissance Festival Book project of the British Library* (www.bl.uk/treasures/festivalbooks/homepage.html), which brought a relevant contribution in the field.

the dissemination of those devices in Lusitanian court feasts. However, the reception of emblematic models in Portugal can actually be tracked down many years before, thanks to significant evidences. Printed in Lyon, the first systematic commentaries to Alciato's *Emblemata* were written in Coimbra, around 1552, by Sebastian Stockhamer (c. 1530-c. 1590), an university student who accomplished them in answer to the request of a local nobleman, João de Meneses Sottomayor (c. 1500-c. 1550)⁹. As far as the current research has gone, it was impossible to identify traces of the circulation of Stockhamer's edition in Portugal, even though many contemporary authors seemed to be acquainted with Alciato (1492-1550) and emblematic gender¹⁰. These compositions became known within miscellaneous works and *loci communes*, often quoted by Renaissance and Baroque writers.

In 1596, Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo Castelo Branco (16th c.-17th c.) published the first collection of Lusitanian emblems¹¹, although they did not represent the canonical triplex structure, which conveyed a composition with moto, picture and epigram. Besides, contemporaneous theoretical writings suggest a widespread contact with the emblematic gender¹². Putting these concepts into practice, applied *ars emblematica* seems to offer the best representatives of the Portuguese skills in what concerns emblematic production. The study of this area counts on a various set of testimonies and resources, including: printed or manuscript descriptions of Baroque festivities; drawings and engravings illustrating ephemeral art, painted tiles and other pieces of visual arts. Decorated tiles are probably the most significant Portuguese donation to the world art and emblematic models have notably enriched this cultural heritage, as we can easily understand considering the case of Otto van Veen's emblem book¹³. Other examples could be mentioned and this remains a quite unexplored dominium of research.

9 These notes are confined to the first book, but paved the way for the extensive commentaries which would gradually be added in successive French and Flemish editions, such as those published by Plantin (Enenkel 2012, 149-218).

10 On the reception of emblematic models in Portuguese Baroque literature, see, for example, Gomes (2009) and Araújo (2014).

11 Apud *Discurso sobre a Vida, e Morte, de Santa Isabel Rainha de Portugal, & outras varias Rimas*, f. 93-109.

12 Among them, we have to highlight the manuscript left by Manuel Pires de Almeida, symptomatically entitled *Poetry and Painting or Painting and Poetry* (1633). This treaty discusses the similitudes and connections between the two arts, concluding that they are like twin sisters and look like each other to such an extent that "when someone writes he paints, and when someone paints he writes at the same time" (Muhana 2002, f. 51). The author suggested an interpretation of the motto *ut pictura poesis* through Aristoteles' assumptions, and instead of a comparison between both arts he proposed a mixed approach: *muta poesis, eloquens pictura*. The organization of the book leads to the section dedicated to emblematics, showing how the logo-iconic gender represents the master-piece of the principles there brought forward, because it is a mixed type of artistic composition.

13 Painter, poet, engraver and humanist, Otto van Veen (1556-1629) was the leading artist in Antwerp, until his pupil Rubens returned from Italy. In his later years, Vaenius turned to producing emblem books, notably *Q. Horatii Flacci emblemata* (1607), *Amorum emblemata* and *Amoris divini emblemata*. The first collection only contained Latin texts from classical authors (mainly Horace) with a facing-page showing an allegorical engraving. The different editions granted itself many purposes in a variety of cultures and countries. It circulated widely during 17th and 18th centuries and it was certainly one of the most widespread books of emblems, as it was copied and pirated in France, Spain, Italy and England. Besides the literary reception of the book, these emblems were used as a pictorial-source for decorative arts. There are three main examples of ceramic series

Considering ephemeral art, there is also a very promising universe of applied emblematics to be studied. Over recent years, many accounts and festival books have been lifted from oblivion, shedding a new light on the procedures and resources related to festive court celebrations in the Modern Period. These documents must however be read with some precaution, taking advice from Watanabe-O’ Kelly (2002, 23): “Festival books present the festival already pre-packaged, already interpreted. The iconography is spelled out for us, the political pretensions of the ruler are underlined. The festival itself will vanish, but this interpretation will last as long as books are read. Festival books are therefore not simple records of a festival, but another element in it”¹⁴.

