

# The Use of Religion in the Ceremonies and Rituals of Political Power (Portugal, 16th to 18th Centuries)

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*As cerimónias, as festas e os rituais enquanto expressão do poder régio e instrumento da sua afirmação têm sido o objecto de inúmeros estudos no contexto da historiografia portuguesa, especialmente dos anos 90 do século XX. Embora alguns destes estudos se debrucem sobre a monarquia medieval e dos inícios da Época Moderna, a maioria centra a sua análise no tempo e no processo de construção da monarquia absoluta, especialmente nos reinados de D. Pedro II e D. João V.*

*Neste artigo procuraremos explicitar de que forma alguns desses trabalhos interpretam especificamente a questão da utilização da religião e da linguagem do sagrado na afirmação do poder régio e na construção da imagem do príncipe e dos fundamentos do seu poder ao longo da Época Moderna. Ressalte-se que a maioria destes estudos não contempla exclusivamente esta perspectiva, integrando-a numa análise que tenta descodificar os diversos instrumentos e linguagens do poder – sagrados ou profanos.*

*Assim, procuraremos num primeiro momento percorrer os principais estudos e a abordagem que fazem desta problemática, seguindo-se a análise de alguns trabalhos operam uma inversão de perspectiva, ou seja, o da utilização pelo poder religioso de rituais e cerimónias do poder temporal.*

*Finalmente tentaremos apontar algumas linhas de análise que pensamos merecerem algum aprofundamento e estudos mais sistemáticos, nomeadamente a da relação das elites protagonistas do poder local com o universo cerimonial religioso e a utilização que fazem deste nas suas estratégias de afirmação social e política.*

Ceremonies, festivities and rituals, while being both an expression of regal power as well as an instrument of its affirmation, have been the subject of innumerable studies in the context of Portuguese historiography, especially during the final decade of the 20th century<sup>1</sup>. Although some of these studies focus on the medieval monarchy<sup>2</sup> and the beginnings of Modern Age<sup>3</sup>, the majority centre on the time and the process of construction of the absolute monarchy, particularly during the reigns of D. Pedro II and D. João V<sup>4</sup>. In this chapter, we will try to explain how some of these works specifically interpret the question of the use of religion and sacred language in affirming regal power, and in

constructing the image of the king and the foundations of his power through the early modern ages. It is important to note that the majority of these studies do not concentrate exclusively on this perspective, integrating it into an analysis that tries to decode the various instruments and languages of power – sacred or profane. Consequently, we will start by looking at the main studies and the approach they take to this problem, followed by an analysis of some works that propose a different approach: religious power using the rituals and ceremonies of secular power. Finally, we will try to identify some areas that we think deserve some more profound and systematic study, such as the relationship of the protagonist elites of local power with the religious ceremonial universe and the use that they made of this power in their social and political strategies.

An itinerary of the most excellent works on the theme of ceremonies, festivities, art and rituals of regal power shows us the concern of historians when analysing this universe through the basic premise propounded by Roger Chartier, who said that the authority and prestige of an institution or social body largely depends on the representations built of them, and the way they are transmitted<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the study of the exercise of power by the Portuguese monarchs cannot be established without a thorough understanding of their own perception of their role and their political practice (the foundations of their power) and the strategies used to consolidate them.

Political power is viewed as a construction that aimed to transmit, to both the powerful and the common people, an image of the king's power which inherently conveyed image of social organization. In this context, the ceremonies and their rituals are understood as a language, a functional expression of a political message that emphasised "the natural order of social bodies" in the regal perception. This "functional view" justifies the effort made by historians to reconstruct these ceremonies, giving special attention to social position, as well as to the words and gestures of each protagonist, because this role or ritual formalization may be employed as a benchmark of social interaction which opens doors to the understanding of the hierarchies that dominated the organization of power and society in early modern Portugal.

The ceremonies of regal power (proclamations, courts, commemorations, funeral rites) can constitute excellent observation points to observe the exact image that those in power had of themselves, as well as the instruments used to transmit and perpetuate it. One of these instruments was, without a doubt, the use of religion and its rituals, symbols, language and, above all, its capacity to mould mentalities and behaviours. This use is clear throughout the monarch's life, starting with his proclamation as king, and the beginning of his reign. This was an important point in the search for the legitimisation of his natural right to be king, and the blood-line that brought him to the throne – it was important to prove that his ancestors were destined to rule due to their extraordinary character, bravery and pious behaviour. As a result, many new monarchs actively promoted the sanctification of their predecessors – D. Manuel I, whose throne did not come by linear succession (he was the cousin and brother-in-law of D. João II, his predecessor), endeavoured to transfer the mortal remains of his cousin from the Cathedral of Silves to the *Panteão de Avis* in the Monastery of *Santa Maria da Vitória* in Batalha<sup>6</sup>, organizing a second funeral, full of state

honours. During these ceremonies, the idea that the deceased king should be venerated as a saint was emphasized: his allegedly uncorrupted body apparently being able to promote miraculous cures, earning the devotion of the subjects and of the new monarch<sup>7</sup>.

