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OF THE AZULEJO
IN PORTUGAL

IDENTIDADE(S) DO
AZULEJO EM PORTUGAL

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Editorial

Rosário Salema de Carvalho e João Pedro Monteiro

From the theoretical point-of-view, the *azulejo* has been studied in Portugal since the second half of the nineteenth century through a perspective that increasingly highlights the idea of originality and, more recently, the identity factor. Actually, today the *azulejo* is regarded as one of the arts that best identifies Portuguese heritage. However, is it truly so? Is it reasonable to associate identity narratives with *azulejo* or is this idea connected only to issues of national marketing?

Included in the *Month of the Azulejo* and the *European Year of Cultural Heritage*, AzLab#42 special seminar, entitled *Identity(ies) of the azulejo in Portugal*,¹ aimed at debating issues of identity related to glazed tiles, focusing its attention both on the historiographic construction of this (these) concept(s) and on the different points that distinguish the Portuguese usage of the glazed tile from how other countries understand this art form.

Following a protocol signed between the Rede de Investigação em Azulejo (*Azulejo* Research Network – ARTIS-IHA/FLUL) and the Amigos do Museu Nacional do Azulejo Association (Friends of the National *Azulejo* Museum), AzLab#42 took place at Amphitheater III of the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon on October 4, 2018. The international call for papers had a significant number of proposals, from which, after a blind peer-review process, six were selected. To the latter, three other sessions were added with guest-speakers whose work has been acknowledged in this field of study, which in turn led to vigorous discussions in the several debates held during the seminar.

For the reasons given, because it secures contributes of the several authors with different educational backgrounds and nationalities, the conference proceedings now published are enormously relevant for the future. In addition, this volume also fulfills one of the initial goals of this initiative: to introduce the scientific community's perspective of this matter and contribute to the theoretical support of the Portuguese *azulejo*'s application to UNESCO World Heritage.

ARTIS ON's special number mirrors AzLab#42 seminar's program. As a result, it starts with a set of articles related to historiography, featuring studies dedicated to general themes which are followed by more specific ones. Nuno Rosmaninho's article opens this volume with a study entitled "Portuguese *azulejos* and other national arts" in which the author seeks to "link the identity appropriation of the *azulejo* to a source common to most artistic discourse in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries".

Focusing on differentiating issues, Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Rosário Salema de Carvalho list originality facts identified by European historiography until the mid-twentieth century, observing how these spring from seemingly diverse ideas to actually embody a set of well-defined points. From an even more funnelled perspective, Sandra Leandro explores Joaquim de Vasconcelos' role in this context while João Pedro Monteiro addresses one of the most significant researchers in the glazed tile field of study – João Miguel dos Santos Simões.

1. AzLab is a monthly seminar organised by the Az group – *Azulejo* Research Network, of ARTIS – Instituto de História da Arte da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa (Art History Institute of the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon), in collaboration with the National *Azulejo* Museum (<https://blogazlab.wordpress.com>). AzLab's goal is to create new analysis perspectives on issues related to the *azulejo*, among which are research, inventory, collecting, safeguarding, creating or divulging. The idea of developing a research lab on *azulejo*, which addresses experimental procedure concepts associated with these spaces, is applied to the discussion AzLab wishes to promote. It also introduces a concept foreign to art history, aiming at developing a multidisciplinary research. Every month a theme is submitted to public debate, which may stem from research projects, masters' dissertations, PhD thesis, among others. National researchers, who are connected to the most diverse institutions, are invited to participate as well as, whenever possible, foreign scholars. AzLab#42 special *Identity(ies) of the Azulejo in Portugal* was a one-day conference, which was co-organised by the Amigos do Museu Nacional do Azulejo Association and also supported by Centro Atlântico publisher.



Fig. 01 Official image of AzLab#42 *Identity(ies) of the azulejo in Portugal* designed by Inês Leitão – a set of eight posters with different examples of glazed *azulejo* coatings
 Imagem oficial do AzLab#42 *Identidade(s) do azulejo em Portugal* concebida por Inês Leitão – conjunto de oito cartazes com diferentes revestimentos azulejares

The appreciation of the convergent and divergent points between Portuguese and Spanish tiles, understood as focal loci for the *azulejo*'s universal reach, is presented by Jaume Coll Conesa. Following this study, there is a set of articles that, addressing the call for papers' theme "*azulejo*: what identity(ies)", considers certain distinctive characteristics. Fátima Rodrigues and Pedro J. Freitas analyse patterned tiles using mathematical models of classification; Cristina Carvalho examines advertising panels; Shelley Miller shows how her artistic interventions call the concept of identity into question and, continuing with contemporaneous studies, Inês Leitão ends this section by analysing how artists perceive identity issues associated with the *azulejo*.

However, there is still plenty to debate and clarify. Indeed, one of the most interesting points concerning AzLab#42, and the articles now published, rests on the range of topics that arise as future research perspectives. Nevertheless, is the importance acknowledged to the *azulejo* today, how it distinguishes national landscape – whether by its physical presence or as a key element in the Portuguese collective imaginary – as well as its role as a reference to a broad set of other cultural and artistic displays, ranging from fashion to cuisine, enough to grant it the status of a culture's identity defining art form? Or are we sometimes witnessing a discourse that aims to subordinate Portuguese tiles to a wider narrative, making them fit into a set of supposedly distinctive factors, which actually intends to build a national image for foreign consumption?

Since we believe this volume is a contribution to the future and that from this initiative several others might be held, for the moment we must thank all participants and AzLab#42's Scientific and Executive Committee. In addition, we would like to highlight the support given by Inês Leitão in terms of graphic design and organisation as well as by Rafaela Xavier and Fábio Ricardo.

Official Hashtags: #IdentitiesAzulejo #IdentitiesOfTheAzulejo #AzLab #RedeAzulejo #EuropeForCulture

Editorial

Rosário Salema de Carvalho and João Pedro Monteiro

O azulejo tem vindo a ser abordado em Portugal, do ponto de vista teórico, desde a segunda metade do século XIX, numa perspetiva que acentua, de forma crescente, a ideia de originalidade e, mais recentemente, de fator identitário, sendo que, na atualidade, é reconhecido como uma das artes que mais identifica a herança patrimonial portuguesa. Mas será que é mesmo assim? E será legítimo associar-se uma narrativa identitária ao azulejo ou esta ideia prende-se, apenas, com questões de valorização nacional?

Integrado no mês do azulejo e nas celebrações do ano europeu do património cultural, o AzLab#42 especial *Identidade(s) do azulejo em Portugal*,² teve como principal objetivo discutir as questões de identidade(s) relacionadas com a azulejaria, centrando a sua atenção quer na construção historiográfica deste(s) conceito(s), quer nos diferentes aspetos que distinguem o uso português do azulejo das formas como outros países entenderam esta arte.

Resultando de um protocolo assinado entre a Rede de Investigação em Azulejo (ARTIS-IHA/FLUL) e a associação dos Amigos do Museu Nacional do Azulejo, o AzLab#42 especial decorreu no anfiteatro III da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, no dia 4 de Outubro de 2018. A chamada de trabalhos, de âmbito internacional, teve um número significativo de propostas, das quais, após revisão por pares, foram selecionadas seis. Estas foram complementadas por três oradores convidados, com um trabalho de reconhecido valor na área, o que suscitou um enorme dinamismo nos vários debates que aconteceram no decorrer da sessão.

Por todos estes motivos, ao fixar os contributos de vários autores com diferentes formações e nacionalidades, o presente volume de atas assume-se como um documento de enorme relevância para o futuro, cumprindo assim um dos seus objetivos iniciais de apresentar uma visão da comunidade científica sobre esta matéria e contribuir para o suporte teórico da candidatura do azulejo português a património mundial da UNESCO.

A organização deste número especial da ARTIS ON reflete o programa do AzLab#42, começando por apresentar um conjunto de textos relativos à historiografia, organizados do geral para o particular. Nuno Rosmaninho abre o volume com um artigo intitulado “Azulejos portugueses e outras artes nacionais”, em que procura “(...) integrar as apropriações identitárias do azulejo numa deriva comum à generalidade dos discursos artísticos nos séculos XIX a XXI”.

Focando o discurso nas questões diferenciadoras, Alexandra Gago da Câmara e Rosário Salema de Carvalho elencam os fatores de originalidade identificados na historiografia europeia até meados do século XX, observando como os mesmos emergem de ideias relativamente dispersas para se materializar num conjunto de aspetos bem definido. Numa perspetiva ainda mais dirigida, Sandra Leandro explora o papel de Joaquim

2. O AzLab é um seminário mensal, organizado pelo grupo Az – Rede de Investigação em Azulejo, do ARTIS – Instituto de História da Arte da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, em colaboração com o Museu Nacional do Azulejo (<https://blogazlab.wordpress.com>). O objetivo do AzLab é criar novas perspetivas de análise sobre questões relacionadas com o azulejo, entre as quais a investigação, o inventário, o colecionismo, a salvaguarda, a criação ou a divulgação. A ideia de desenvolver um laboratório de pesquisa sobre azulejo, que passa pelo conceito de procedimento experimental associado a estes espaços, é aqui aplicada à discussão de trabalho que se pretende promover. Introduce também um conceito externo à história da arte e que aponta para a investigação multidisciplinar. Todos os meses é apresentado um tema para discussão pública, que pode partir de projetos de investigação, dissertações de mestrado, teses de doutoramento e outros. São convidados a colaborar investigadores nacionais, pessoas ligadas às mais diversas instituições tentando, sempre que possível, contar com a participação de investigadores estrangeiros. O AzLab#42 especial *Identidade(s) do azulejo em Portugal* consistiu numa conferência de um dia inteiro e contou com a co-organização da associação de Amigos do Museu Nacional do Azulejo, tendo ainda o apoio da editora Centro Atlântico.

de Vasconcelos neste contexto, cabendo a João Pedro Monteiro referir-se a um dos nomes mais significativos do estudo da azulejaria – João Miguel dos Santos Simões.

O entendimento das convergências e divergências entre a azulejaria portuguesa e espanhola, entendidas como *focos de irradiação universal do azulejo*, é apresentado por Jaume Coll Conesa, a que se segue um conjunto de textos que, respondendo ao tema “azulejo: que identidade(s)” da chamada de artigos, aborda determinadas características distintivas. Maria de Fátima Rodrigues e Pedro Freitas analisam a azulejaria de padrão através de modelos matemáticos de classificação; Cristina Carvalho observa os painéis publicitários; Shelley Miller mostra como as suas intervenções artísticas põem em causa a ideia de identidade e, continuando na contemporaneidade, Inês Leitão encerra o ciclo ao analisar de que modo os artistas entenderam as questões identitárias ligadas ao azulejo.

Todavia, muito fica ainda por debater e esclarecer, e um dos aspetos mais interessantes do AzLab#42, e dos textos que são agora publicados, reside no leque de questões que emergem como perspetivas de investigação futura. A importância que hoje se reconhece ao azulejo, e a forma como este marca a paisagem nacional, quer pela sua presença física, quer enquanto imaginário e referente para um vasto conjunto de outras manifestações culturais e artísticas, que vão desde a moda à culinária, é suficiente para lhe conferir o estatuto de valor identitário de uma cultura? Ou estaremos, por vezes, em presença de discursos que visam subordinar a azulejaria portuguesa a uma narrativa de maior amplitude, fazendo-a integrar um conjunto de fatores, supostamente distintivos, com o qual se pretende construir uma imagem nacional para consumo externo?

Acreditando que o presente volume é um contributo para o futuro e que, a partir desta iniciativa, várias outras possam nascer, resta-nos agradecer a todos os participantes, à Comissão Científica do AzLab#42, e à Comissão Executiva, destacando o apoio ao nível do design gráfico e da organização de Inês Leitão, assim como de Rafaela Xavier e Fábio Ricardo.

Hashtags oficiais: #IdentitiesAzulejo #IdentitiesOfTheAzulejo #AzLab #RedeAzulejo #EuropeForCulture

PORTUGUESE AZULEJOS AND OTHER NATIONAL ARTS

AZULEJOS PORTUGUESES E OUTRAS ARTES NACIONAIS

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ABSTRACT

In this article I intend to link the identity appropriation of the *azulejo* to a source common to most artistic discourse in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. I am convinced the national assumptions concerning the *azulejo* followed six phases which I have linked to different identity mutations that could be summarized as unceasing historicist approaches, which are characterological and long-term. Historicism prevailed until the end of the nineteenth century. A passion for characterological principles followed, which was conveyed by Reynaldo dos Santos with unsurpassable strength. However, when the Estado Novo's identity pattern started to decline, art historians focused on researching unchanged structures. First, traces of Portuguese originality, though ephemeral, were sought after. Second, researchers attempted to show that the *azulejo* is an expression of Portuguese sensibility which, with its ups and downs, remained throughout the centuries. Third, by inventorying and analysing, they tried to integrate the *azulejo* in the structural attributes of Portuguese art.

KEYWORDS

Narratives of identity | Periodisation | Characterology | Traditionalism

RESUMO

No presente artigo procuro integrar as apropriações identitárias do azulejo numa deriva comum à generalidade dos discursos artísticos nos séculos XIX a XXI. Estou persuadido de que as ilações nacionais do azulejo seguiram as seis fases em que divido as mutações identitárias, e que poderia resumir em sucessivas apreensões historicistas, caracterológicas e de longa duração. O historicismo preponderou até final do século XIX. Seguiu-se uma paixão pelas essências caracterológicas, que Reynaldo dos Santos exprimiu com um vigor insuperável. Quando o padrão identitário do Estado Novo entrou em declínio, os historiadores de arte voltaram-se para a pesquisa das invariantes estruturais. No primeiro caso, procuraram-se no azulejo os vestígios de uma originalidade portuguesa, ainda que efémera. No segundo, trabalhou-se para mostrar que o azulejo é a expressão de uma sensibilidade portuguesa que, com altos e baixos, permaneceu ao longo dos séculos. No terceiro, procura-se integrar o azulejo nos atributos estruturais da arte portuguesa, deduzidos por inventariação e análise

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Narrativas identitárias | Periodização | Caracterologia | Tradicionalismo

National identity is a theme that often seems excessive and unnecessary. However, its historiographical repercussions are enormous. Why is it that António Ferro, so many times referred to as “Orpheus’ modernist”, uses such energy to disqualify the modern and modernism? How is it that, for the sake of national identity, we began to defend the artistic copy and argued against the originality of the 1930s? How is it possible to have so many certainties when it comes to identity in artistic matters so likely to be controversial? How did the idea

of universalism manage to cast an appearance of union to those who support and object individualism, internationalism and cosmopolitanism in art? How did we come to refuse our national artistic identity, conveyed by Leonel Moura in 1990? (Moura, 1990).