Regarding the use of emblematic compositions in particular, the descriptions make clear that logo-iconic compositions carried an ideological message and had to be easily understandable to the heterogeneous public. Consequently, they often displayed common motifs and repeated the same ideas, using well-known images and short mottoes. Among them, one can select a meaningful *corpus* in order to demonstrate the rhetorical uses of the iconography of water, accordingly to the principles of *repraesentatio maiestatis* that played a crucial role in the context of royal festivals. These devices accomplished therefore the main purposes of the spectacular events: to praise the power of the king, to promote his virtues and to reinforce the connexion between the ruler and his people (Marin 2005).

The legitimation of the royal power became thus a very sensitive issue during the Portuguese 17th century. The Iberian Union prevailed until 1640 and, after the rebellion, the new dynasty of Braganza had to deal with severe international obstacles until King John IV (1604-1656) was recognized as the legal sovereign of the autonomous kingdom of Portugal. Royal festivities played then a very important role in order to establish a connection between the ruler and his people. Due to the political and social circumstances of the selected events, the comparative analysis of the use of water iconography in that context reveals particularly interesting, because it allows to wonder whether or not there are meaningful differences between the emblematic devices dedicated to Habsburg kings and the new dynasty of Braganza.

Previous festivals accounts usually don’t provide details on this matter, but the descriptions of the royal entry hold in 1581 carefully report some logo-iconic

inspired by Van Veen’s emblems: the cloister of the Franciscan convent in São Salvador (Bahia), the panels of Lisbon City Museum and the three panels, decorating a balcony in St. João de Deus’s Convent (Lisbon), painted around 1740, probably by Valentim de Almeida.

14 Festival accounts usually explained the program of the event. In this way, the official version conveyed important information – but not necessarily reliable – about guests, supplies, payments and procedures. It could be printed in a luxurious edition or distributed for free, as a souvenir, in a cheap format, depending on the author, the purpose and the investment involved. Thanks to textual descriptions and visual copies printed on festival books, it has been possible to rescue some devices from loss, demonstrating that religious and political power made an extensive use of emblematic language as an extraordinary rhetorical tool in the Early-Modern Europe festivals. Emblems then became a fundamental medium of political and spiritual propaganda, applied to several ephemeral forms and supports. See McCall Probes and S. Mödersheim (2014).

compositions¹⁵. The German Merchants' Arch, for example, bore a clear celebration of the Habsburg, using one of the most sophisticated ephemeral display in the festival. Velásquez Salmantino (1581, 119-120) describes it as a huge fortress, profusely decorated on all faces. On the façade turned to the sea, which Philip I saw firstly, there was a statue of the King, between Atlas and Neptune, with an inscription evoking the ruler "who extended catholic faith worldwide through land and sea"¹⁶. The maritime God also carried a panegyric text, reinforcing the royal power overseas: "Until now I was the comandant over the Oceans, now I deliver the sceptre up to you, Philip, and from now on there will be no more unpunished corsairs in my waves, neither bloody robberies"¹⁷.

Using this type of logo-iconic compositions, Philip I appeared in Lisbon as the universal ruler of lands and oceans. The layout was not quite original, but the format was attractive and easily understandable to people. So, that rhetoric strategy was successfully repeated in following events.

1. Royal entry of Philip II (1619)

On 29 June 1619, twenty-one years after his coronation, Lisbon could finally see Philip II (1578-1621, Philip III of Spain). The journey was carefully prepared regarding its political meaning, because the ruler knew how important it was to cause an imposing visual impact, in order to be remembered, admired and respected as the sovereign of both Iberian kingdoms. The royal entry involved a huge economical sacrifice, but the capital city of Portugal gave its best to impress and proudly show its value¹⁸. The spectacular event gave origin to many descriptions and Philip II ordered an official record, printed by the royal chronicler, João Baptista Lavanha (1550-1624), entitled *Viagem da Catholica Real Magestade del Rey D. Filipe II N. S. Ao Reyno de Portugal e relação do solene recebimento que nelle se lhe fez* (1622).

Decorating the title page, there is the allegoric representation of the river Tagus, next to the feminine figure of Lisbon (Ulissey), representing the spirit of Portuguese people and history¹⁹. This volume contains engraved illustrations of the magnificent arches raised in 1619, showing how the organizers of the public festival were well acquainted with the principles of the propagandistic strategies. The complex iconographic programme painted Philip II's governing qualities and pious virtues on amazing ephemeral structures. These artistic works embellished the main streets, squares and fountains,

15 These accounts mention the use of triumphal arches in Portuguese royal festivities at least since 1490, when prince Afonso (1475-1491), heir of John II (1455-1495), celebrated his marriage in Évora. On this matter, consult, for example, Pizarro Gómez (1987, 123-146).