However, D. João II was not the only monarch whose sanctity D. Manuel I intended to reinforce. D. Afonso Henriques, first king of Portugal, was also transferred to a new tomb. This was concluded in 1520. Once more, the chronicles of the time emphasise the state of conservation of the body, which was considered to be the basic mark of sanctity. An official cult to the founder of the nation was thus instituted, culminating with diverse requests made to Rome for his canonization<sup>8</sup>. The pretence of the sanctity of these crucial monarchs was used by D. Manuel I as a strategy to legitimise and consolidate his power as king when assuming his position as the full heir of this pious line.

The religious element was also used in more obvious ways as a tool of power, enabling the strengthening of hierarchies and the justification of decisions. Pedro Cardim, in his important study of Portuguese courts<sup>9</sup> in the 16th and 17th centuries<sup>10</sup>, clearly demonstrates this. He emphasizes the fact that the official opening of the courts was carried out using a formal address, the main purpose of which was to state the reasons for that very assembly. This address was given by an ecclesiastic, in a form similar to a sermon, guaranteeing the solemnity of the moment through the introduction of a religious element, and urging the social bodies to fulfil their duties to the kingdom in harmony with its sovereign and his points of view. At the same time, important sermons commanded by the Royal House were given in the Royal Chapel. These sermons invariably concerned the importance of the subjects that were going to be dealt with in the courts, and included explicit instructions regarding the position that the participants in the meeting should assume in the matters that were going to be discussed<sup>11</sup>.

The presence of religion, but above all, religion serving the interests of the regal image, was visible in the day-to-day activities of the royal court and its ceremonies. As religion was an important factor of social cohesion, and the ceremonies were a basic tenet of the establishment of hierarchies and social positions, the king controlled these ceremonies and their liturgy, associating his image and his mission with a holy design. As Paula Marçal Lourenço commented, “The magnificent churches, the royal processions, the Patriarchal parades, the richness of the vestments and the cult objects, the canonisations and the solemn *Te Deum*, all contribute to surround the regal figure, patron and demigod, with feelings of collective loyalty, but also of separation, distance, divine intangibility”<sup>12</sup>. For example, the king going to mass was a point when a religious ceremony was used as a place and time to formalise hierarchies, since the proximity of any chosen courtiers to the monarch during the liturgy established their prestige. Hence, the religious space and the solemnity of its function operated as an instrument of exclusion (and inclusion) that the monarch was able to use to maintain harmony in the universe of the court<sup>13</sup>.

However, regal power did not confine its use of religion to the appropriation of ceremonies and liturgies. It also emerged in the space of the sacred, moulding or creating

spaces where the image and symbols of regal power cohabited with religious symbols, and where regal will was reflected in the organization and functioning of religious hierarchies.

There are two exemplary cases during the reign of D. João V. Firstly, the institution of the Patriarchate with almost pontifical prerogatives that allowed a true “ecclesiastical court” to congregate around the monarch. It was headed by a Patriarch who, while being the primary figure of the Church in Portugal, was also a royal chaplain, responsible for the religious space of the king<sup>14</sup>. The creation of the Patriarchal Basilica of Lisbon, adjacent to the court as the monarch expressly ordered, allowed the king to extend his dominion over the Portuguese ecclesiastical hierarchy. This dominion was achieved through ritual splendour and a careful choice of prelates to key positions in the hierarchy.

The other example is the palace of *Mafra*, the masterpiece of his reign, where the power of men and the power of God are truly joined in an impressive architectural programme<sup>15</sup>. Following other European examples, especially those in Spain, the King set out to build a royal residence on sacred ground adjacent to a convent and a basilica, with the purpose of identifying the duties and attributes of royalty with those of religion through this coexistence of spaces, thus making religion ever more present in the life of the court and the governance of the kingdom.