To answer these questions, I have decided to adopt a long-term historical perspective in which I seek to incorporate the *azulejo*. In a previous study, I adopted a coordinated perspective of the national artistic



Fig. 01· Coimbra, Old Cathedral, mudejar azulejos, 16th century (photo by Francisco Queiroz/IPC)

forms from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, including in it the First Romanticism and highlighting the characterological shift that began at the end of the eighteen-hundreds. In this article I will begin by summing up the previously developed timeline, so I will mention some parts of the work entitled *A Deriva Nacional da Arte. Portugal, séculos XIX-XXI* (*The Origin of National*

Art. Portugal, 19th-20th centuries) (Rosmaninho, 2018) and of the anthology *Artes de Portugal (1814-2013)* (*Portugal's Arts*) (Rosmaninho, 2014). The pages on the *azulejo* have never been published and may be read as a verification of all the hermeneutical possibilities of that historical perspective.

OBJECT OF STUDY

National identity is a feeling that lives within memory and is expressed through a speech directed at establishing the homeland's originality and worth. My goal is not to *find* national art, but only to draft some kind of history of the narratives of identity stemming from art. I do not wish to decide upon whether there is a Portuguese school of painting, but to explain the

use of Vasco Fernandes' and Nuno Gonçalves' work to uphold the country's ideas of worth and originality. It is not up to me to point out the *lie* of the *Portuguese household*, but to show how it was adapted to the Neogarrett ideology and to a persistent collective imaginary.

A TIMEFRAME FOR THE NARRATIVES OF IDENTITY

The provenance of Portuguese art in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries might be summed up in six periods. In fact, art's bond to a Portuguese identity started at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Indeed, despite some enthusiastic beliefs, at the start, national art was plagued by uncertainty concerning the possibility of Portugal reaching a collective specificity worthy of appreciation. A Portuguese national culture was a wish, a possible expectation.

The second period of provenance of national art, between 1841 and 1890, is determined by its past hopes and the primacy of an historical perspective. The pioneers of national art do not see crisis, but hope. "Romantic nationalism" rests upon the idea that culture, popular traditions, and a country's rural way of life voice a vital harmony. The hopes of a national identity lay in the past where a Portuguese school of painting headed by Grão Vasco and a private Portuguese Manueline style is greatly sought after.

In the third period, between 1891 and 1920, patriots become increasingly more assured as well as more aggravated by all that seemed foreign or inappropriate. Although to our eyes they seem thoroughly victorious, they actually felt besieged by scepticism. A great increase in identity discourse concerning art is recorded. Patriots find the theme *Portuguese household* and take rurality as a reference, cladding all subjects under a powerful and restorative characterological mantle and becoming excited by the discovery of Nuno Gonçalves' panels. The Neogarrett style underscores life in the countryside, José Malhoa's painting is brought to the fore as a legitimate representation of

the country, and the idea of a Portuguese character leads to fascinating reinterpretations of the Manueline style and the "Portuguese school of painting".

The fourth period, between 1921 and 1940, is an era of extremes: artistic nationalism grows in its fight against the international threat brought about by the avant-garde. It is a struggle that seems to sort itself out in favour of the nationalists, though the balance indicates that the supremacy of the individual would soon have drastic effects. This era begins with António Ferro, a provocatively antinational modernist, and ends with Fernando de Pamplona commending national architecture and the antimodernist *Exposição do Mundo Português* (Exhibition of the Portuguese World). It starts with the future director of the National Propaganda Secretariat demeaning Almeida Garrett's alleged parochialism and ends with unceasing criticism to internationalism and cosmopolitanism. Growing in strength, radical views persevere throughout the thirties and are not solved. Cultural nationalism, which had elected chalets as its prime enemy, turns against avant-garde and non-naturalistic currents or, using a broad and misleading term, against modernism. The ethnical characterology of the nineteenth century becomes an inebriant "Portuguese sensibility". As a result, modern artists felt affected by the flair and responded. In 1939, since it was neither possible to defy artistic nationalism nor forfeit an "universalist" understanding of art, a symbiosis between *nation* and the *world* was aimed at, which was in turn translated into convergent formulas: "national form", "universal content"; "national origin, universal repercussion"; individualism as a prerequisite to the universal;



Fig. 02. Vila Viçosa, Church of Santo António, patterned *azulejos*, 17th century (photo by Jorge Guerra Maio)

national art as a particular interpretation of general values. With these syntheses, modernists, who were seemingly bowing before the nation, were actually placing the individual above the collective, a fact that will become more obvious in the next decades.

The fifth phase, between 1941 and 1970, was punctuated by radical certainties about the timelessness of the Portuguese spirit, feeding Reynaldo dos Santos' powerful historiography. However, young artists grew more and more indifferent. The conflicting mood of the previous period slows down with the frantic patriots' victory and modern artists' apparent acceptance of the nation. Yet, though it lasted until the end of the *Estado Novo* (New State or Second Republic), this peace is partial and illusory. Artists gradually lost interest in identity issues, which had begun to seem repetitive, reiterative and propagandistic. Art started steering into a period in which historical obligations and identity concerns were incompatible with individual rights, where the artist's originality was above the nation's cultural particularities and creators obeyed only themselves.

After the *Estado Novo*, the nationalistic canon was weakened. In the seventies and eighties, the Portuguese artistic identity became an abject theme to the new, young artists, who were eager to free themselves from an ideological authority that still remained under a shadow cast by the *Estado Novo*. These young artists began to give in to the allure of *internationalisation* or, to use a more up-to-date term, *globalisation*. The nationalistic speech had become more solipsistic, characterological, essentialist and disconnected from the actual work of art. New scholars who were still interested in the national perspective preferred a long-term (instead of a timeless) and comparatist view (instead of a soliloquy of values). Concerns about identity lost national activism and instead became more opened to an extra-European context. Perhaps the year that best signals the peak of indifference when it comes to the national perspective is 1990. Afterwards, a nostalgic tone started to grow and has been growing ever since; it now seems to take on the uncertain and hopeful form of a new beginning. In the twenty-first century, globalisation triggered a renewed traditional nostalgia that is changing the elements of national identity.

GREAT HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TOPICS

If this historical perspective is correct, one will be able to find it in some of the greater themes of Portuguese art history: in the universal sense of Portuguese art; in the identity relationship it has with Spain, Flanders, Italy, Europe and Asia; in the particular interpretation of Velasquez; in Nuno Gonçalves' exemplar importance;

in originality and imitation concepts; in influence and assimilation; in inferiority and delay; in the appreciation of light and colour; in interpretations of landscape; in the antimodernist nationalistic principle; and, I believe, also in the *azulejo*.

AZULEJO

As it is clear, identity concerns are not present in all studies dedicated to the Portuguese glazed tile – the *azulejo*. In many, on the contrary, the interest lies in the technique, the Muslim, Spanish and Dutch influences and in the historical evolution of techniques, patterns and uses. As a result, it might be of use to remember that an identity appropriation grew with the development of a patriotic feeling between the end of the nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. It should also be added that the identity framework appears as a preliminary comfort to great works or as a mean to reinforce the importance of tile art as cultural heritage.

Historicism, characterology and long-term

I am convinced that the lessons to be learnt from the *azulejo*'s identity followed the aforementioned phases, which could be summed up in consecutive historical, characterological and long-term concerns. Historicism prevailed until the end of the nineteenth century. A passion for characterological essences followed, which were conveyed by Reynaldo dos Santos with unsurpassable strength. When the identity pattern of the *Estado Novo* started to decline, art historians turned their focus onto researching unchanged structures. In the first case, researchers sought in the *azulejo* traces of Portuguese uniqueness, even if short-lived. In the second, work was developed to prove that the

azulejo is a representation of the Portuguese sensibility which, with its highs and lows, prevailed throughout the centuries. In the third, researchers tried to fit the *azulejo* into the structural attributes of Portuguese art, gathered through inventory and analysis.

The historical period is well-represented by Raczyński who, in a letter on January 16, 1845, underscored the *azulejo*'s importance for the country's identity, showing its great use in Portugal and the grander beauty of the glazed tiles produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Raczyński, 1846). Furthermore, in the article by H.B.K. (1850), published in *Art Journal* and translated in the *Revista Universal Lisbonense* (Lisboners Universal Journal) in 1950, the author highlights the value of the *azulejo* in a mediocre contemporary context.

At a time of few studies and great hopes for the development of a national identity, the thought of a Portuguese school of painting, which would leave its imprint upon historiography for a century, was coyly endeavored in glazed tiles by Francisco Assis Rodrigues, sculptor and professor at the Fine Arts Academy. The *Dicionário Técnico e Histórico de Pintura, Escultura, Arquitectura e Gravura* (Technical and Historical Dictionary of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Engraving), published in 1875, assumes that, "in Portugal, scattered throughout the kingdom, there was a school or establishment where artisans and workers, who were responsible for a great number of this type of pieces, were taught"¹ (Rodrigues, 1875: 67).

1. In the source text: "em Portugal alguma escola ou estabelecimento, em que se criaram artífices e operários, que fizeram o grande número de obras deste género, que se acham espalhadas por todo o reino". Henceforth all in-text translations are provided by the author.



Fig. 03· Funchal, Church of the Convent of Santa Clara, upper choir, floor with mudejar tiles, 16th century, and “chequered azulejos” (photo by Rosário Salema de Carvalho)

However, as per usual, suggestions concerning identity flowed without any firm ground. The *Grande Dicionário Português ou Tesouro da Língua Portuguesa* (*Great Portuguese Dictionary or Treasure of the Portuguese Language*) by Domingos Vieira, published in 1871, aligns the *azulejo* with two striking points of the Portuguese artistic identity: the fact that architecture is “a vital form of Portuguese art” and that this is due to “the Mozarabic genie”. Since Portuguese architecture

“is distinguished by its ornamental richness, it is easy to grasp the Arab provenance of the *azulejo*”² (Vieira, 1871: 696).

When, in 1891, Ramalho Ortigão wrote about Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro’s *faïence*, a characterological reinvention of art history had already begun precisely through the actions of the latter. In it, traditional artistic elements, including the *azulejo*, started to appear with

2. In the source text: “se distingue pela riqueza da ornamentação, é fácil de compreender a origem árabe do *azulejo*”.



Fig. 04. Funchal, Church of the Convent of Santa Clara, patterned *azulejos*, 17th century (photo by Rosário Salema de Carvalho)

expressions such as, “of the esthetical genius of our race” (Ortigão, 1891).

The growing interest in the idea of a *Portuguese household* led to a fascinating traditional appropriation of the *azulejo* within a field that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was known as artistic ethnography. In 1904, Sousa Viterbo regarded the *azulejo* panel with its images of saints lit by a lamp, “a motive of charming ingenuity” (Viterbo, 1912³).

This shows that, within the historical identity framework, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the *azulejo* was indeed at its artistic peak. Afterwards, when ethnical characterology swept through Europe and

artistic historiography arrived, the *azulejo* began to represent a collective way of life. While popular culture was transformed into the greatest bedrock of national identity, it is possible to find in the *azulejo* the religious and naïve spirit of the people. In a key article published in 1905 and dedicated to traditional Portuguese art, Rocha Peixoto did not forget to include the “*azulejo* altarpieces” among the rural “household accessories” (Peixoto, 1905).

At this point it is important to recall that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the disbelievers in the self-sufficient value of Portuguese art, who had been sheltered by the teachings of Joaquim de Vasconcelos, were being overrun by a new generation

3. On pages 567-570, he includes the article “A casa portuguesa” (The Portuguese household) originally published in *Diário de Notícias* on September 2, 1904.



Fig. 05. Faro, Cathedral, Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, 18th century, Masters' Cycle (*Ciclo dos Mestres*)
(photo by Jorge Guerra Maio)

of intellectual patriots that were able to find the Portuguese originality and distinction in everything. Yet, the skeptics, ready to highlight the Portuguese inborn neglect for art, regarded with horror the proliferation of façades covered with *azulejos*. Manuel Emygdio da Silva understood this position well. In 1909 he was grieved by "this craze to coat buildings with *azulejos* that, in most cases, are not even as embellishing as some ads"⁴ (Silva, 1958). In his opinion, this behavior would transform "Lisbon from a city of marble and granite into a town of crockery and posters"⁵ (Silva, 1958). It is perhaps in this line of thought that Joaquim de Vasconcelos' opinion should be considered, since, in a letter to António Augusto Gonçalves on

March 1, 1912, he objected "against Colaço *azulejos* and its Ilha dos Amores (in *azulejo*) in Bairro Alto"⁶ (Vasconcelos, 1973).

Traditional and antimodern convictions

In 1912, José de Figueiredo had already taken up Ramalho Ortigão's artistic patriotism and created a suggestive historiographical norm, that was full of promise. With it, the *azulejo* would increasingly become an expression of the people and of the Portuguese collective personality. As its sense of belonging to

4. In the source text: "a mania de forrar os prédios com azulejos que, na maioria dos casos, nem sequer são decorativos como alguns anúncios".

5. In the source text: "a Lisboa de "mármore e de granito" em uma cidade de «louça e de cartazes»".

6. In the source text: "contra os azulejos Colaço e a sua Ilha dos Amores (em azulejo) do Bairro Alto".

the people and to Portugal grew, which occurred relentlessly until the mid-twentieth century, step by step the *azulejo* found its way into identity discourse and became a source of convictions, including artistic ones; a weapon against the avant-garde and modernism.

The *azulejo* panel with a saint or the Virgin Mary, which was promoted by Eduardo Nunes Colares in the journal *A Arquitectura Portuguesa* (*The Portuguese Architecture*), became a recurring theme in Portuguese households, and was regarded as one of the cornerstones of the “Portuguese style” worthy of being placed at railway stations, like Guerra Maio suggested in 1916 (Colares 1914; Colares, 1915; Maio, 1916).