16 "Catholicae fidei propagator orbe, mari et terra" (Guerreiro 1581, f. 11).

17 "Hactenus Oceani fueram moderatus habenas,/ Nunc eadem trado sceptra Philippe tibi./ Iam non praedo meis impune uagabitur undis,/ Post hac nec praedas sanguinolentus aget." (Guerreiro 1581, f. 11).

18 This is one of the most famous Iberian festivals and academic bibliography on this event is vast. However, some reference authors must be cited, such as Alves (1986), Benatti (2008), Bouza Álvarez (2000), Fernández-González (2014, 413-450), Kubler (1972, 105-127) and Megiani (2004).

19 On the symbolic meaning of rivers in Baroque literature, see Ferro (2012, 625-659).

following an itinerary which passed through the most important urban points, each of them representing local, religious and political powers: the city chambers, the cathedral and, finally, the royal palace. Arriving in his royal vessel, the monarch could enjoy a spectacular vista, observing the magnificent riverfront square, crowded with public, pageants, carriages and monumental pieces of ephemeral art. Lisbon was then a cosmopolitan trading center and had invested tremendous funds in the royal reception (Kubler 1972, 107). It was the meeting point between West civilization and East luxurious products, which travelled through the seas to reach the final destiny crossing Tagus²⁰.

Philip II landed thus at the Palace Courtyard (Terreiro do Paço) accompanied by a magnificent procession of richly decorated boats representing sea creatures, such as tritons, mermaids, whales, dolphins, seahorses “and other sea monsters ingeniously made” (Lavanha 1622, f. 8). The official account describes the arrival and contains a panoramic engraving of the scene, providing an eloquent image of the impressive spectacle. Close to the Customs House, located on the banks of the river, there was a magnificent portico holding the inscription “To Philip II of Portugal, Africa and Asia, Father of the Ocean”²¹, which clearly evoked the huge maritime empire ruled by the Lord of the two Iberian thrones.

The adventure overseas was actually a recurrent theme along the triumphal parade. The arch raised by the Merchants displayed a representation of the four continents, illustrating the universal power held by Philip II. There were images of mythological sea heroes (Ulysses and Jason) and many Portuguese historical warriors, like Nuno Álvares Pereira (1360-1463)²², besides other national heroes related to the Maritime Discoveries. The inner ceiling of the arch bore an image of the king, in front of whom Mars and Neptune knelt down, offering respectively a sword and the trident, below the motto “Everything obeys you”²³. Placed at the end of the New Street, the arch of the Goldsmiths exhibited the statue of Philip I with a golden sceptre in his left hand and two crowns in the right. Accompanied by Vasco da Gama (1469-1524) and Cristoforo Colombo (1451-1506), the main heroes of Portuguese and Spanish expansion, the father was offering both Iberian kingdoms to his successor. The Latin inscription expressed a valuable advice, suggesting that the loss of one of the thrones would necessarily lead the monarch

20 Lavanha (1622, 8r) describes Lisbon as a “World Condensed”, because of the wealth of their citizens and the concurrence of many nationalities that meet there, but this designation might also serve as an analogy for the interdisciplinary nature of the study of Renaissance and Early Modern festival culture (Checa Cremades 2015, 1).

21 “*PHILIPPO II LVSI. AFR. ASIAT. OCEANICO PARENTI OPTI.*” (Lavanha 1622, f. 13).

22 The ancestor of the House of Braganza was an outstanding military leader, known also as the Holy Constable. When Ferdinand I (1383) died without an heir, Pereira supported the king’s illegitimate brother João of Aviz, later John I (1357-1433), against the claims of Ferdinand’s daughter Beatriz, married to John I of Castile, who invaded Portugal in January 1384. As commander-in-chief of the army, Nuno defeated the enemies until the final battle of Aljubarrota (1385). Pereira’s daughter married the first Duke of Braganza, Afonso (1377-1461), son of John I. After his wife’s death, Pereira became Friar Nuno de Santa Maria and he was canonized on April 26, 2009.