A further example of the use of religion by the king can be detected in the final act in the process of building the regal image – the farewell of its earthly body – since his memory, as we have seen, would be perpetuated and used in the consolidation of the power of his successors. The regal funeral rites have been the subject of several studies<sup>16</sup> and they all point out the use of the sacred space as the last stage of communication between the monarch and his subjects; a highly ritualised stage, sometimes prepared by the monarch himself beforehand<sup>17</sup>. In the churches where the sculptures were covered by black cloths, altars were raised to the regal memory (*castrum doloris*), regal shields were broken, and sermons eulogized the deceased, in a succession of ceremonies that actively contributed to the consolidation of a certain feeling of “national unity” around the image of the king. The holy space, once more “becomes a place of monarchic exaltation”<sup>18</sup>.

We have been exploring the dominant lines of analysis in the works that in some way have studied the theme of ceremony in the context of regal power and its relationship with religion. We have tried to clarify that the interpretative key is importance of religion as an instrument of power and as a tool for building the Portuguese monarchy of the Modern Age. However, some studies reveal an equally interesting perspective – the use of spaces, rituals and ceremonies of political power by the religious powers. Particularly relevant to this field are the studies of José Pedro Paiva on the ceremonial associated with the entrance of bishops into their ecclesiastical dioceses, and other public ceremonies<sup>19</sup>.

In the analysis made of these public ceremonies (directed towards an ecclesiastical and lay public), especially the entry of the newly-elected bishops into their dioceses<sup>20</sup>, the

author makes particular note of the appropriation by the religious powers of secular symbols of prestige, now used for the benefit of the promotion of the Episcopal image. These practices and symbols were, for example, parading on a horse, the construction of triumph arcs, and military guards of honour that presented weapons and saluted the prelate<sup>21</sup>. Throughout this ceremony, there was a flagrant attempt to use the representatives of local power, who were requested to carry the canopy under which the bishop, seated on a horse, crossed the town which was the headquarters of his diocese (a custom that was traditionally reserved for the person of the king<sup>22</sup>). The solemn procession resembled part of the ceremonial used in regal entrances<sup>23</sup>, staging a ritual of power that aimed to affirm the bishop's authority and not only consolidate hierarchies of authority inside the ecclesiastical universe (i.e., in the relationship of the bishop with the chapter), but also of this religious universe with regard to the secular universe.

The political assertion mechanisms used by the clergy employed similar strategies to those used to project the image of the monarch. Many prelates adopted programmes of personal and institutional promotion that involved, besides the solemn entrance through the city described above, the involvement of literary academies, book sponsorship, and the organization of festivities, bullfights and processions, all of which were designed to attract popular participation in religious celebrations. Many prelates also used art and architecture as tools of image consolidation, ordering important architectural sets that were meant to impress the public and to eternalise ecclesiastical dignity and power in stone<sup>24</sup>.

The majority of the studies analysed or quoted identify ceremonies and rituals as one of the constituent elements of political speech and practice because of the use given to them. While they overflowed with legitimatising functions and propaganda, these ceremonies carried a more important purpose, that of establishing a code of communication between the monarch and his subjects. However, the interpretative dimension of the ceremonies, and in our case, of the ceremonies built upon the exploitation of the liturgy, symbols or spaces of religion, also rests on the idea that they were a basic way of understanding social hierarchies and existing or desirable power relationships<sup>25</sup>. We cannot forget that we are analysing a social universe where etiquette played an important role in social organization; the place where an individual was seated or the role he played in a ceremony, for instance, meant that he had a certain social status, and any change made to this place or function could be interpreted as a change in his place in society.

We think that the scope of this last analysis lies in the fact that it can be used as a basic tool to broaden the knowledge of the social relationships and the individual and collective perceptions that moulded the organization and the establishment of social positions. This is especially effective in the understanding of limited social environments, such as those that were strongly hierarchic and codified, like the regal court.

We believe that it is important to widen the perspective of this analysis to other social universes such as the local social organization. The social understanding of the early

modern Portuguese communities has been accomplished through a very static analysis based upon the construction of categorizations that are not able to disclose the social complexity and the underlying logic of the local hierarchy.