Azulejo’s use as an identity insurance against foreign imports (first, the chalets; then, modernism) was incorporated into a powerful, aggressive discourse in the second half of the twentieth century. The article “Arquitetura tradicional do século XVIII” (Traditional architecture of the eighteenth century), published in 1918 in the *Revista Turismo* (*Tourism Journal*), is a fine example of this, though it was in the thirties that the *azulejo*’s association with Portuguese identity was most used to achieve extreme nationalistic aims. The book *A Nossa Casa* (*Our House*), 1918, by Raul Lino suggests its employment several times and praises the Portuguese sense of belonging and technical merit but is only willing to accept its dissemination if it offers a “sentimental interest” (Lino, 1918). Eleven years later, in *A Casa Portuguesa* (*The Portuguese Household*), Raul Lino still acknowledged the *azulejo* as one of the fundamental morphological elements of Portuguese art and associates it with a particular way of “feeling in architecture” (Lino, 1929). This shows a victory in favour of José de Figueiredo’s characterological historiography and, ever more so, of Reynaldo dos Santos. The esteem felt for the *azulejo* was the result of a tendency to “despise the game of volumes in architecture”, the “little interest in the chiaroscuro”, the southern character of the country and an intrinsic “superficial sense” (Lino, 1929: 12).

The *azulejo*’s importance for the country’s sense of identity spread through two means in the second third of the twentieth century: in sphere of the *Portuguese*

household, having been set as one of the morphological elements that would make domestic architecture more Portuguese; and in the historiographical context, since the *azulejo* asserted itself as proof of the creative originality of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The book Raul Lino published in 1929 is filled with references to ancient *azulejos* (Lino, 1929). It is a retrospective view that allows supporters of the *Portuguese household* to demand “simple *azulejo* panels with sweet, protective saints, always lit by an oil lamp,”⁷ as Mário Gonçalves Viana wrote in 1932 (Viana, 1932). The fact that these representations – of the *azulejo* and of the *Portuguese household* – became increasingly more common, though, was loathed by Raul Lino in his third book entitled *Casas Portuguesas* (*Portuguese Households*), 1933 (Lino, 1933). Actually, this decade of extreme views on identity and art tended to convert glazed tiles into a vehicle that stood for Portuguese identity against the threats of cosmopolitan modernism. In a well-known article entitled “Façam-se casas portuguesas em Portugal” (Make the houses in Portugal Portuguese), published in January 1939, its anonymous author regrets that the tile coating of façades has been forbidden but that there is no attempt to stop the surge of foreign-looking buildings that “are nothing more than poor, artificial plants pretending to perfume gardens”.⁸

In the journal *A Arquitectura Portuguesa* (*The Portuguese Architecture*), where this short piece was published, there was a fierce campaign against modernism in favour of a *Portuguese art*. In June 1939, the article “Portugal lá fora” (Portugal abroad) firmly states that a feeling of Portuguese identity cannot be obtained without the employment of “ancient traditions” such as the *azulejo*. In the same edition, a few pages onwards, this number – then at the height of the antimodernist campaign – considers the *azulejo* a primordial resource that would allow architecture to be made Portuguese again. “Our classic and so often incredibly beautiful *azulejos*” would have the power to make “modern buildings” more Portuguese (“Azulejos portugueses”, 1939). In 1941 Raul Lino’s outcry against “a sea of small rooftops, *azulejos*, bollards and balconies”⁹ eloquently illustrates how the *azulejo* was employed

7. In the source text: “ingênuos painéis de azulejos com doces santos protectores, sempre alumados pela lâmpada de azeite”.

8. In the source text: “não passam de pobres plantas artificiais a fingir que perfumam jardins”.

9. In the source text: “chuvada de beiralinhos, azulejos, pilaretes e alpendrôides”.



Fig. 06· Lisbon, patterned azulejos, 19th century (photo by Jorge Guerra Maio)

by a generally traditional, patriotic and antimodern taste, which may have continued to grow for as long as the modern architects of the fifties kept using glazed tiles in new ways (Lino, 1941).

It was in this midst of patriotism that the *azulejo* became common in detached houses and Reynaldo dos Santos extracted historiographical conclusions. Because of him, the claim that *azulejos* were linked to identity reached a superlative level. In a conference given in 1941 about "Art's spirit and essence in Portugal", Reynaldo dos Santos explained why the *azulejo* "achieved a logical and original ornamental form" and "is one of the wonders of the creative power of Portuguese decorative art"¹⁰ (Santos, 1943). This line of thought finally developed a definitive structure in 1957.

In the work *O Azulejo em Portugal* (*The Azulejo in Portugal*), a scholarly analysis prevails most chapters, but the introduction – conceived to define a critical bibliography and expose the author's wide historical views – describes the intrinsic originality and worth of the Portuguese *azulejo* (Santos, 1957). "Variety", "continuous renewal", "the vitality of its decorative instinct", "great dissemination", "absolute coherence" and "national autonomy" are some of the attributes highlighted by Reynaldo dos Santos. The Portuguese glazed tile of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offered an unparalleled "variety of features, evolutionary renewal and broad ornamental view"¹¹ that could not be found in any other country.

10. In the source text: "alcançou uma expressão decorativa lógica e original" "constitui uma das glórias do poder criador da arte decorativa portuguesa".

11. In the source text: "a variedade de aspectos, a renovação evolutiva e a ampla visão ornamental".

The engine of invariants

Side by side with the traditional splendour of the *Portuguese household* and Reynaldo dos Santos' spiritual momentum, modern architects felt compelled to reject oversimplification and establish their creative rights. The struggle against the *Portuguese household* is also a struggle against "the tiny *azulejo* panels", as Francisco Keil called them (Amaral, 1947). However, this state of affairs would also lead to the *azulejo*'s reinvention in Portugal. Thriving art historians of the seventies, who nonetheless rejected Reynaldo dos Santos' patriotic epistemology, were forced to recognise the "*azulejo*'s persistence" (Silva, 1993) and "the flow" of the decorative arts' own behaviour, even in periods of greater tendency towards internationalisation, such as D. João's (Serrão, 2001: 223-224).

The search for unchanged artistic structures stemmed from Reynaldo dos Santos' wide-ranging vision, which was nevertheless devoid of the author's spiritual and patriotic tone. Portuguese originality was, to Reynaldo dos Santos, a product of the Portuguese collective personality. The scholars who followed him (and sought to deny him) looked for originality in the consistency of forms, but were left without a driving force that would help explain these structural consistencies. That is why, even without a patriotic speech, characterology always emerges, albeit discretely, as the cause of the forms and *taste* that endure throughout the centuries.

Therefore, we can now understand why José Meco, in 1985, started the book *Azulejaria Portuguesa* (*Portuguese Tiling*) with a categorical statement concerning the national originality of this art in its forms as well as purposes (Meco, 1985). In addition, he conveyed an idea that would help establish the patriotic speech developed at the end of the nineteenth century, which was later taken up and amplified by Reynaldo dos Santos, that is: the strength of external influences is lesser than that of a country's collective personality that absorbs everything and suits it to its ways. Regarding the *azulejo*, the following statement

is equivalent to José Meco's, who, full of ontological certainty, claimed, "The ability to absorb the most diverse elements, without losing its personality, added to the genesis of the Portuguese *azulejo*"¹² (Meco, 1985: 6), a thought no one verbalized better than Reynaldo dos Santos.

Identity purposes also arise when the scholarly aim is replaced by the need to offer a quick and comprehensive perspective of the Portuguese *azulejo*. In these cases, the researcher must, even if unwilling, outline general ideas to standardise five-hundred years of history in the geographical area we call Portugal. This is what happened in 1986 when José Meco highlighted the *azulejo*'s originality, expressivity, complexity and persistent use as well as its economic, social and cultural suitability. Yet, the swiftest way to convey these ideas is still, as it was in Reynaldo dos Santos' time, to consider the *azulejo* "a personality trait, a sign of the Portuguese creative vitality and difference"¹³ (Meco, 1986).

The hermeneutic of transculturation

The catalogue of the 2005 exhibition on *A Arte do Azulejo em Portugal* (*Azulejo's Art in Portugal*) is guided by the same characterological lines, since it considers glazed tiles "one of the most original contributions of the Portuguese genius to Universal Culture" and an eloquent illustration of "the Portuguese practical intelligence and sensibility" (Henriques *et. al*, 2005). The post-colonial context we are in no longer allows us to have an expansionist interpretation of Portuguese culture, so the *azulejo* has tended to appear in the last decades has a vehicle to the much appreciated "cultural encounters".

The remarks this catalogue makes concerning the *azulejo* as "supporting tolerance between exoticism and sensuality" underline characterology's renewed use ("swift practical sense", "the values of sensuality"), which is intersected with artistic deductions fashioned after José de Figueiredo (the Portuguese preference

12. In the source text: "Contribuiu para a génese do azulejo português a sua capacidade de absorção dos mais variados elementos, sem perda de personalidade" (Meco, 1985: 6).

13. In the source text: "marca da personalidade, da vitalidade criativa e da diferença portuguesa".



Fig. 07. Trafaria Praia, 2013, motor-driven passenger ferry (1960), cork covering and furniture, 1430x750x3010 cm; *Great Panorama of Lisbon (21st Century)*, 2013, Viúva Lamego hand-painted, tin-glazed ceramic tiles on a sandwich-structured composite panel, 220x6000 cm; *Valkyrie Azulejo*, 2013, handmade woollen crochet, felt appliqués, fabrics, ornaments, polyester, LED, power supply unit, dimensions variable. Douro Azul, Porto (photo by Luís Vasconcelos/Cortesia Unidade Infinita Projectos)

for “colourful material, mirroring light” and for the “description of real life”) and laid at the service of principles that contradict old patriotism (“the ability to fuel dialogue with other peoples, which is made obvious by the preference for Exoticisms”). The resources concerning identity, which were arduously conceived at the end of the nineteenth century, are reused to praise Portugal’s importance. However, because it is no longer possible to stress its utter predominance, the dialogue between cultures is treasured, that is, Portugal’s weight in “the universal context of artistic creation”,¹⁴ namely through the *azulejo* (Henriques *et al.*, 2005: 9).

Despite the efforts to make research more objective, it seems we cannot become detached from the subjectivism and spiritualism that derive from the use of concepts like *genie*, *personality*, *taste* and *sensuality*, even if subjected to the hermeneutic of *transculturation* (Henriques *et al.*, 2005: 19).

The void of globalisation

In the last couple of years, in which the deceptions of globalisation and the economic crisis helped produce a new patriotism, the *azulejo* was once more entangled in a diaphanous search for national identity. Indeed, the transformed *cacilheiro*¹⁵ created by Joana Vasconcelos to represent Portugal in the Venice Biennial exhibition in 2013 illustrates that semblance of a new beginning. In the interview granted to *JL*, the artist accepts both her Portuguese identity and internationalism, she wants to be Portuguese but also belong to the world (Vasconcelos, 2013). The *azulejo*, with all its Portuguese peculiarities and universal coating qualities, is yet again involved in a kaleidoscope of references regarding identity. The latter tend to be avoided due to the lingering fears inspired by the memory of the *Estado Novo*, but at the same time it cannot be entirely freed from this kaleidoscope because of the void of globalisation.

14. In the source text: “no contexto universal da criação artística”.

15. Translator’s note: *cacilheiro* is the Portuguese term used to identify the boats departing from Cacilhas, Almada, that cross the Tagus River and connect the north side to the south side of Lisbon.

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IN PORTUGUESE... AND SPANISH, ENGLISH, DUTCH, FRENCH... SINGULARITIES OF PORTUGUESE AZULEJOS WITHIN EUROPEAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

EM PORTUGUÊS... E EM ESPANHOL,
INGLÊS, HOLANDÊS, FRANCÊS...
A IDENTIDADE DO AZULEJO PORTUGUÊS NO
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ABSTRACT

The link between Portuguese tile decorations and the notion of identity(ies) is rooted today in a very wide context, leading to the extensive use of *azulejos* as cultural and narrative symbols with very different aims. The purpose of the present article is go back in time, to the mid 19th century, and to debate the role played by European historiography in the emergence of the azulejo as an “identitarian” art form, considering its unique characteristics and the main moments and agents that have contributed to the creation and consolidation of this phenomenon.

KEYWORDS

Tiles | Historiography | Identity | Differentiating aspects

RESUMO

A associação da azulejaria portuguesa a uma noção de identidade(s) encontra-se hoje enraizada num contexto muito alargado, conduzindo à utilização massiva do azulejo como signo de uma cultura e servindo de narrativa para os mais diversos fins.

Este artigo pretende recuar no tempo, até aos meados do século XIX, discutindo qual o papel da historiografia europeia na construção da ideia do azulejo como “arte portuguesa”, considerando sobretudo os aspectos distintivos que foram sendo apontados ao longo dos anos, e observando os principais momentos e agentes que contribuíram para a criação e consolidação deste fenómeno.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Azulejo | Historiografia | Identidade | Aspectos diferenciadores

INTRODUCTION

The debate around identity issues in Portuguese art dates from the nineteenth century. Today, Nuno Rosmaninho has clearly defined different cycles directly related to the political and cultural backgrounds, which, according to the author, are: 1) art's association with the nation (1810-1840); 2) romantic nationalism (1841-1890); 3) triumph of rurality and characterology (1891-1920); 4) an era of extremes (1921-1940); 5) hyperbolic serenity (1941-1970); indifference and nostalgia (post-*Estado Novo*) (Rosmaninho, 2016: 331-332). The *azulejo* is a part of all these phases and resonates in the narratives of identity that characterise each of the periods mentioned, as rightfully stated in the article published by Nuno Rosmaninho in this volume.

Bearing in mind, on the one hand, identity as a discourse within which surface the unique characteristics that constitute one of the several elements of narratives of identity; and, on the other hand, the importance these differentiating factors have had in the historiographical context and how they have, in fact, grown with renewed strength in the last couple of years, becoming one of the cornerstones that support the *azulejo*'s hypothetical application to world heritage, this article has one main goal: to analyse the European historiographical production from mid-nineteenth century onwards. Our aim is to understand what aspects support this sense of originality in the authors under study while, at the same time, question the consequences these narratives have had in the current assessment of the *azulejo* in Portugal and its study perspectives.

We left out the direct or indirect testimonies of Portuguese authors or foreign travellers to whom the *azulejo* was culturally unique, but whose texts do not provide a scientifically based critical analysis, like the one started by Athanasz Raczynski (1788-1874) at an international level, or by Joaquim de Vasconcelos (1849-1936) in the Portuguese Art History. Among the many examples we could mention, we would like to highlight Cosme de Médicis' intervention who, in 1669, in his visit to Portugal, claimed, "The *azulejo* is a part of Portugal's landscape"¹ (Simões, 1959: 23). This idea was emphasized decades later by Merveilleux who, in 1726, referred to the glazed tile fashion he had seen in the country (Carvalho, 1960: 152). Other authors, like Cyrillo Volkmar Machado (1748-1823), seem to deliberately ignore the *azulejo*'s role within the national artistic production, thus placing this art in an inferior position when compared to painting, sculpture or architecture (Mangucci, 2016). The *azulejo* would only definitely recover from this positioning with João Miguel dos Santos Simões (Monteiro, 2007).