23 “*TIBI OMNIA CEDVNT*” (Lavanha 1622, 19v).

to ruin: “take these two crowns and remember you must keep both, because your empire will be ruined if you lose one of them”²⁴.

Finally, in the centre of the Palace Courtyard, the arch of the Germans depicted Neptune himself, holding his trident with the moon on the horizon (**fig. 1**). On the opposite side, there was the goddess Cybele with the sun. The inscription below claimed: “It is fair that the sun and the moon serve whom the Sea and Land gods obey”²⁵. According to Lavanha’s interpretation, these emblematic compositions represented Sea and Land, in order to praise Philip II, the powerful Lord of a global empire, from America to India.



1 Detail of the arch of the German Nation. Lavanha. 1622. *Viaje de la Catholica Real Magestad del Rei D. Filipe III N. S. al reino de Portugal*, f. 54v.
Source: <http://purl.pt/23283/4/353780>.

Recalling the layout of 1581, the German arch use the two elements to illustrate the universal Habsburg dominium. In this context, the iconography of water, through the figure of Neptune, evokes the greatest achievement reached by Spanish monarchs, at the same time it could represent Portuguese own deeds. The sophistication of the artefacts deployed in 1619 celebrations, additionally to the inclusion of fantastical sea and mythological creatures in waterborne events, bring to mind the legendary origins of Lisbon (Fernández – González 2015, 92). And it is nonetheless remarkable how ingenious were the logo-iconic compositions, because they allowed (or perhaps fostered) ambivalent readings. Through the emblematic allusions to maritime empire, Portuguese payed homage to Philip II and simultaneously remind him their own strength overseas, suggesting that Iberian Union meant an alliance between two kingdoms, more than a submission. This festival provides therefore a significant example of the use of *ad hoc* emblems, some

24 “ACCIPE DO GEMINAS, PARITER SERVARE MEMENTO CORRRET IMPERIVM, SI RVAT VNA, TVVM” (Lavanha 1622, 48).

25 “TELLVRISQVE MARISQVE SIMVL, CVI NVMINA PARENT, LVNAQVE SOLQVE SIMVL, LEX EST FAMVLENTVR” (Lavanha 1622, f. 56v).

of them inspired by printed books that codified Habsburg iconography and internationalized their image (Checa Cremades 2015, 7). Besides, the use of water motifs shows how inventive could be the adaptation of those models to fit a specific context.

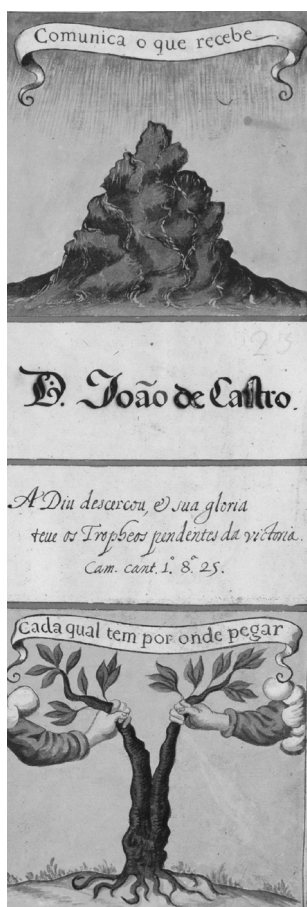
2. Royal wedding of Afonso VI and Maria Francisca Isabel of Savoy (1666)

In the aftermath of the events of 1 December 1640, Lusitanian people acclaimed the Duke of Braganza as King John IV, restoring the Portuguese monarchy and putting an end to sixty years of Habsburg reign. From 1641 to 1668 the two nations fought each other: Spain trying to keep its universal supremacy and Portugal hoping to maintain its independence through political alliances and colonial resources. Queen Luísa de Guzmán (1613-1666) assumed the regency in 1656, but, six years after, the young and rebel prince heir moved her away from the government, in the sequence of a palace coup. Recent historic circumstances taught Portuguese court how important was to assure royal offspring as soon as possible, even if Afonso VI initially showed some resistance to that official duty.