In our opinion, the ceremonies promoted by the regal power (commemoration of marriages, births, funeral rites of the king and the royal family<sup>26</sup>, regal entrances) or the ecclesiastical power (processions<sup>27</sup>, solemn entrances of the bishops, *autos-de-fé*, canonisations of saints and so on) constitute basic points of formalisation and public expression of the social position that each individual or group occupied in the local society, and of the way they should relate to those that occupied other positions in the social hierarchy. This analytical perspective allows the historian to draw a more dynamic picture, closer to the perceptions of the social actors, and detect moments when the conflict or the experimentation of new logics may indicate changing processes such as the establishment of upward social movement or loss of importance, prestige and influence in the community.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The majority of the studies that we have mentioned in this article have their origins in the 1990s. Clearly, in this decade of the 20th century, Portuguese historians, especially those working in cultural history, felt attracted to the thematic publishing of sources and articles, where they tried to decode the etiquette of several ceremonies and to understand the processes of communication of the regal power. There are also more extensive works which try to understand the processes of political assertion by the monarchs who were the protagonists of the construction of the modern Portuguese state. See R. Bebiano, *D. João V. Poder e Espectáculo*, Aveiro 1987; A. Pimentel, *Arquitectura e Poder. O Real Edifício de Mafra*, Coimbra 1992; D.R. Curto, *A Cultura Política em Portugal. Comportamentos, Ritos e Negócios*, Lisbon 1994; L.R. Guerreiro, *La Représentation du Pouvoir Royal à l'Âge Baroque Portugais (1687-1753)*, 4 volumes, Paris 1995; P. Cardim, *Cortes e Cultura Política no Portugal do Antigo Regime*, Lisbon 1998 e J. Tendim, *Festa Régia no Tempo de D. João V*, Porto 1999.
- <sup>2</sup> With reference to this subject, we must mention the studies of: P. Merêa, *Sobre a Aclamação dos Nossos Reis*, "Revista Portuguesa de História", X, 1962, pp. 411-417; J. Mattoso, *A Coroação dos Primeiros Reis de Portugal*, in F. Bethencourt - D.R. Curto (eds.), *A Memória da Nação*, Lisbon 1991, pp. 187-200; R. Gomes, *A Corte dos Reis de Portugal no Final da Idade Média*, Lisbon 1995.
- <sup>3</sup> For example, studies such as those of F. Bouza Alvarez, *Retórica da Imagem Real. Portugal e a Memória Figurada de Filipe II*, "Penélope. Fazer e Desfazer a História", 4, 1989, pp. 19-58; R. Araújo, *Lisboa. A Cidade e o Espectáculo na Época dos Descobrimentos*, Lisbon 1990; N. Soares, *O Príncipe Ideal no Século XVI e a Obra de D. Jerónimo Osório*, Lisbon 1994; P.D. Braga - I.D. Braga, *As Duas Mortes de D. Manuel: o Rei e o Homem*, "Penélope. Fazer e Desfazer a História", 14, 1994, pp. 11-22; A. Buescu, *Uma Sepultura para o Rei. Morte e Memória na Trasladação de D. Manuel I (1551)*, in G. Sabatier - R. Gomes (eds.), *Lugares de poder. Europa dos séculos XV a XX*, Lisbon 1998, pp. 185-203; A. Buescu, *Imagens do Príncipe. Discurso Normativo e Representação (1525-1549)*, Lisbon 1996; A. Cardoso, *Um Rei Leva a sua Alma às Sedes Etéreas. Representações do Poder no Portugal de Quinhentos*, Lisbon 1997; P. Cardim, *Entradas Solenes. Rituais Comunitários e Festas políticas, Portugal e Brasil, séculos XVI e XVII*, in I. Jancsó - I. Kantor (eds.), *Festa: Cultura e Sociabilidade na América Portuguesa*, vol. 1, São Paulo 2001, pp. 97-124; J. Paiva, *As Festas de Corte em Portugal no Período Filipino (1580-1640)*, "Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura", 2, 2002, pp. 11-38; A. Araújo, *Hagiografia Política e Cerimoniais de Estado no Tempo de D. Manuel I*, "Revista Portuguesa de História", XXXVI, 1, 2002-2003, pp. 319-345.
- <sup>4</sup> Beside the studies quoted in note 1, we also have to mention the studies: A. Barreto Xavier - P. Cardim - F. Bouza (eds.), *Festas que se Fizeram pelo Casamento de Rei D. Afonso VI*, Lisbon 1996; E. Griné, *A Construção da*