Since it is not possible to address all the literature available on this subject, we decided to select historians whose work had a greater impact on the area of study this article is inserted in. Perspectives linked to the *azulejo*'s appreciation through restoration or tile reapplication, as usually done by Raul Lino, among others, were left out. The same applies to official exhibitions and representations of Portugal that convey a political discourse, or even the ones that were organised by the *Azulejo* Museum – called National *Azulejo* Museum from 1980 onwards – since its creation in 1965.

THE FIRST FOREIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Considering the genesis of art historiography in Portugal, Count Athanasz Raczynski (1788-1874) was more than a "traveller-writer", as he did not merely draft "impressions" and raise awareness to the

most representative examples of the Portuguese artistic heritage, instead he established a methodology to substantiate the history of Portuguese art (Rodrigues, 2011: 264). In addition, because he acknowledged

1. In the source text: "O azulejo faz parte da paisagem de Portugal". From henceforth, all in-text translations are provided by the authors.

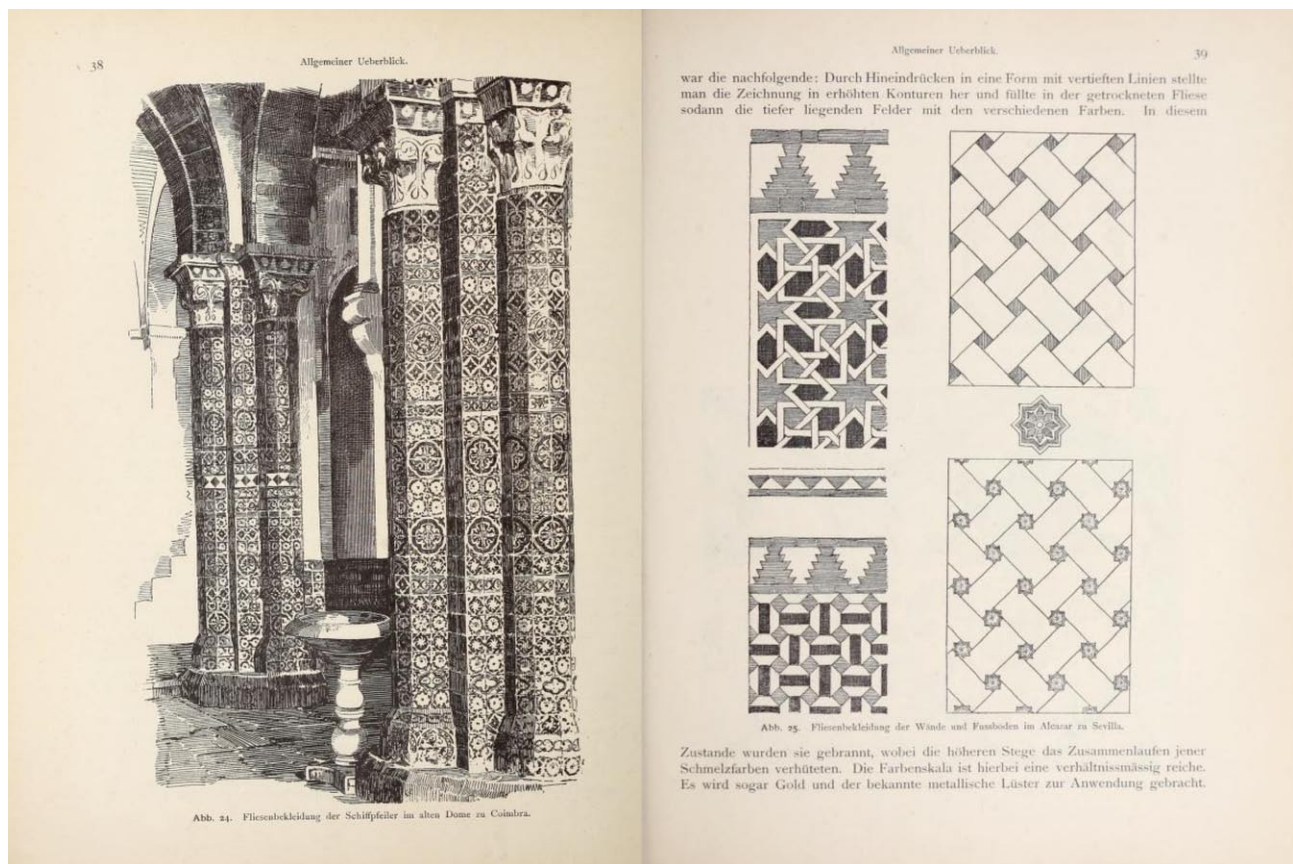


Fig. 01· Coimbra, Old Cathedral. In Albrecht Haupt, *Die Baukunst der Renaissance in Portugal : von den Zeiten Emmanuel's des Glücklichen bis zu dem Schlusse der spanischen Herrschaft*. Frankfurt a. M.: Heinrich Keller, 1890.

the *azulejo's* importance as a Portuguese artistic expression with unprecedented and unique specificity – “Azulejos are a part of Portugal’s physiognomy”² (Raczynski, 1846: 427-434) – Raczynski is regarded as a pioneer in understanding the glazed tile as an art linked to identity and a document of Portuguese culture, having, therefore, established a long historiographic legacy.

In the work *Histoire de la Céramique*, edited in 1873, the first great historian in the field of ceramic studies, Albert Jacquemart (1808-1875), signalled the importance of Portuguese tiles, describing the generalised use of this art in public and private buildings: “That country is so to speak the new world of ceramics (...) More

importantly everyone talks about the *azulejos* which in that part of the Peninsula are treated with no less success than in Spain. Since 1850 the Magasin pittoresque signal the general employment of this form of decoration on public buildings and private houses that, sometimes, are coated with glazed tiles from top to bottom; they represent hunts, sacred or historical subjects, landscapes, vases filled with flowers, arabesques, etc.”³ (Jacquemart, 1873: 600-601).

Soon after, the French historian Henri Martin (1810-1883), who was visiting Portugal for the 1880 Anthropological Congress, highlighted the colourful character of the Portuguese people and the *azulejo* as a component of the picturesque appearance of their

2. In the source text, “Les azulejos constituent en partie la physionomie du Portugal”.

3. In the source text, “Ce pays est en quelque sorte le nouveau monde de la céramique () Mais avant, tout, parlons des azulejos qui, dans cette partie de la péninsule, ont été traités avec non moins de succès qu’en Espagne. Dès 1850, le Magasin pittoresque signalait l’emploi général de cette décoration dans les édifices publics et les maisons particulières qui, parfois, sont recouvertes de carreaux émaillés de la base jusqu’au toit; ils représentent des chasses, des sujets sacrés ou historiques, des paysages, des vases remplis de fleurs, des arabesques, etc.”.

houses (Braga 1995 [1885]: 137), a view which was in line with a nationalistic devotion and spirit as well as a vital attention to all that is Portuguese.

Following the on-going acknowledgment of the *azulejo*'s decorative merit by the international academia, in the next decade, the German architect Karl Albrecht Haupt (1852-1932) travelled across Portuguese land, drawing, studying and collecting countless data on national monuments, aiming to study Portuguese architecture during the "Renaissance period". His work *Die Baukunst der Renaissance in Portugal (Renaissance Architecture in Portugal)*, published in 1890, favoured the graphical records of monuments, a task that was completed in the course of his trips and includes drawings of some *azulejos*, like the ones in the pillars of the Old Cathedral in Coimbra, which would disappear, or in the Chapel of Santo Amaro, in Lisbon. When discussing Moorish influences, whether in the Mudejar architecture or in the *azulejo* coatings and interlaced geometrical drawings, Karl Albrecht Haupt underscored the glazed tile's use as a characteristic feature of the national architecture: "A typical characteristic of Portuguese architecture was and is the practice of covering surfaces with Moorish tiles (called *azulejos* because of their predominant blue colour); this coating was very appreciated both on internal and external walls, so it is used in entire church façades, towers, houses' façades, patios, domes, corridor walls, stairwells, salons and bedrooms"⁴ (Haupt, 1890: 37).

In 1895, Theodore Rogge published *Keramik und Decoration in Portugal (Ceramic and Decoration in Portugal)* where he refers that the *azulejo* is used so frequently in Portugal that it becomes characteristic, complementing the decorative sense of its placement – "Isolated *azulejos* (...) can only provide a very imperfect idea of the magnificent harmony and of how they were so brilliantly used for decoration in those days"⁵ (Rasteiro, 1895: 108).

Right at the beginning of the twentieth century (1908), the Scottish architect Walter Crum Watson acknowledged the *azulejo*'s great decorative importance in the history of Portuguese architecture, since it is placed on buildings from the north to the south of the country, from Paço de Sintra to Quinta da Bacalhôa, among many others: "Indeed it may be said that tilework is the most characteristic feature of Portuguese buildings, and that to it, many a church, otherwise poor and even mean, owes whatever interest or beauty it possesses. Without tiles, rooms like the Sala das Sereias or the Sala dos Arabes would be plain whitewashed featureless apartments, with them they have a charm and a romance not easy to find anywhere but in the East" (Watson, 1908: 28).

It is, therefore, clear the *azulejo* was paid great attention by the "gaze" of foreign historians, who favoured its decorative purpose. Nevertheless, in Portugal, it was Joaquim de Vasconcelos who introduced a scientific outlook on this area of study.

THE AZULEJO IN PORTUGUESE

The first researchers who dedicated themselves to studying the *azulejo* had a difficult task. Since there was a lack of studies in the field, a lot of the information on ceramics was not available and, as it was absolutely imperative to be aware of the national context, Joaquim de Vasconcelos

(1849-1936), José Queiroz (1856-1920) and Vergílio Correia (1888-1944) adopted and perfected methodologies related to inventory and registration of dated and signed sets of *azulejos*. The latter, in the first edition of *Azulejos Datados (Dated Azulejos)*, praised the work of his predecessor, José Queiroz,

4. In the source text, "Bem característico da arquitectura portuguesa foi e é o uso de revestir à mourisca as paredes com azulejos (chamados azulejos por causa da cor predominantemente do azul), este revestimento era muito apreciado tanto em paredes internas como externas, usando-se em fachadas inteiras de igrejas, torres, fachadas de casas, pátios, abóbodas, paredes de corredores, de vãos de escada, de salões e de quartos".

5. In the source text, "Azulejos isolados (...) não podem dar senão uma ideia muito imperfeita da magnífica harmonia e da arte genial com que os azulejos naqueles tempos foram aproveitados para a decoração".



Fig. 02: Almoester, Church of the Convento of Almoester, 17th century (photo by Jorge Guerra Maio)

who in turn had already been mentored and preceded by Joaquim de Vasconcelos. All of them, as well as Gabriel Pereira (1886), Liberato Teles (1896)⁶ and Sousa Viterbo (1903), aimed at establishing a history of the Portuguese glazed tiles and collected signatures and dates to that purpose, making an effort to obtain a global understanding of these partial reports. As a

result, their texts have few significant remarks on the aspects that make Portuguese glazed tiles stand out when compared to its counterparts.

Having learnt a scientific methodology in Germany, Joaquim de Vasconcelos was a central and founding figure in the field of Portuguese Art History, which

6. The researcher cites an article by Conceição Gomes where it is mentioned that the use of glazed tiles in Portugal and Spain differs from that on any other place (Teles, 1896: 215) and refers that foreigners are actually the ones who most value the art we possess (Teles, 1896: 223). However, Teles makes no allusion to the *azulejo* as an art form linked to identity.

was regarded as an area dedicated to specific items and methodologies from then onwards (França, 1966: 118-119). The *azulejo* was one of the many art forms that fascinated Vasconcelos and to which he dedicated special attention from the 1880s onwards; thus, he is also considered by Santos Simões “the founder of ceramic studies in Portugal”⁷ (Simões, 1990: 24).

Joaquim de Vasconcelos’ analysis is characterised by the appreciation of pattern *azulejos*, polychrome, when compared to the white and blue narrative painting (Vasconcelos, 1884: 20-21), but he also mentions a connection to themes related to the history, customs, traditions and legends of “our people”⁸ (Vasconcelos, 1884: 17). In fact, “between 1841 and 1890 there is a hopeful beginning of a new cultural pattern rooted on popular and scholarly displays”⁹ (Rosmaninho, 2016: 331), of which Vasconcelos was one of the main advocates. Furthermore, it should be underscored that Vasconcelos strongly criticised those who belittled the *azulejo* as an art with a *foreign touch* (Vasconcelos, 1884: VI).

In 1882, Sousa Viterbo’s notes written for the catalogue of the *Exposição de Arte Ornamental (Ornamental Art Exhibition)* take up the idea that Portugal is the country of *azulejos*. Later, the author developed his ideas on the importance of this artistic expression which he admits was “(...) the most considerable ornamental element used in Portugal; its application can only be compared to woodcarving or sculpted wood (...)”¹⁰ (Viterbo, 1903: 36). Applied on the most diverse locations, the *azulejo*’s importance is measured for artistic or social reasons; it is “(...) a characteristic specialty that deserves to be studied with care and attention, not only separately, but also in comparison with the other branches of painting”¹¹ (Viterbo, 1903: 36).

The appreciation of the *azulejo*’s artistic and decorative richness, therefore, seems to gain greater strength. An example of this can be found in 1903 when, concerning the Pena National Palace, Sabugosa Count referred that, “Of all the forms of Portuguese ceramics, the most beautiful, the most characteristic and the most varied is without a doubt the *azulejo*”, since it is “the most beautiful ornament of monumental architecture and the most picturesque in the decoration of private houses. It is a document for art history and a record of glorious deeds”¹² (Sabugosa, 1903: 205-206).

In turn, when José Queiroz (1856-1920) describes – with flattering adjectives – the main moments of the history of the Portuguese glazed tiles, he is mirroring the republican propaganda, which emphasizes a discourse on the character of the Portuguese nation (Braga 1995) that promotes the need of a collective cultural conscience. This propaganda enhanced the love “for all that is Portuguese”, including in this perspective the *azulejo*. Like Sabugosa Count, who in 1903 claimed the *azulejo*, “(...) is an expression of the Portuguese soul”¹³ (Sabugosa, 1903: 206), Queiroz also defends that it “is a characteristic manifestation of our nationality, a jovial symbol of our people”¹⁴ (Queiroz, 1907: 231).