More than a century after the last royal wedding, on 29 August 1666, Lisbon prepared a luxurious festival to welcome the new Queen, Maria Francisca Isabel (1646-1683), from the House of Savoy. There were fantastic ephemeral buildings, triumphal arches and ingenious compositions, in order to create the image of a golden era around the new dynasty, although Afonso VI (1643-1683) was far from being a model of political virtue. The festive programme designed by the Secretary of State António Sousa de Macedo (1606-1682) clearly aimed to disclose the idea of a new period of peace and prosperity, relating it with the figure of the King, according to the strategies of political propaganda within Baroque courts. After the triumphal entries of the two Spanish monarchs, Lisbon finally celebrated the wedding of a Portuguese ruler and the city did not spare money nor efforts to commemorate *urbi et orbe* the restoration of independence, despite the fact that the war against Spain was not yet ended. The union of Afonso VI and Mademoiselle d'Aumale, goddaughter of Louis XIV (1638-1715), marked the first spectacular event of the recently empowered Braganza dynasty and formalised the political alliance between Portugal and France.

The water coloured album entitled *Festas que se fizeram pelo casamento del Rey D. Affonso VI*²⁶ invites the reader to imagine how sumptuous was the spectacular apparatus involved in the ceremonies. Considering the political and propagandistic purposes of the event, it is expected that Portuguese glorious achievements overseas played a distinguished role in the iconographic programme and provided inspiration for several logo-iconic compositions. The arch of the Merchants, for instance, represented many heroes of the maritime expansion, reinforcing the national pride, stimulating the popular support and calling for future success.

26 This is a precious manuscript kept in the library of the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa, the seat of the House of Braganza. There is available a facsimile version, edited by Xavier (1996).



2 Emblem on the arch of the Merchants, *Festas que se fizeram pelo casamento del Rey D. Affonso VI*, f. 23.

Manuscrito da Biblioteca do Paço Ducal de Vila Viçosa.
Photo credit: author.

Focusing on the golden period before the Spanish domination, that magnificent arch located in the New Street (Rua Nova) evoked eight heroic figures of the national history directly related to the conquest of the seas during maritime Discoveries. Each composition combined the name of a famous navigator or governor, such as Vasco da Gama, with a subscription made of selected verses from *The Lusíads*. In the top and in the bottom of each panel, there was the emblematic representation of political virtues. This set obviously paid tribute to national heroes as inspiring models to the sovereign, at the same time it brought to light the glorious Portuguese past, previous to Iberian Union. The festival aimed to delete all the memories of that dark period, emphasizing Lusitanian golden eras. According to the thematic context of maritime victories, some logo-iconic compositions displayed motifs that were related to sea water, like the image of the ship held by two anchors under the motto “Mais firme está sobre duas” (“it is safer over two”). It illustrates the political union between Portugal and France against Spain, their common enemy. On the next panel, water represents divine gifts with the image of rain sent from the sky accompanied by the motto “comunica o que recebe” (“share what you receive”). This composition seems to legitimate the royal mission entrusted to Afonso VI, demonstrating that the ruler had to use the power delegated by Divine Providence for people’s benefit (fig. 2).

Triplex emblematic compositions were also displayed on a series devoted to the Portuguese-French alliance, designed for an unidentified arch. Bearing the lemma *Successio firma*, on top of an image depicting an anchor attached to a caravel docked close to a city, there is an emblem representative of the Queen. It creates a wordplay based on her family name in Portuguese, Saboya (Savoy), phonetically equivalent to the expression “nossa boia” (“our float”). The following poetic stanza, which clearly imitates Camonian style and format in *The Lusíads*, explains the meaning of the

logo-iconic device. It repeats the idea that Maria Francisca Isabel was bringing safety and hope to Portugal, not only because she was connected to Louis XIV, but also because she could give birth to an heir of the throne, ensuring the “stable succession” mentioned by the motto (Xavier 1996, f. 25).

Contrary to the analysed examples from Habsburg entries, these emblematic devices deal with objective images of water, depicting rain, rivers and seas to represent royal power but also aquatic natural strength. This option seems to suggest that the young couple would be able to control both, leading the new dynasty and Portuguese nation to a period of justice, peace and prosperity. Thanks to divine protection and human skills, Portugal had settled a huge maritime empire, so it is perfectly understandable that, in 1666, the iconographical programme of the festival recalled the Lusitanian conquests overseas. It repeated – perhaps intentionally – the same topic used by Habsburg propaganda, using different logo-iconic elements, which reflected each national heritage. After all, Iberian kingdoms had once divided the whole world and kept fighting each other for the title of “Lord of the biggest empire overseas”.