- Imagem Pública do Rei e da Família Real em Tempo de Luto (1649-1709)*, Coimbra 1997; A. Araújo, *Ritualidade e Poder na Corte de D. João V. A Gênese Simbólica do Regalismo político*, “Revista de História das Ideias”, 22, 2001, pp. 175-208 and *Ritual and Power in the Court of King João V. The Symbolic Genesis of Political Regalism*, in J. Paiva (ed.), *Religious Ceremonials and Images: Power and Social Meaning (1400-1750)*, Viseu 2002, pp. 323-349.
- <sup>5</sup> R. Chartier, *Pouvoirs et Limites de la Représentation. Sur l’Oeuvre de Louis Marin*, “Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales”, 2, Paris 1994, p. 413.
- <sup>6</sup> Burial place of the second dynasty Portuguese monarchs.
- <sup>7</sup> See Araújo, *Hagiografia Política e Cerimoniais de Estado* cit., pp. 324-326 and Curto, *Ritos e Cerimónias da Monarquia em Portugal* cit., p. 243-245.
- <sup>8</sup> Official campaigns were registered during the reigns of D. João III and D. Sebastião. See Araújo, *Hagiografia Política* cit., pp. 330-331.
- <sup>9</sup> Courts being the assembly where the diverse parts of the social body of the kingdom had representation and which were convoked every time the monarch needed to take decisions in certain matters of governance.
- <sup>10</sup> Cardim, *Cortes e Cultura Política* cit.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
- <sup>12</sup> P. Lourenço, *Estado e Poderes*, in *Nova História de Portugal*, Vol. VII – *Portugal da Paz da Restauração ao Ouro do Brasil*, Lisbon 2001, pp. 33.
- <sup>13</sup> Curto, *Ritos e Cerimónias* cit., pp. 228-232; Id., *A Capela Real: um Espaço de Conflitos (Séculos XVI a XVIII)* “Revista da Faculdade de Letras”, série Línguas e Literatura, V, 1993, pp. 143-154.
- <sup>14</sup> The Lisbon Patriarchate was created, after difficult negotiations, by Pope Clement XI in the papal bull *In supremo apostolatus solio*, dated 7th November, 1716. Among the extensive prerogatives it granted, for the first time in the ecclesiastical history of Portugal, was a position of supremacy over the archbishops and bishops of Portugal, assigned by the king. The monarch went further by granting honours to the nominated Patriarch, and the title of cardinal, even though he did not have the right to do this (1717). It was only in 1737, through the papal bull *Praecipuas apostololici ministeri*, that Pope Clement XIII granted that the “appointed cardinals of Lisbon” could truly be acknowledged as cardinals. See Araújo, *Ritualidade e Poder na Corte de D. João V* cit., pp. 195.
- <sup>15</sup> With reference to the palace-convent of Mafra and its architectural decoding as an object of power, see the enlightening work of Pimentel, *Arquitectura e Poder. O Real Edifício de Mafra* cit.
- <sup>16</sup> For example, we quote J. Pereira, *A Morte de D. João V: Ascese e Espectáculo*, “Claro-Escuro, Revista de Estudos Barrocos”, 2-3, 1989, pp. 165-176; M. Araújo, *O ritual da morte – As exéquias celebradas na defunção de El-rei D. João V*, in *A Festa. Comunicações Apresentadas no VIII Congresso Internacional*, vol. II, Lisbon 1992, pp. 201-266; M. Hespanhol, *As Cerimónias Religiosas Realizadas na Sé de Évora, no Tempo de D. Teotónio de Bragança, pela Morte de El-rei D. Filipe II de Espanha (1598): Contribuição para a História da Igreja eborense*, in *Actas do Congresso de História no IV Centenário do Seminário de Évora*, Évora 1994, pp. 457-465; Guerreiro, *La Représentation du Pouvoir Royal à l’Âge Baroque Portugais* cit., vol. II, pp. 149-192; Braga - Braga, *As Duas Mortes de D. Manuel: o Rei e o Homem* cit., pp. 11-22; Griné, *A Construção da Imagem Pública do Rei* cit.; Buescu, *Uma Sepultura para o Rei* cit., pp. 185-203.
- <sup>17</sup> As was the case with D. Manuel I, in whose will (7 April 1517) we find detailed specifications for his sepulchre, funeral, suffrages, alms and pious legacies. See Araújo, *Hagiografia Política e Cerimoniais de Estado* cit., pp. 341-345.
- <sup>18</sup> Griné, *A Construção da Imagem Pública do rei* cit., p. 48.
- <sup>19</sup> J. Paiva, *O Cerimonial de Entrada dos Bispos nas suas Dioceses: Uma Encenação de Poder (1741-1757)*, “Revista de História das Ideias”, 15, 1993, pp. 117-146. Id., *Etiqueta e Cerimónias Públicas na Esfera da Igreja*, in I. Jancsó - I. Kantor (eds.), *Festa: Cultura e Sociabilidade na América Portuguesa*, vol. 1, São Paulo 2001, pp. 75-94 and J. Paiva., *Public Ceremonies Ruled by the Ecclesiastical-clerical Sphere: a Language of Political Assertion (16th-18th centuries)*, in Id. (ed.), *Religious Ceremonials and Images* cit., pp. 415-425.