Vergílio Correia (1888-1944) does not refrain from reiterating this line of thought, highlighting, as those before him, the extension of the ceramic applications in Portugal and advocating that *azulejos* express the “unique character of the Portuguese constructions that, on account of them, began to distinguish themselves from the Spanish ones in the 17th century”¹⁵ (Correia 1922: 5). As he continued to claim Portugal was “the country of *azulejos*” and that “(...) if they do not fully reveal *la physionomie du Portugal* as Raczyński Count wished, the *azulejos* at least reveal a brilliant

7. In the source text, “o fundador dos estudos ceramológicos em Portugal”.

8. In the source text, “do nosso povo”.

9. In the source text, “entre 1841 e 1890, assiste-se ao arranque esperançoso de um novo padrão cultural assente nas manifestações populares e eruditas”.

10. In the source text, “(...) o mais considerável elemento de ornamentação que se tem usado em Portugal, podendo apenas competir com ele a talha ou a madeira esculpida (...)”.

11. In the source text, “(...) uma especialidade característica, que bem merece ser estudada com atenção e carinho, não só isoladamente, mas em comparação com os outros ramos da pintura”.

12. In the source text, “De entre todas as manifestações da cerâmica portuguesa, a mais bela, mais característica, e mais variada é sem dúvida o *azulejo*”; “o ornato mais belo da arquitectura monumental, e o mais pitoresco na decoração das habitações particulares. É documento para a história da arte, e registo de feitos gloriosos”.

13. In the source text, “(...) uma expressão da alma portuguesa”.

14. In the source text, “é a expressão característica da nossa nacionalidade, o símbolo jovial do nosso povo”.

15. In the source text, “carácter próprio às construções portuguesas, que só por isso no século XVII se começam a distinguir das espanholas”.

part of the Lusitanian artistic expression”, Vergílio Correia compared national production to the foreign one. While he acknowledged the importance of other regions, in particular Spain, the Netherlands and northwest France, Vergílio Correia still highlighted that, “(...) all the *azulejo* produced in foreign shops does not represent even a fourth of what is produced and still exists in our country”¹⁶ (Correia, 2018: 3, 6) – a perspective he applies to the city of Lisbon as well (Correia, 1919).

After reading the aforementioned texts, we can identify some singular aspects that, though more or less dispersed, are mentioned by the various authors and must be systematised as of now:

- The extension of the production, which is clear due to the great number of tile coatings preserved *in situ*;

- The ornamental component of its application;
- The recognition of the *azulejo* as an important patrimonial document: “After a long period of oblivion and even repulsion, for the last two decades the Portuguese *azulejo* has been regarded by scholars and educated people under its true nature: a precious record of the industrial art of our forefathers and an ornamental element of irreplaceable use”¹⁷ (Correia, 2018: 7).

Other authors, like Gustavo de Matos Sequeira, maintain this viewpoint, perceiving the *azulejo* as “a decorative element connected to «the national constructive style»”¹⁸ (Sequeira, 1933: 55), that is, they highlight the decorative nature of the *azulejo* as its main differentiating factor.

A SYSTEMATISED DIFFERENTIATION

Considering the authors that we have been tracking, João Miguel dos Santos Simões (1907-1972) systematically proceeded with inventory and classification work, including in his analysis *azulejos* produced in other countries but placed in Portugal (Monteiro, 2007). His oldest texts were written in the 1940s and from then on, the discourse concerning the originality of the Portuguese glazed tiles, which regards the dispersed aspects formerly identified but systematises them, was strengthened. This in turn allows greater objectivity, which is also the result of the development of studies focused on the *azulejo*. These factors were listed by Santos Simões and are as follows:¹⁹

- a) the *azulejo*’s incorporation in buildings’ architecture, thus adding value to the different spaces (Simões, 2001 [1944]: 53-54), “marrying architecture itself”²⁰ (Simões, 2001 [1957]: 173), and adjusting to its scale and characteristics. To Santos Simões, “Along with woodcarving, the *azulejo* bestows on Portuguese temples that unmistakable ecological character and, in its perfect alliance with architecture, it “makes it Portuguese”, even when the architecture’s formal and technical canons are inspired by foreign trends”²¹ (Simões, 2001 [1960]: 219);

16. In the source text, “o país dos azulejos”; “(...) se eles não revelam inteiramente la physionomie du Portugal como queria o Conde de Raczynski, patenteiam pelo menos um aspecto brilhante do facies artístico Lusitano”; “(...) todo o azulejo produzido nas oficinas estrangeiras não representará talvez a quarta parte do que se fabricou e existe ainda no nosso país”.

17. In the source text, “Depois de um largo período de esquecimento e até de repulsa, o azulejo português vem, desde há dois decénios, sendo considerado pelos estudiosos e pela gente culta sob o seu verdadeiro aspecto de documento precioso da arte industrial dos nossos antepassados, e de elemento ornamental de insubstituível aplicação”.

18. In the source text, “como elemento decorativo ligado ao «estilo construtivo nacional»”.

19. Although these characteristics are a part of his first texts, it was only in 1961 that Santos Simões listed them in a summary fashion in an article published in the journal *Insulana* (Simões, 2001: 253-254): monumentality; modernity (adaptability to different times); versatility of its employment; complement of/integration in the architecture.

20. In the source text, “casando-se com a própria arquitectura”.

21. In the source text, “Com a talha de madeira, o azulejo confere aos templos portugueses esse carácter inconfundivelmente ecológico, e na sua aliança perfeita com a arquitectura, “portugaliza-a”, mesmo quando os cânones formais e técnicos desta, são de inspiração estrangeira”.



Fig. 03· Lisbon, Church of Nossa Senhora do Socorro, sacristy Master P.M.P., ascribed (photo by Rosário Salema de Carvalho)



Fig. 04· Lisbon, Hospital of São José, 18th century (photo by Az Infinitum – Azulejo Indexation and Referencing System)

b) the *azulejo's* unlimited use (Simões, 2001 [1944]: 53);
 c) the decorative sense that regards the genuine originality of Portuguese tiles and has led Santos Simões "to claim to Portugal the indisputable primacy that ceramic decoration is entitled to in the area of decorative arts"²² (Simões, 2001 [1943-1945]: 35), highlighting the production of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in particular (Simões, 2001 [1944]: 53). Right in the text *Alguns azulejos de Évora* (Some *azulejos* from Évora), in the second paragraph, the author underscores that glazed tiles are "the most characteristic display of the Portuguese decorative art"²³ (Simões, 2001 [1943-1945]: 17) and continues arguing that the

only matchless element that can be argued in favour of this art in Portugal is its ornamental employment and its "rather Portuguese" use. To this researcher, there is no doubt that Portugal holds the most extensive *azulejo* collection in the world (Simões, 2001 [1948]: 149): "Portugal is a vast and unique museum of *azulejos* that are full of life"²⁴ (Simões, 2001 [1956]: 168). He further adds that glazed tiles are "(...) the only artistic activity that can be claimed to be both traditional and typically Portuguese"²⁵ (Simões, 2001 [1956]: 172);
 d) the preservation of a specific preference that crosses generations (Simões, 2001 [1943-1945]: 18);

22. In the source text, "a reivindicar para Portugal a incontestável primazia a que a decoração cerâmica tem direito no quadro das artes decorativas".

23. In the source text, "a mais característica manifestação de arte decorativa portuguesa".

24. In the source text, "Portugal é um vasto e único museu de azulejos cheios de vida".

25. In the source text, "(...) a única actividade artística que pode ser reclamada como sendo tradicional e tipicamente portuguesa".



Fig. 05· Vila Viçosa, Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição, 17th century (photo by Rosário Salema de Carvalho)

- e) the distinctive use of *azulejos* even if they are imported; an example is Coimbra's Old Cathedral that does not copy Andalusia's models, where the *azulejos* employed originated from (Simões, 2001 [1956]: 168);
- f) modernisation of the people's taste (Simões, 2001 [1944]);
- g) the monumentality, which is directly connected to the *azulejo* from the seventeenth century onwards (Simões, 1947);
- h) the range of motives.

Although Santos Simões' project for a study dedicated to the *Arte do Azulejo em Portugal* (*Azulejo Art in Portugal*) dates from 1957, the edition of the volume that was in fact the first history of the Portuguese

azulejo appeared on that very same year but authored by Reynaldo dos Santos (1880-1970). The latter's approach reveals an understanding of glazed tiles as a national art integrated into "(...) an aesthetic and identitarian system developed (...) "²⁶ by Santos Simões and by José de Figueiredo (Rosmaninho, 2016 :343).

In the first phase of the work *O Azulejo em Portugal* (*The Azulejo in Portugal*), Reynaldo dos Santos starts by praising the *azulejo* – "In the history of decorative arts in Portugal, the *azulejo*'s importance and originality is indisputable" – considering that "(...) the *azulejo* is quintessentially our decorative art, the most unique (...) "²⁷ (Santos, 1957: 7). The author proceeds, underscoring its worth as a decorative art and, hence,

26. In the source text, "(...) um sistema estético e identitário desenvolvido (...)".

continuing a narrative that keeps the focus on the previously listed aspects: "(...) a variety of specimens, the broadness of its employment and the permanent charms of its colours and glaze"²⁸ (Santos, 1957: 7). Against those who voice a critical opinion concerning the *azulejo's* uniqueness, due to its exterior influences, he argues that, "(...) the unprecedented nature of its creations rests on the ornamental concept that inspires and renews itself"²⁹. Other criteria for the *azulejo's* singular nature are: "(...) a monumental approach regarding its employment, even when the *azulejos* are imported (...)" along with the "(...) ornamental concept that presides its placement and the unprecedented effect it has"³⁰ (Santos, 1957: 7-8). When discussing the evolution of the Portuguese glazed tiles and their ability to renew themselves, Reynaldo dos Santos claims, "Hence, one of the characteristics of the Portuguese *azulejo's* uniqueness is that it followed, from the sixteenth century onwards, its own evolution; its unity lies not on the immutability of a traditional conception but in the variety of the inventions inspired by an adaptation to the style and spirit of each age"³¹ (Santos, 1957: 8).

His defence of the *azulejo* continues; comparing it to other countries, Reynaldo dos Santos values not the picturesque character of its compositions, but its decorative nature, "Under that point-of-view, in the West, we were the ones who gave the glazed tile decoration a range and diffusion no other country, not even Spain, did"³² (Santos, 1957: 8). In fact, he underlines that, "(...) it is legitimate to claim that the *azulejo* is one of the most unique decorative means that the baroque art conceived in western Europe and that it was Portugal the country which made a more fruitful

and pleasurable use of it"³³ (Santos, 1957: 9) since "Not even Italy, neither Spain nor Holland granted the *azulejo* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the variety of features, evolutionary renovation and ample ornamental vision that in Portugal led to the development of an unparalleled decorative art"³⁴ (Santos, 1957: 10).

The crucial work done by João Miguel dos Santos Simões, which rests on a demanding effort to develop an inventory, strengthens the belief in the special preponderance and uniqueness of the employment of the *azulejo* in Portugal and its territories abroad (Simões 1963, 1965, 1969, 1971, 1979) without ever losing sight of the dialogue it established with the international ceramic production. The 1st International Tile Symposium, in 1971, gathered researchers from several countries in Lisbon and is an example of this openness and the concerns regarding the *azulejo's* characteristics, its influences and expansion or repercussion (Mântua, 2007: 133).

In addition, still on the international setting, the North-American historian Robert Chester Smith (1912-1975) must be mentioned as he dedicated several important studies to very specific tile coatings (São Victor Church in Braga, *azulejos* in Cascais, in Extremoz, among others). Indeed, he acknowledged the importance of the *azulejo* as a unique national art, unparalleled in the whole world. On the *azulejos* in Cascais, for instance, Smith starts his text claiming that the "walls covered with painted tiles are as typical of Portugal as codfish or Port wine. (...) these *azulejos* are an important aspect of Portuguese painting and an essential element of the great decorative ensembles that characterize much of

27. In the source text, "A importância e originalidade do azulejo, na história das artes decorativas em Portugal, é incontestável"; "(...) o azulejo é a nossa arte decorativa por excelência, a mais original (...)".

28. In the source text, "(...) variedade dos espécimes, continuidade da evolução, amplitude do seu emprego e sempre o encanto das suas cores e esmalte".

29. In the source text, "(...) o inédito das suas criações reside no conceito ornamental que a inspira e renova".

30. In the source text, "(...) uma visão monumental da sua aplicação, mesmo dos azulejos importados (...)"; "(...) concepção ornamental que preside ao seu emprego e no efeito inédito alcançado".

31. In the source text, "Assim, uma das características da originalidade do azulejo português é ter seguido desde o século XVI a sua própria evolução, cuja unidade residiu, não na imutabilidade duma concepção tradicional, mas na variedade de invenção inspirada na adaptação ao estilo e espírito das épocas".

32. In the source text, "Sob esse ponto de vista, no Ocidente, fomos nós que demos à decoração azulejada uma amplitude e difusão que nenhum outro país, nem mesmo a Espanha, lhe deu".

33. In the source text, "(...) é legítimo afirmar que o azulejo constituiu um dos meios de decoração mais originais que a arte barroca criou no ocidente da Europa, e que foi Portugal o país que com mais fecundidade e gosto se soube servir dele".

34. In the source text, "Nem a Itália, nem a Espanha, nem a Holanda, deram ao azulejo dos séculos XVII e XVIII a variedade de aspectos, a renovação evolutiva e a ampla visão ornamental que em Portugal gerou uma arte decorativa sem par".

the art of Portugal" (Smith, 1968: 1). What is more, in the work *The Art of Portugal*, in the chapter dedicated to ceramics and particularly to *azulejos*, Smith is more assertive when he refers that, "decorative tiles were made all over Europe in the period between 1500

and 1800, but nowhere were they used on such a scale, for such a variety of purposes or in so many different patterns as in Portugal, where they represent, along with gilt woodcarving, a truly national form of decoration" (Smith, 1968: 229).

FINAL OVERVIEW

From the works studied within the scope of this article, and no matter the analysis perspective one may have, a common narrative comes into light from which surfaces the idea that the Portuguese *azulejo* is an art form with specific and differentiating traits when compared to its other counterparts.