3. Royal wedding of Peter II and Maria Sofia of Neuburg (1687)

Two years after the ephemeral spectacle previously mentioned, Afonso VI was dethroned by the action of his own brother, who took his kingdom and his wife. But the Queen Maria Francisca could only give birth to one female heir and the new dynasty was therefore in danger. When his wife died, king Peter II was forced to marry soon because the political situation was very sensitive and, consequently, it required an even more sophisticated political festival²⁷.

There are plenty of testimonies describing the event and they make clear the repeated use of water iconography, which is a good signal of its propagandistic relevance²⁸. On 11 August 1687, the German Queen arrived in a luxurious brigantine and the court was expecting her in the marvellous bridge, next to the pier. According to the manuscript account entitled *Descrição da sumptuosa e magnífica ponte, que se fabricou para o desembarque da augustíssima rainha de Portugal D. Maria Sofia Isabel*, there was erected a triumphal arch with four sides, three levels and a dome. The south façade represented the four continents and the east frontage was dedicated to the four elements, each of them with three specific emblems, constituted by motto, picture and epigram.

27 The Queen arrived on 11 August 1687 and the festivities extended to the 25th October. The organization of this propagandistic event aimed to praise the monarch, fostering the international affairs, and celebrate the Portuguese glories. Consequently, the iconographic program often made allusion to the maritime discoveries, using the images of previous kings and verses taken from *The Lusiads* (Borges 1986, 110).

28 Antonio Rodrigues da Costa (1694) published a full description of the arrangements. The well know manuscript *Feniz de Portugal Prodigiosa* offers beautiful drawings of the cars and ephemeral works built for the royal festivities, many of them reproducing sea creatures, Tritons and Neptune (Sider 1997). The Jesuit João dos Reis (1687?) drew an album which shows the fireworks prepared on the occasion and the maritime theme becomes evident once again.

The representation of water bore the inscription “Tell your king that Fortune offered the Queen the power of our ocean and the cruel trident”²⁹. The first emblem presented the motto “fertility of Her Serenity the Queen”³⁰, depicting a group of tritons with shelves above the subscription: “This one will give pearls born from the joyful waves”³¹. Maritime universe with its fantastic creatures appears thus as a symbol of fecundity, which was a very important matter in royal weddings. The second composition held the motto “*Lusitaniae desiderium*” (“Love of Portugal”), showing a woman between a river and the sea, to whom she was leaning forward, as if she wanted to drink its water. The subscribed text was taken from Virgil (*Buc. V. 47*): “She doesn’t want to quench her thirst from the river, she desires and leans forward the sea”³². This is an easily understandable allusion to Portuguese maritime discoveries, using the feminine figure to create an allegorical picture which would also resemble Lisbon or Lusitania, often depicted with Tagus and Atlantic Ocean. The third emblem bore the motto “*Serenissimae Reginae pulchritudo*” (“The beauty of Her Serenity the Queen”), with a picture of a fountain pouring water into a pond, where Narcissus admired his own reflection. Statius clearly inspired the verses below: “In this crystalline water, Narcissus, you can see yourself even better”³³, suggesting that royal image would reflect on the Queen and give prominence to her beauty. In this particular context, water symbolizes Queen’s fertility, love and beauty³⁴.

In the upper part of the same arch, there were fourteen allegoric statues of virtues. Above them, figures of old men hold big jars with water flowing from inside. They represented the main four rivers which cross Portuguese lands: Tagus, Mondego, Douro and Minho, depicted as symbols of beauty, strength, loyalty and wealth (Costa 1694, 162-163)³⁵. A similar allegorical set of the same rivers was displayed on the arch of the Germans (**fig. 3**), according to the album entitled *Copia dos Reaes Aparatos* (1687?, f. 20), drawn by the Jesuit João dos Reis (1639-1691). Next to a luxurious group of six emblems, representing Fame, Happiness, Hope, Wellness, Fortune and Peace (Costa 1694, 258-259), the presence of the four rivers which fertilize Lusitanian soil is clearly an illustration of Portuguese soul and power.

29 “*Haec regi dicite vestro, Haud nobis pelagi imperium, saevumque tridentem, Reginae sed sorte datum*” (Coimbra, f. 90).

30 “*Serenissimae Reginae foecunditas*” (Coimbra, f. 90).