- <sup>20</sup> In Portugal, the bishops were chosen by the monarch and later confirmed by the Vatican, a procedure that provoked several questions and conflicts between the king and the papacy. For the problems raised by the episcopal presentation, see Fortunato de Almeida, *História da Igreja em Portugal*, Vol. II, Lisbon 1967, pp. 47-50. The solemn entrance, that assumed the form of a ceremonial procession, passed through the streets of the city diocese headquarters and had, according to José Pedro Paiva, “the function of a rite (...) to give, to know and to recognize a difference, the Episcopal superiority, and to affirm it as a social difference known and recognized by the invested agent, in this case the bishop, and by all the community.”; Paiva, *O Cerimonial de Entrada dos Bispos nas suas Dioceses* cit., p. 137.
- <sup>21</sup> Paiva, *O Cerimonial de Entrada dos Bispos nas suas Dioceses* cit., pp. 138-142.
- <sup>22</sup> The reception of bishops in this manner, with royal support, was opposed by some members of the local government. See Paiva, *O Cerimonial de Entrada dos Bispos nas suas Dioceses* cit., p. 139.
- <sup>23</sup> For the ceremonials and rituals of regal entrances see A. Alves, *As Entradas régias portuguesas: uma visão de conjunto*, Lisbon 1986 and Cardim, *Entradas Solenes* cit., pp. 97-124.
- <sup>24</sup> One of the best examples is the programme of measures taken by the first Patriarch of Lisbon, D. Tomás de Almeida (1717-1754), in order to establish the new statute, which promoted, beside the solemn entrance, several festivities that celebrated pastoral visits, canonisations or consecrations of works completed throughout his term in office. He also ordered several architectural projects to be carried out, such as the construction of the church of Senhor Jesus da Pedra in Óbidos and the extensive restoration and enlargement of the church, palace and gardens of a property owned by the diocese in Santo António do Tojal (near Lisbon); Paiva, *Etiqueta e Cerimónias Públicas na Esfera da Igreja* cit., pp. 92-93.
- <sup>25</sup> With regard to this interpretation, see J. Paiva, *As Festas de Corte em Portugal no Período Filipino (1580-1640)*, “Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura”, 2, 2002, pp. 19-22.
- <sup>26</sup> The commemoration of royal marriages, births of princes and princesses, and funeral rites were locally financed and organized by the city councils. The local officers of the city council and local elites participated very actively, taking advantage of these ceremonies to prove their prestige and social importance using the function and social position that they occupied in these events to exclude or relegate to secondary social positions those individuals that they intended to distance from the opportunity of obtaining a position of power in local society. S. Soares writes, regarding Coimbra: “It is in the political festivities, commemorations of births, marriages and funeral rites of the royal family, proclamations of the new king, celebrations of the victorious battles, peace accords and other diplomatic events, that the highest-ranking members of government position themselves and clarify their relationship with the Crown (...). More than an expression of patriotism by those in government, these acts are used as a tool of assertion of an elite seeking to emphasise their specific, superior and exclusive qualities (...)”. S. Soares, *O Município de Coimbra da Restauração ao Pombalismo*, vol. II (*Sociologia do Poder Municipal*), Coimbra 2002, p. 173.
- <sup>27</sup> The processions, particularly the procession of the Body of Christ (*Corpus Christi*), that became an object of thorough regulation during the reign of D. João V, are excellent historical sources as they allow an insight into the logic of local social stratification because the place each one occupied in these religious ceremonies depended upon his “quality” and social positioning. For the procession of the Body of Christ see: M. Genro, *Festa do Corpo de Deus: Procissões Eucarísticas*, Lisbon 1959; L. Couto, *As Origens das Procissões da Cidade do Porto*, Porto 1971; H. Janeiro, *A Procissão do Corpo de Deus na Lisbon Barroca – o Espaço e o Poder*, in *Arqueologia do Estado – 1<sup>as</sup> Jornadas sobre Formas de Organização e Exercício de Poderes na Europa do Sul, Séculos XIII-XVIII*, Lisbon 1988, pp. 723-742.

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