If at first the differentiating aspects of the Portuguese tiles were characterised by national authors in a somewhat scattered manner, as they agreed with foreign outlooks on the decorative sense and near omnipresent nature of this art in Portugal, in time the studies elaborated by the Portuguese grew and gained more strength. The systematisation of what is actually considered distinctive acquired a new, more definite form through the work developed by João Miguel dos Santos Simões.

A wide survey to the bibliography produced following this author's work would now be fundamental to accurately understand the discourse conveyed since the 1970s. Even though that analysis no longer fits the pages of this article, that line of future enquiry is to be bore in mind, focusing on how the idea of the *azulejo*, as a differentiating and characteristic Portuguese art, influenced or determined study approaches over the last sixty years.

Generally speaking, it will not be far from the truth to state that the argument which rests on the *azulejo*'s difference has been continued, even if at certain times some authors favoured one aspect over another. In fact, that conception of the Portuguese *azulejo* was common to national and foreign researchers. José

Meco, for instance, claims that, "amongst all the European countries, it was in Portugal that the *azulejo* was more greatly developed and had its most unique and functional forms of usage in a fundamentally architectonic performance; it was never passive or neutral, instead it widely exceeds a mere decorative purpose"³⁵ (Meco, 1985: 5). In the words of Hans van Lemmen, "Portuguese tiles, or *azulejos* as they are commonly known, are a remarkable feature of the history of Portuguese architecture and design and are still used with exuberance and on a scale that is matched nowhere else in Europe" (van Lemmen, 2013: 126).

Only more recently have some started to react, questioning not so much the *azulejo*'s actual difference, which is acknowledged, but mainly the preservation of an "isolationist" discourse in the analyses used. In this framework, simply as examples, we would like to point out the exhibition entitled *O Brilho das Cidades. A Rota do Azulejo (The Glaze of the Cities. The Azulejo's Route)*, which took place at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 2013 and was commissioned by Alfonso Pleguezuelo and João Castel-Branco Pereira. The exhibition drew attention to the *azulejo* as a key element in the widespread dissemination of ideas and forms at a global scale. In addition, there is Céline Ventura Teixeira's PhD thesis (2014), which proposes a combined reading of the glazed tile production in the Iberian Peninsula during the reign of the Philips, or Celso Mangucci's articles (2015) that questioned the relevance of stressing the differentiating aspects over the common ones.

35. In the source text, "de entre todos os países europeus, foi em Portugal que o azulejo manifestou maior desenvolvimento e as formas mais originais e funcionais de utilização, numa actuação primordialmente arquitectónica, nunca passiva nem neutra, que ultrapassa largamente uma mera função decorativa".

In Portugal the *azulejo*'s decorative goal and its use on a monumental scale, integrated and articulated with other arts, among other aspects we may consider differentiating, is indeed indisputable. Yet, we cannot but agree with Céline Ventura Teixeira who states that "New methodological approaches need to be applied so as to renew the analysis of that ornamental practice under a more dialectical and critical angle"³⁶ (Teixeira, 2014: 16). Since the premises pointed out

by historiography are, without a doubt, compelling, the breakthroughs in knowledge as well as the methodological doubt that characterizes science allow us to use our critical sense to rethink the true dimension of these differentiating aspects in a broad sense, correlating the national and international production even if not throughout the whole history of the glazed tile, at least to some periods.

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36. In the source text "De nouvelles approches méthodologiques nécessitent d'être appliquées afin de renouveler l'analyse de cette pratique ornamental et ce, sous un angle plus dialectique et critique"

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A HOMELAND DIVIDED IN SQUARES: JOAQUIM DE VASCONCELOS (1849-1936) IDENTITY PANELS

A PÁTRIA AOS QUADRADOS: JOAQUIM DE VASCONCELOS (1849-1936) PAINÉIS IDENTITÁRIOS

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ABSTRACT

Considered the founder of Art History in Portugal with a rigorous method, Joaquim de Vasconcelos was also a Musicologist, Museologist, Teacher and Professor, Art Critic and a “champion” of visual transmission “systems” like Photography and Drawing. His capacity for critical analysis, his anarchic enthusiasm for various areas of knowledge, providing ways of thinking and acting when almost everything was still undone, impose him as an anti-mythical and unique character who created his own legend, a myth and a romantic hero, a master of himself far beyond from Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) or Giambattista Cavalcaselle (1819-1897) just to point out two of the masters that he admired. *Homeland squares* are not only a way of referring how tiles are a very important part of the Portuguese identity puzzle, but also a way of alluding to the geometry of parallels and meridians that Joaquim de Vasconcelos drew when trying to identify the Art in Portugal.

KEYWORDS

Joaquim de Vasconcelos | Industrial and Commercial Museum of Oporto
National identity | Exhibitions | Tiles

RESUMO

Considerado o fundador da História da Arte em Portugal com um método rigoroso, Joaquim de Vasconcelos foi um Musicólogo, Museólogo, Professor, Crítico de Arte e “campeão” dos sistemas de transmissão visual como a Fotografia e o Desenho. A sua capacidade de análise crítica, o entusiasmo anárquico por várias áreas do conhecimento indicando pistas certas, ou erradas, num tempo onde quase tudo estava ainda por escrever, impõe Vasconcelos como um carácter anti-mítico e único, um homem que criou a sua própria lenda, um mito e um herói romântico, um mestre de si mesmo muito além de Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) ou Giambattista Cavalcaselle (1819-1897) apenas para apontar dois mestres que admirava. *A Pátria aos quadrados* expressa, em metáfora, como os azulejos são uma parte muito significativa do quebra-cabeças da identidade portuguesa e alude igualmente à geometria dos paralelos e meridianos que Joaquim de Vasconcelos desenhava ao tentar identificar a Arte em Portugal.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Joaquim de Vasconcelos | Museu Industrial e Comercial do Porto
Identidade Nacional | Exposições | Azulejo

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON JOAQUIM DE VASCONCELOS

Joaquim de Vasconcelos was born in Oporto on February 10th, 1849 (Fig. 01). Orphan of both parents, the family sent him to Hamburg when he was ten to continue his studies. There he attended Harms College where he acquired not only an excellent general education but also studied Music, which would define the beginning of his intense professional activity (Lacerda et al., 1929: 268-278). Vasconcelos returned to Portugal in 1865, and later, when he wanted to return to continue his Philosophy studies in Berlin (França, 1990: 115), he was frustrated by the Franco-Prussian War. At the time when Francophone culture was dominant, Vasconcelos was a pro-German (Leandro, 2006: 4-5). His first book entitled *Os músicos portugueses* (*The portuguese musicians*) was published in 1871 and the following year he gave his contribution to the controversial "Question of Faust" that prolonged the "Coimbra Question" opposing "new" and "old" generations of writers. It was due to this debate that Vasconcelos came to the acquaintance of the wise Berliner Carolina Michaëlis (1851-1925), and in 1876 he married her. Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos, a remarkable woman who had an important role in Portuguese Culture, specifically in Literature, was the first woman to teach at a University in Portugal. The way they supported each other is a fact to be acknowledged (Leandro, 2014: 97). It should also be considered that, from a certain point in his life, Vasconcelos economic income came from his activity as a teacher.

Let us focus on the theme of national identity. When Vasconcelos returned to the country in 1865 he was not exactly a patriot, on the contrary, but progressively he fell in love with Portugal, but not for everything... For instance, his position against *Manuelino*¹ was not popular, and it collided with the stronger power of a myth that fuelled the growing nationalism of the "Ultra-lusos" (Ultra-Lusitanians) as Vasconcelos called them (Leandro, 2008: 423). And it was not only on this issue that he faced what he considered "wrongly patriotic views" (Leandro, 2008: 237).



Fig. 01 · Joaquim de Vasconcelos, 1868. Two years before the edition of his first book *Os músicos portugueses*, [*Portuguese musicians*]. In *Ilustração moderna*, 30 (Fev. 1929)

Fencer of ideas, Vasconcelos was an outstanding debater who hated his country's capital because, like many others, he thought that Lisbon despised all Portuguese cities. Oporto, the country's second town, felt continually hampered with Lisbon macrocephaly and he often named the capital as octopus... (Leandro, 2008: 181).

1. Aesthetic trend associated with the reign of King Manuel I in the sixteenth century and supposedly a national style.

JOAQUIM DE VASCONCELOS: THE POWER OF EXHIBITIONS AND THE CREATION OF INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL MUSEUMS



Fig. 02. Engraving of the *Ceramics Exhibition*, curated by Joaquim de Vasconcelos, at Crystal Palace, Oporto, 1882. In *O Occidente*, 147 (21st Jan. 1883)

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Portugal suffered from chronic industrial backwardness, and the political community felt it was time to boost the industry by any necessary means. Industrial arts were an important subject because they meant hope for the country's economic and cultural revitalization.

It was during the Liberalism and the Regeneration periods of the Government of Fontes Pereira de Melo (1819-1887), with António Augusto de Aguiar (1838-1887) as Minister of Public Works, Trade and Industry, that were established the Industrial and Commercial

Museums in Lisbon and Oporto, several Industrial Schools and the Schools of Industrial Design throughout the country. Such measures tried to streamline the sector. Aguiar had visited the South Kensington Museum which inspired him (Costa, 1997: 33) and there were, probably, other timely thoughts.

The museums were created by Decree of December 24th, 1883, with the main objective to exhibit collections of labelled products and raw materials to the public so they could know its origin, the name of the manufacturer or dealer, the price, the place of

production, transportation expenses, consumer markets, etc. The aim was to stimulate national production and consumption. In other words, these kinds of Museums were created as vehicles to promote national products, one of the expressions of the Nationalisms raised in the nineteenth century.

Vasconcelos had a much earlier enthusiasm compared to official deployment plan. Knowing and enjoying the Museums of Berlin, Vienna and South Kensington, he studied and dreamed of a way to do something similar in Oporto. In 1877, Eduardo Augusto Allen (1824-1899) wrote to him: "I hope to see you soon crowned with triumph because of your patriotic efforts to establish your Industrial Art Museum" (Leandro, 2008: 263). This emphasis on the possessive pronoun "your" turn out to be more significant as I studied the existence of the no longer existent Industrial and Commercial Museum of Oporto. Vasconcelos managed this institution as a very personal thing, for better and for worse.

Nevertheless, before he was able to establish his museum, he had a powerful experience organizing various exhibitions of Industrial Arts and Home Industries for Centro Artístico Portuense (Art Centre of Oporto) and for the Sociedade de Instrução do Porto (Instruction Society of Oporto), guilds where he was a distinguished member.

Let us pause at a large exhibition organized by Vasconcelos in 1882: the *Ceramics Exhibition* in the Crystal Palace of Oporto, where tiles were represented (Fig. 02). In July 16th, 1882, Joaquim de Vasconcelos wrote a letter to his friend from Coimbra, António Augusto Gonçalves (1848-1932), who among other activities was a draftsman, asking if he could do some drawings: "For our exhibition of ceramics we need a coloured copy of the collection of tiles of Sé Velha [Old Cathedral of Coimbra], natural size of the square, so that each drawing is represented complete (...). What we want is the complete collection. Do you have time that is 2 months and a half until September 25th. The opening is on October 1st [The opening of the exhibition was later postponed to 22nd October]; counting 5 days for shipping and setting. Your work will be properly paid by the Society, and it is only with this condition that we give you the burden, and we consider ourselves more than happy to be able to show the public that there are those who knows how to do things well and who does not consider

that they damage the pencil, serving industrial art. You know what to do: wide drawing, colour watered, the character of the drawing very accentuated, brush cleared" (Vasconcelos, 1973: 32). And then he informed his friend: "I'm going from Bussaco to Lisbon to finish my Conferences" (Vasconcelos, 1973: 33).

The conferences that he mentioned were about the *Exposição de Arte Ornamental Portuguesa e Hespanhola* (*Exhibition of Portuguese and Spanish Ornamental Art*) in Lisbon, an exhibition on which Vasconcelos made quite a number of criticisms. At the fifth conference he referred to tiles as a scholar industry (Leandro, 2008: 244). In the next conference he showed that "the patterns of old lost carpets were visible in the tile" and one of the examples was the Alhambra (Leandro, 2008: 249).

Outraged with the poor depiction of tile at the *Exhibition of Portuguese and Spanish Ornamental Art*, he pointed out that insignificant samples from the sixteenth century had been collected and exposed, when with an exceptional collection "which would serve, more than any other in the Exhibition, to demonstrate, in a small space, all types of ornaments from the 13th to the 18th centuries" (Leandro, 2008: 249) the same objective could easily be obtained. As Vasconcelos pointed out if the organizing commission had used the collection of José Maria Nepomuceno (1836-1895), the most prominent in the country, and perhaps of the Peninsula, that insufficiency would never have happened. He wondered why "a person so understood in this matter as Mr. Nepomuceno, who had rendered remarkable services in the works of conservation of the celebrated monastery of Madre de Deus, and had organized there a museum of a very remarkable national pottery, which was then robbed by who wanted" was not consulted (Leandro, 2008: 249-250). For Vasconcelos it was enough to see the lack of judgment, knowledge and science of the commission that organized the abovementioned exhibition.

According to his opinion, Spain sent to the *Exhibition* a small but well-chosen collection of tiles, plates, vases, objects of gallantry in earthenware and porcelain. The Spanish delegates had had the good sense to choose only the best and to concentrate everything in a room (Leandro, 2008: 251).

To make a comparison, let us return to the *Ceramics Exhibition* that Vasconcelos organized at Crystal Palace

in Oporto. Vasconcelos wrote to Gonçalves “We will have an exhibition of ancient tiles that will dazzle” (Leandro, 2008: 295-296). Asking for museographic advice, he questioned his friend if it would not be better to arrange his tiles drawings in a frame, just as he did with the embroidery.

When the exhibition opened on October 22nd, José Frutuoso Gouveia Osório (1827-1887), president of the Sociedade de Instrução do Porto, did not hide the tension that existed between public power and private initiative in his opening speech. He regretted that the Minister of Public Works Trade and Industry had not been able to inaugurate the exhibition, since the whole group was committed to making public authorities aware of the importance of individual efforts and the necessity to guide them through good professional schools, a vital need for certain local industries that were failing because of this shortage.

The first article on the *Ceramics Exhibition* published in the *Commercio do Porto* by Vasconcelos, was dedicated to “The Hispanic-Portuguese tiles” and expressed several of its patrimonial concerns. He emphasized that the Sociedade de Instrução do Porto in this *Exhibition* presented for the first time to the public the magnificent collection of José Maria Nepomuceno one “of the few Portuguese, who, in these days and age, think that not everything should be measured in gold, that not everything should be sold abroad” (Leandro, 2008: 299). Here it was the big difference compared to the *Exhibition of Portuguese and Spanish Ornamental Art*.