31 “*Gemmarum quidquid felicibus undis, Nascitur, una dabit*” (Coimbra, f. 90). Cf. Tibullus, II, v.15.

32 “*Nequit illa sitim restinguere rivo/ Prona petit Maria*” (Coimbra, f. 90).

33 “*Hic te perspicuum melius, Narcise, videres*” (Coimbra, f. 90).

34 See also Costa 1694, 148-150.

35 Each of these images bore an inscription: Tagus “*Iam fluit unda Tagi multo pretiosior auro/ Cum pretiosa suo est vecta Sophia vado*” (“More precious than plenty of gold, the waves of Tagus flow, when precious Sophie was carried in his water”); Mondego “*Stellifero qui Monda cadit de vertice, plantas/Amne, Sophia, tuas dum petit, astra subit*” (“Mondego, which falls from the starry peak, reaches the sky when desires your plants in the river”); Douro “*Fertur arundineis formosus Duria ripis/ Pulchrior adventu, Pulchra Sophia, tuo est*” (“Douro is said to be pretty thanks to his banks of reeds, and after your arrival, beautiful Sophie, he is even more beautiful”); Minho “*Gurgite qui Minius duo dividit incluta regna,/ Subiicit imperiis utraque Regna tuis*” (“Minho, who splits the two famous kingdoms in the gulf, places under your rules both kingdoms”).



3 River Tagus and Minius. Detail of arch of the German Nation, João Reis. 1687?.
Copia dos reaes aparatos, f. 20. Source: <http://purl.pt/26151>

Water iconography in this festival included furthermore the image of Neptune, the well-known roman God of the sea. The triumphal arch raised by the English nation, for example, displayed a portrait of Peter II, between Mars, who was offering him a sword, and Neptune, who was giving him his trident as a gift³⁶. On the top, a couple of angels delivered two crowns, holding banners with the inscription: “To the ruler of Earth and Sea, the most powerful in both kingdoms”³⁷. This emblematic composition focuses on the submission of Neptune, using a logo-iconic structure very similar to the ones held in Habsburg royal entries into Lisbon. As already noticed, the arch of the Merchants, in 1619, showed Neptune and Mars paying obeisance to Philip II, exactly as the composition painted in 1687, bearing similar inscriptions and sharing the same purpose of representing royal dominium over large territories, thanks to the maritime discoveries. In fact, the repetition of topics and even the reuse of ephemeral structures was a frequent practice. But the imitation of this iconographical device, which perfectly fit both Iberian monarchs, establishes an intertextual dialogue that emphasizes the equilibrium between them, and the new dynasty of Braganza probably wanted to put that idea on public view.

Analyzing the emblematic figurations of water in the context of these festivities hold in 1687, it becomes clear that they represent royal virtues, Lusitanian identity and maritime power. In this way, they perfectly matched the propagandistic purposes of the iconographic programme, especially designed to praise Peter II and pay tribute to Portuguese glorious history, erasing the phantasm of Iberian Union.

36 According to the manuscript account written by Manuel Nogueira Souza (1687, f. 1-22), King Peter II used a luxurious boat decorated with the image of Neptune and the same God was painted on the arches built by the Flemish nation, the English people and the Carpenters.

37 “*Soli, salique moderatori: Ab utroque magnus*” (Costa 1694, 256).

4. Funeral ceremonies for Queen Maria Sofia (1699)

Twelve years and seven children after, Portugal organized sumptuous funeral ceremonies for the Queen Maria Sofia, who was buried in the precise day of her 33rd birthday. Many cities organized exequies, giving origin to impressive pieces of ephemeral art, such as the mausoleum built by the Congregation of the Oratory in Lisbon, which displayed a very interesting series of emblematic devices (Pereyra 1699)³⁸. Besides, Sebastião de Fonseca e Payva published a poetic account describing the funeral ceremonies hold in the royal convent of Palmela, paying special attention to the mausoleum. It bore eight emblems on its basis, as the author explains in the sonnet placed in the beginning of the *Relaçam* (Payva 1699, 7).

Each logo-iconic composition included a framed *picture*, an extended motto and a variable number of stanzas as *subscriptio*, in the following page. These verses explain the meaning of the related emblem, but it doesn't become clear if they took part in the iconographic programme of the ceremonies or only joined the printed version. Among a heterogeneous series of funeral motifs (such as flowers, the sun, an eagle...), one of the emblems takes the image of a ship in the ocean (**fig. 4**). The long motto advances the metaphor, which is in the basis of the composition: "This one, who had once made the journey with favourable wind, passed away, when she was safer than ever"³⁹.

Considering that Maria Sofia had actually arrived in Lisbon by boat and was received with a luxurious waterborne event, this emblematic device suggests a special meaning. It obviously represents the passage to eternal life, echoing a well-known metaphor of death as a non-return trip, but it also reminds that, coming from the sea, Queen Maria Sofia had brought hope, joy and wealth to Portugal.

How did the iconography of water relate to rulers' propaganda in Portuguese 17th century royal festivals?

The empire overseas and the related supremacy in international trade had a crucial impact on Portuguese social development, political affairs, economic circumstances and urban life in the metropolis. Consequently, the presence of water elements in the iconographical programme of royal festivities is a reflection of the importance of the aquatic element in the representation of political power.

The spectacular use of waterborne events gained particular brightness in the festivals staged in Lisbon for Philip I and his son (Fernández-González 2014, 414). The efficient methods of Habsburg propaganda definitely contributed to improve Portuguese festival culture after 1581, but local artists learned how to implement an iconographical

38 Emblematic devices also played an important role in the context of these magnificent festivities, showing that not only Jesuit colleges were acquainted with *ars emblematica*. It proves furthermore that it was not a language exclusively used by official mechanisms of royal propaganda (Medeiros 2013).

39 "Esta que já fez jornada com vento em popa algum dia, quando mais segura hia, então se viu soçobrada" (Payva 1699, 14).



4 Funeral emblem for Queen Maria Sofia. Paiva. 1699. *Relaçam da magnifica, e sumptuosa pompa fvneral*, f. 14. Source: <http://purl.pt/23283/4/353780>.

programme, which combined local traditions and international models. Such ceremonies, mainly performed in the Palace Courtyard (Terreiro do Paço), showed that the ancestral connection between Lisbon, Tagus and Ocean was not merely geographic. In fact, it was based on the historical heritage, which gave origin to an elaborated logo-icomic language, used in the layout of royal festivities, in order to celebrate Portuguese deeds.

The relevance of water iconography in what concerns the representation of the Portuguese nation is also attested in sponsored arches in European festivals. The *Descriptio publicae gratulationis*, for example, provides a detailed account of the triumphal entry of Prince Ernest in Antwerp and shows how the allegoric images of four main rivers (Ganges, Hydaspes, Tagus and Plata) were depicted in the Lusitanian arch. These figures illustrated the universal impact of the Portuguese empire, then ruled by Philip I. In the top of the structure, there was Neptune holding his trident and showing the armillary sphere symbol of Lusitania on the other hand (*Descriptio* 1595, 76-77).

Similar water motifs were applied in the court festivals hold in Lisbon, as the *corpus* here collected demonstrates. Aquatic iconography included not only rivers, but also maritime symbols (ships, trident, anchors...), heroes of the expansion overseas, Neptune, sea monsters and mythological creatures (Jason, Ulysses). Thus, rivers usually symbolize fertility, character and beauty. Neptune, Tritons and mythological figures with their accompanying symbols represent the natural power of water, which was controlled

by Portuguese people. The allusion to overseas discoveries embodies, furthermore, the glorious history and economical power of the Lusitanian empire. Making use of international models (mainly Spanish) and adapting them to a specific context, Portuguese festival programmes manifest forms of hybridization characteristic of a globalized society. Emblematic compositions related to water provide thus a good example of this technic, because they reflected international codes and reinforced the rhetorical power of royal image.

Following this perspective, Lusitanian royal festivities in the 17th century wisely used the iconography of water in different ceremonies, which aimed to set a place for communication between the ruler and the ruled, at a very sensitive period of dynastic change. Applying well-known motifs and the popular logo-iconic language, in order to empower the image of the King of either side of the sea, “*whom Mars and Neptune dared not disobey*”, the iconographic programmes aimed to foster international alliances and display abroad the idea of a flourishing dynasty. In this way, the rhetoric impact of the festive propagandistic speech could reach a larger public, emphasizing the power of the King who dominated over a huge empire submitted to Lisbon, the city where the “*Salgado Neptuno*” (“salty Neptune”) met the “*doce Tejo*” (“Sweet Tagus”; Camões 2015, IV. 84).

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