Declaring that he had seen what existed in Madrid and in the provincial museums of Spain, and what existed in South Kensington, Louvre, Cluny, etc., he “strongly affirmed that the Nepomuceno collection was” unique in the peninsula and in Europe for its variety, by the

uninterrupted connection of the historical series, and by the beautiful state of its conservation”. However, he added: “The expert may perhaps note the imbalance in which the epochs are represented: extreme abundance of types of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, much smaller in the seventeenth century, and still smaller in the following century” (Leandro, 2008: 299).

One of the distinguishing features of Joaquim de Vasconcelos’ writing is the questions he made, problematizing the subject that he is exposing (Rosas, 1997: 299). Regarding the theme of the Hispanic-Moorish tiles seen in the exhibition, he questioned: “Is everything good as a fabrication (raw material) and as a model of the style? There is order, is there a possibility of a rational classification, of style and dates? We will see” (Leandro, 2008: 299). After this observation, he explained to the reader that he did not wait for the solution of all the doubts raised by this event.

These exhibitions like *Ceramics Exhibition* dealing with Industrial Arts and Home Industries, tried to give light to the state of that same industry and came up with solutions to the problems detected. Usually improvements were proposed in teaching methods. From this exhibition resulted the Escola de Desenho e Modelação (School of Design and Modelling) applied to the ceramic industries that were instituted near the Fábrica das Devezas (Factory of Devezas) in Vila Nova de Gaia.

In short, the *Exhibition of Portuguese and Spanish Ornamental Art* was the embryo of the current Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (National Museum of Ancient Art) and it is plausible that the *Ceramics Exhibition* made definitely clear the need for the establishment of Industrial Schools and of Industrial and Commercial Museums.

THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL MUSEUM OF OPORTO

Thanks’ to Joaquim de Vasconcelos knowledge, enthusiasm and practical experience in organizing exhibitions, he was appointed in May 7th, 1884, as the museum curator of the Industrial and Commercial Museum of Oporto and in January 17th, 1889, as its director.

The Museum opened on March 21th, 1886, with the presence of António Augusto Aguiar, former Minister and official responsible for its creation. Housed in the Olympic Circus, commonly denominated “Circo dos Cavalinhos” (Circus of wheelies), the Museum belonged to the grounds of the Crystal Palace.

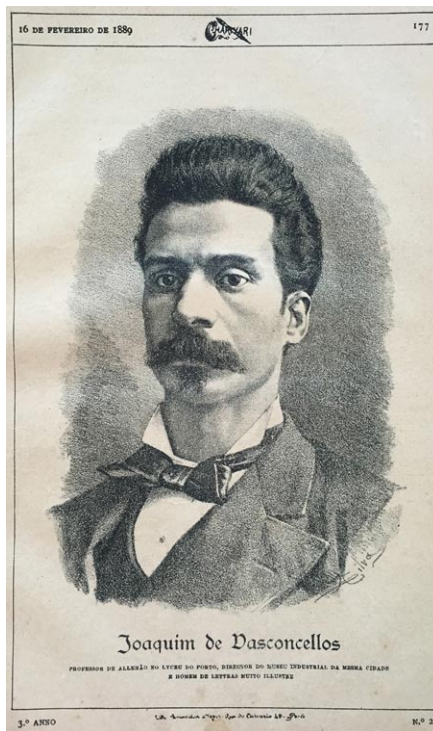


Fig. 03. Almeida e Silva drew (by photography or other drawing...) Joaquim de Vasconcelos as "Professor of German in the Lyceum of Oporto, Director of the Industrial Museum of the same city and remarkable in the field of writing". In *Charivari*, 23 (16th Feb. 1889)



Fig. 04. Postcard showing the exterior of the Industrial and Commercial Museum of Oporto. The Museum opened on March 21st, 1886 (Private collection)

In the initial direction of the Museum was Joaquim Pedro de Oliveira Martins (1845-1894) the Government Delegate. When Oliveira Martins entered politics, he was asked by Guerra Junqueiro (1850-1923): "– What are you going to do to Lisbon? – I'll put away those thieves! – he replied. It was the time of Mariano and Navarro; it was when Marçal Pacheco, a very *smart man* shouted towards scandals and thievery: – Steal, boys! Steal, but give me my share!" (Brandão, 1999: 198). Oliveira Martins had great political influence in this institution, and it was Vasconcelos himself that pointed out what his departure meant, and that the initial direction worked for free (1884-1888) without a word of thanks and recognition (Viana, 1970: 93). Vasconcelos stayed as Curator and Director of the Museum since his creation. Did Oliveira Martins left because he assumed other responsibilities? Did he left because of the differences between him and the Minister Emídio Navarro (1844-1905) who succeeded António Augusto de Aguiar?

What was the key idea that structured this institution? The museum was, above all, a teaching tool for draftsmen and factory workers, as was shown by the exhibition

plans that Vasconcelos established. It was a place of identity, a Museum of proto-Design and a pre-Museum of Ethnography (Leandro, 2008: 3). Articulated with this notion this museum was a vehicle of dynamic promotion and application of national products, like a "museum-storefront" (Leandro, 2008: 369). It was also a "place of salvation", conservation and preservation, where he could show various traditions that prevailed since immemorial times, as if some of the pieces of ethnographic art that were featured on paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries stood out. With this Museum Joaquim de Vasconcelos mapped what the Portuguese people did with their hands by the ancestral way and what the national workers could produce in factories. As Lúcia Rosas observed, "Here emerges the romantic myth of demo purity, and also the static veneration of the worker virtues who, through his work, is the protagonist and promoter of progress, ideals of demo-liberal resonance" (Rosas, 1997: 230). The Museum unveiled Portugal's Northern production (Neves, 1996: 89), but there were also some industries from the South such as Fábrica de Faianças das Caldas da Rainha (Earthenware Factory of Caldas da Rainha) or Fábrica de Sacavém (Factory of Sacavém) and it is

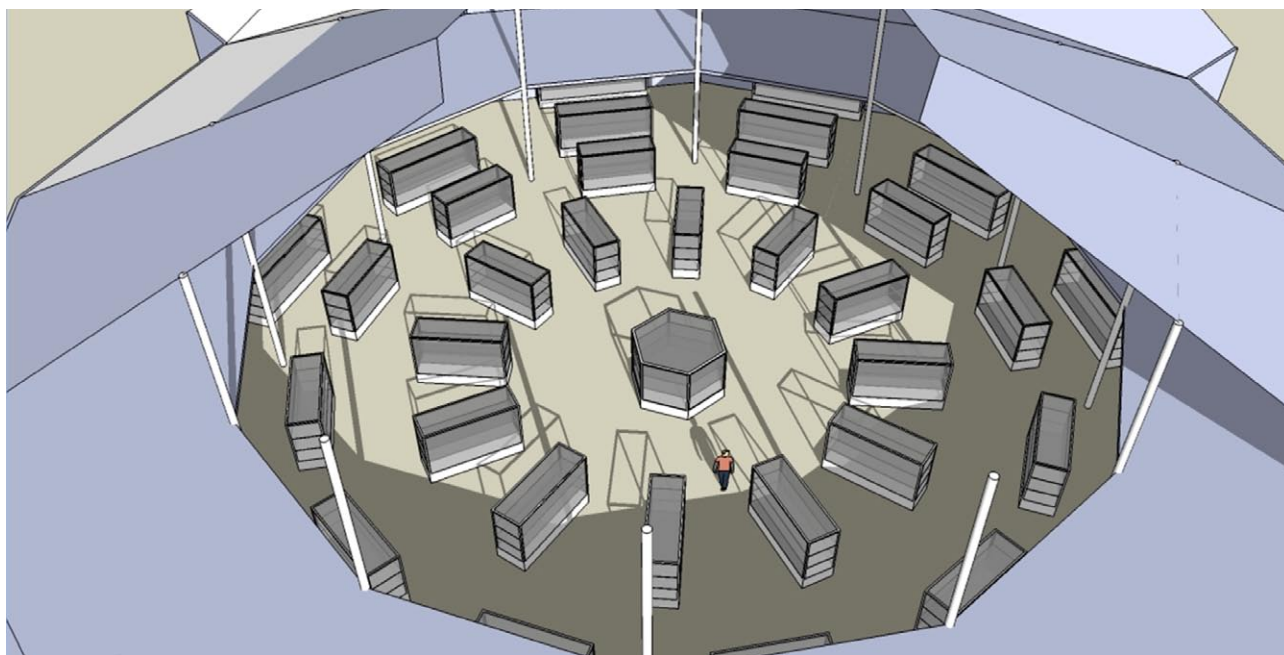


Fig. 05- Industrial and Commercial Museum of Oporto (reconstitution of the architects Paula Jardim and André Maranhã, 2009 © Sandra Leandro)

to be admitted that in the respective showcases, tiles have been exposed.

Although in a small-scale, Joaquim de Vasconcelos used the same type of spatial organization which had been adopted at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1867. He created a radiating structure centred in a hexagonal showcase with objects of glassware and crystal with some of them coming from the prolific Portuguese factory of Marinha Grande (Fig. 05). It was a shimmering centre as a heart of glass, from which the other cases radiate.

Vasconcelos left to the exhibitors the display of their objects, and concentrate with the general layout and arrangement of the small industries. Let us summarize the panorama: hung from the balcony of the upper gallery, and in the intervals of the twelve columns supporting the metal roof of the building, were displayed various types of fishing nets used in the North of the country. Eight mannequins arranged on pedestals were distributed between eight angles of space, dressed in traditional costumes also from the North. Vasconcelos covered the room walls with posters and photographic and lithographic reproductions of national and foreign industrial arts.

To complete this brief overview, Teresa Viana also added that "The collection of old earthenware of

Coimbra gave a graceful note and enriched the presentation" (Vasconcelos, 1983: 18). Through a letter dated October 16th, 1885, addressed to António Augusto Gonçalves, we can detect the origin of these pieces – tiles and other ceramic objects – that Joaquim de Vasconcelos asked his friend for two or three months: "We need to "garnish" the Museum, in the early days, to captivate our unique audience. It is true that samples of charcoal, wood, lime, clays, wool and cotton, granite, etc., have little artistic significance, and give little pleasure to the eye. Let us now transpose a little; and the Statute gives us this freedom" (Vasconcelos, 1983: 95). Tiles gave pleasure to the eye, and the Fábrica de Cerâmica das Devezas of António Almeida Costa & C.^a exhibited tiles, in this Museum, from the very first moment.

Unfortunately, the Museum's catalogue was never published because Vasconcelos received official orders to suspend it for no apparent reason. However, he wrote thirty articles in the newspaper *O Comercio do Porto*, between 1886 and 1887 which were a kind of catalogue of the Museum.

Among the documents found in the estate of Joaquim de Vasconcelos preserved at Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra (General Library of University of Coimbra), one of the most important and illuminating manuscripts is this one: "The Industrial and



Fig. 06. "A visit to the Industrial Museum", humoristic draw by Almeida e Silva. In *Maria da Fonte*, 22 (6th Apr. 1886)

Commercial Museum of Oporto notes for its History". These "notes" went to the press, but in the comments that Vasconcelos wrote on the margin, it is very important to emphasize the following observation: "Unpublished. Not published by request of prudent people" (Leandro, 2008: 382).

In this manuscript, Vasconcelos stressed that he had made significant proposals to streamline and develop the Museum, which, however, did not obtain reply or approval from Lisbon (read: Government). These initiatives were: the Bulletin, Workshops, Travelling Museum, the historical and educational conferences, and the Cabinet of study. Nevertheless, Vasconcelos developed some of these activities on his own.

The Minister Emídio Navarro sought to develop vocational education in existing schools, enacting a new form of organization on December 30th, 1886. With this rearrangement the: "museums lost ground in the network of industrial and commercial establishments branch" (Costa, 1990: 100). The structure originally set for Industrial and Commercial Museums was further processed through a new regulation – The General Regulation of Industrial and Commercial Museums – approved by Decree on December 19th, 1888, and signed by the same minister. With the aid of Joaquim de Vasconcelos, the following Minister – João Franco (1855-1929) – did another reform of industrial and commercial education and Museums by Decree on 8th October, 1891 (Leandro, 2008: 355).

CLOSING THE SQUARE AND TURNING TO CIRCLE: THE EXTINCTION OF THE MUSEUM

In 1894, the Government of Hintze Ribeiro (1849-1907) dissolved the Trade and Industrial Associations. This was only a measure among many that prove a deliberate disinvestment in the national industry. Chronically and cyclically, the country returned to secular economic activities: agriculture and trade.

By Decree of December 23th, 1899, the Minister of Public Works, Trade and Industry Elvino de Brito (1851-1902), extinguished the Industrial and Commercial Museums. Vasconcelos couldn't review "his" institution on the words of the Decree which considered that the

Industrial and Commercial Museums were "far from satisfying, the motives aimed either as permanent exhibitions of industrial and corresponding articles of raw materials or as a subsidy providing the teaching of industrial schools" (Gouveia, 1997, vol. II: 89).

Contrary to what happened to the Industrial and Commercial Museum of Lisbon, which was quickly dismantled, the process of extinction of the Oporto Museum was slow, which made it more painful to Vasconcelos.

Most of the collections remained closed in the “Circus” supervised by one or two guards at least until 1918. However, in 1927 the Museum would still be visited by a Minister. In short, if there was an officially endangered, in practice there was a suspension: the Museum did and did not exist... (Leandro, 2008: 401).

This was one of the wounds that Joaquim de Vasconcelos never healed until the end of his life. In 1911, he confessed to António Augusto Gonçalves: “The Museum is my creation. (...) Taking the museum away from me is like amputating my legs” (Vasconcelos, 1973: 213).

However, the peculiar survival of this Museum was attested in many ways. Vasconcelos had the key to the institution and opened it for those who asked to him, especially friends. For instance, in 1906, José Queirós (1856-1920), a ceramics historian asked him for documents and forms of containers, questioning: “Isn’t there anything in your Industrial and Commercial Museum of Oporto?” (Leandro, 2008: 402). Currently we only have objects and small pieces of this ghost Museum in some other museums or institutions, like Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis (National Museum of Soares dos Reis) or on deposit at Museu de Olaria of Barcelos (Pottery Museum of Barcelos).



Fig. 07 · Box with the collection of laces at the Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis [Soares dos Reis National Museum] “backstage”, Oporto (photo by Sandra Leandro, 2008)

In 1907, Joaquim de Vasconcelos published *A cerâmica portuguesa* and left the second edition of *Industria de Cerâmica*, the ceramics industry manual – the XXIII volume of the Library of Instruction and Professional Education, coordinated by Pedro Prostès –, with a preface of his authorship where he addressed the issue of tiles (Leandro, 2008: 166).

Tiles were part of the national identity puzzle and Vasconcelos opinion on those matters was requested. In a letter dated April 27th, 1909, Rocha Peixoto (1866-1909), another remarkably intellectual, asked Vasconcelos’ “authorized opinion” (Leandro, 2008: 174) as to a series of single figure tiles which had been sent to him from Braga.

The aesthetic standards of Joaquim de Vasconcelos made him abominate everything that he considered

excessively ornate, fanciful, artificial, and for that reason he manifested himself “against the [Jorge] Collaço tiles and his island of Loves (in tile) of Bairro Alto”, loved served in what he referred to as the “Bussaco ice cream” (Vasconcelos, 1973: 219).

To his friend António Augusto Gonçalves he wrote on April 8th, in 1921, showing great interest in obtaining the catalogues of the Count of Ameal’s collection important auction, and stated: “Since the end of last year I have made an inquiry with José de Figueiredo to save, before the auction, through the National Museum the main elements of the national art of the alluded collection: tiles [which I bought from Nepomuceno (Lx.º)] for the Count, for a quarter of their value] (...) But José de Figueiredo, not even a line answered!!!” (Vasconcelos, 1973: 249). Considering the glimpses on tiles dispersed and fragmented in this article, I believe



Fig. 08· Detail of a yoke of the Industrial and Commercial Museum of Porto. Museu de História Natural e da Ciência da Universidade do Porto (Natural History and Science Museum of the University of Porto) (photo by Sandra Leandro, 2016)

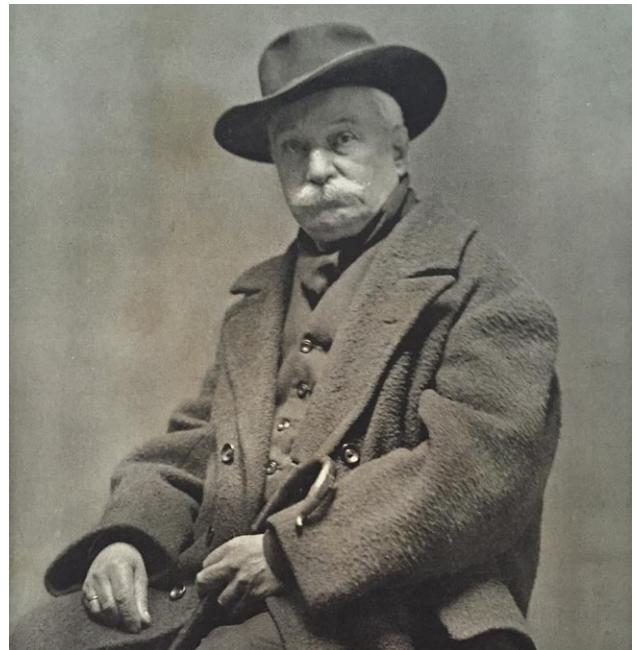


Fig. 09· Joaquim de Vasconcelos, 1928. In *Ilustração moderna*, 30 (Fev. 1929) (photo by Fotografia Medina)

it is explicit the importance that Vasconcelos attributed to this issue in the national artistic panorama.

In 2016, I curated an exhibition evoking Vasconcelos Museum and called it *Museu Infinito* (*Endless Museum*). There were tiles from Fábrica das Devezas. Also, it was to have exposed tiles of the Factory of Sacavém, but I did not have enough space. *Museu Infinito* was a way of mapping the theme of identity. Most

of the times History tends to look more like a circle than a square: as it happened to the Industrial and Commercial Museum of Porto, the catalogue of this exhibition did not come out, until today. Nevertheless, I edited a newspaper to leave clues and I called it *Infinitum*. I still have hope to see one day the edited catalogue. I started with a square and I end up in an open circle, where I always try to honour the memory of Joaquim de Vasconcelos.

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SANTOS SIMÕES AND THE AZULEJO IDENTITY IN PORTUGAL¹

SANTOS SIMÕES E A IDENTIDADE DO AZULEJO EM PORTUGAL¹

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ABSTRACT

The present article focuses on the work of João Miguel dos Santos Simões (1907-1972), a researcher, historian, scholar and promoter of Portuguese *azulejos* and their use in Portugal, as well as the founder of the National Azulejo Museum. Santos Simões played a very important role in the identification both of the *azulejo*'s specific characteristics and of their use in Portugal. He was, in the 20th century, one of the most important promoters of the *azulejo* as a distinctly Portuguese art form. His main theoretical contribution concerns the recognition of the *azulejo*'s unique expression in Portugal — and, by extension, in Brazil. Its use gave rise to monumental decorations and helped shape the architecture in original ways. Apart from identifying the main characteristics of the use of *azulejos* in Portugal, Santos Simões also compared it to the situation in other countries, namely in Spain. Moreover, he studied the *azulejo* as a touristic phenomenon, a subject whose topicality warrants, according to the author of the present article, a detailed examination.

KEYWORDS

Santos Simões | Tiles | Identity | Portugal

RESUMO

O presente artigo aborda o trabalho de João Miguel dos Santos Simões (1907-1972), investigador, historiador, teórico e divulgador do azulejo português e do uso do azulejo em Portugal, bem como fundador do Museu Nacional do Azulejo. Santos Simões teve um papel de grande importância na identificação das características próprias quer do azulejo português, quer do uso do azulejo em Portugal, e foi, no século XX, um dos mais importantes promotores do azulejo enquanto arte identitária e diferenciadora. O seu principal contributo teórico centra-se na constatação de que o azulejo teve em Portugal e, por extensão, também no Brasil, uma expressão única, caracterizando-se esta pela monumentalidade da sua aplicação, e pela forma original como estruturou arquiteturas. Ao identificar as principais características do uso do azulejo em Portugal, fê-lo também tomando como ponto de comparação o uso do azulejo noutros países, nomeadamente, em Espanha. Santos Simões abordou ainda o azulejo enquanto fator de atração turística, tema que, pela sua grande atualidade, justifica, no entender do autor do presente artigo, uma reflexão aprofundada.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Santos Simões | Azulejo | Identidade | Portugal

1. This paper takes up parts of two texts published in the catalogue of the exhibition João Miguel dos Santos 1907-1972 (Museu Nacional do Azulejo/IMC, 2007): "Teórico e Historiador do Azulejo em Portugal" (Azulejo Theorist and Historian in Portugal); "A classificação da azulejaria portuguesa dos séculos XVII e XVIII" (The classification of the Portuguese tile in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries).



Fig. 01· Santos Simões in *Casinha de Prazer* (Small House of Enjoyment) owned by Frederico de Freitas, Funchal (João Miguel dos Santos' / National Azulejo Museum's estate)

To be aware of azulejos (glazed tiles) is a part of being Portuguese! From the baptismal chapel of the church, to school, to the city, throughout life, the Portuguese have got used to seeing in azulejos a natural frame, which is why they know it so poorly and even despise them² (Simões, 1972: 1).

It was said and proven that tiling is the most specific and original display of art created in Portugal. Along with wood carving, the azulejo grants the Portuguese temples that unmistakably ecological character while its perfect alliance with architecture makes it Portuguese, even when the formal and technical standards that inspired it are foreign³ (Simões, 1960: 16).

João Miguel dos Santos Simões (1907-1972), researcher, historian, theorist and promoter of the Portuguese *azulejo* and its use in Portugal, founder of the Azulejo Museum, later the National Museum, is an indisputable figure within a conference that aims at addressing the *azulejo's* role in identity issues in Portugal. In fact, Santos Simões had a very important role in identifying the singular characteristics both of the Portuguese *azulejo* and its use in our country. Furthermore, in the twentieth century, he was one of the main promoters of the *azulejo* as a distinctive art form linked to identity, ideas which he stated in several of his writings.

2. In the source text: "Ter presente os azulejos é quase uma condição de ser português! Desde a capela baptismal da igreja, à escola, à cidade, pela vida fora, os portugueses habituaram-se a ver nos azulejos um quadro natural de ambiente. Daí o conhecerem-no tão mal e, até, menosprezá-lo!...". From henceforth, all in-text translations are provided by the author.

3. In the source text: "Está dito e provado à saciedade que a azulejaria constitui a mais específica e original manifestação de arte criada em Portugal. Com a talha de madeira, o azulejo confere aos templos portugueses esse carácter inconfundivelmente ecológico, e na sua aliança perfeita com a arquitectura, «portugaliza-a», mesmo quando os cânones formais e técnicos desta, são de inspiração estrangeira".

In the first paper he published on the *azulejo*, in 1943, he was astonished to find out that: "Portugal is the country of the *azulejo* but, as extraordinarily as it may seem, there is no complete study on the Portuguese *azulejo* or even a sufficiently developed one"⁴ (Simões, 1943).

In view of this evidence, for almost three decades, Santos Simões dwelt on the Portuguese tile in its whole, studying its application in Portugal, Azores, Madeira and Brazil, and on the *azulejo* that, though arising in other countries, was also applied amongst us. His contribute turned out to be decisive to how we understand and think about this art form and is an indispensable reference to the following generations of art historians.

Faced with the vastness of this heritage, Santos Simões' scientific and methodical spirit soon realised that a comprehensive view of the Portuguese *azulejo* could only lay on its inventory and classification, a task he systematically embraced. From 1944 onwards, the monographic studies he devised and published at a regional level would result in the *Corpus da Azulejaria*, which after 1963 the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation began publishing. In these volumes, and based on a strict inventory conducted in Portugal, Azores, Madeira and Brazil, he explained his global view on the Portuguese tile.

Simultaneously, he fought for the recognition of the *azulejo* as an autonomous ceramic category – at that time the National Ancient Art Museum was responsible for this section – as well as its promotion as an object that belongs in a museum, therefore upholding its independence in this field too.

He would eventually be successful in achieving his goal when, though short lived, he secured the *azulejo* a top spot in the National Museum of Ancient Art in 1947 with the "6th Temporary Tile Exhibition", a collection which was transferred to the old Madre de Deus Convent at the end of the 1950s, where he would have the task of setting up the Azulejo Museum.



Fig. 02. Santos Simões, Palácio Fronteira (Frontier Palace), Lisbon, 1971 (João Miguel dos Santos' / National Azulejo Museum's estate)

His main theoretical contribution, which is scattered throughout many publications and sometimes in short statements, is centred on the realisation that the *azulejo*, always in tune with the evolution of society's taste, had in Portugal an incomparable presence, distinguished not only by its monumentality application, but also by the unique ways it structured the architecture of the country. As the author stated in a work published posthumously: "In the end what remains Portuguese is the inheritance of the architectural integration established in the seventeenth century, which would last as a differentiating feature for at least the first half of the eighteenth century. It was in the great constructions that the Portuguese tilers would fulfil their creative possibilities for which no rules could be found abroad"⁵ (Simões, 1979: 5).

4. In the source text: "Portugal é o país do azulejo, mas, por extraordinário que possa parecer, não existe ainda um estudo completo, ou sequer já suficientemente desenvolvido sobre o azulejo português".

5. In the source text: "O que fica de português é afinal a herança da integração arquitectónica implantada no século XVII e que perdurará como característica diferenciadora durante, pelo menos, a primeira metade do século XVIII. É aqui, na composição das grandes superfícies, que o azulejador de Portugal dará medida das suas possibilidades criadoras, para as quais não podia obter regras do estrangeiro".



Fig. 03· Santos Simões visiting Palácio Fronteira (Fontier Palace), Lisbon, for the 1st International Tilework Symposium, October 1971 (João Miguel dos Santos/ National Azulejo Museum's estate)

To Santos Simões the *azulejo* as a decorative element is also a defining trait of the “Portuguese sumptuary construction”, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although he clarifies that the use of ceramic decoration in architecture is not particularly Portuguese, since it was imported from abroad, he also claims that: “Nevertheless, what characterises the Portuguese *azulejo* and outstandingly distinguishes it from its original counterparts is its decorative intent and the nearly unlimited use made of it, since the *azulejo* was integrated into the buildings’ own architecture as if it was a part of them (...)”⁶ (Simões, 1944: 286). In his words, it is “a true nationalisation of a decorative mode to which we owe the promotion of hundreds of buildings that without it would be clumsy or even inferior and without any artistic interest”⁷ (Simões, 1944).

It is not incidental that one of the styles he most studied in-depth were the seventeenth century tile patterns, which he identified and systematically classified. In the work dedicated to tiles in Portugal in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, *Azulejaria em Portugal nos séculos XV e XVI*, he started his study of patterns with chess-table pattern schemes and checkered (*enxaquetado*) tiles, which he valued as follows: “It is common and only natural to consider the *azulejo* a “support” for painting, hence one may think that its decorative potential depends on the ornaments and representations attached to it. If this were the case, the *azulejo*, in this point, would be mixed up with any other support to painting and, at best, would be separated from it only due to the nature of its pictorial materials and especially the peculiar glaze of this type of ceramics.

6. In the source text: “O que, porém, caracteriza o azulejo português e o diferencia notavelmente dos congêneres originais é a sua intenção decorativa, o uso quase ilimitado que dele se fez, integrando-o na própria arquitectura como se dela fizesse parte (...)”.

7. In the source text: “uma verdadeira nacionalização de uma modalidade decorativa à qual devemos a valorização de centenas de edifícios que, sem ela, seriam desgraciosos, ou mesmo inferiores e sem interesse artístico”.

However, we realise that the *azulejo*, even if devoid of any painted ornaments, has by itself enough plastic characteristics to determine decorative rhythms. (...) In these cases, the cross-linked form obtained by the union between the tiles determines the decorative rhythms, transforming a flat surface into a dynamic set with centres of visual interest – strength lines.

Therefore, we believe that the *azulejo*, or rather, its format, controls and determines its decorative potential. The cross-linked structure obtained through the superficial clustering of *azulejos* is its greatest value as a plastic art and, when there are small superficial bends, that value remarkably increases due to the creation of a third dimension. Therefore, we realise that the laying of tiles on a surface is always a decorative act, regardless of drawings or additional ornaments in the *Azulejos*"⁸ (Simões, 1969: 92).

Starting with the assumption that "«decoration» is based fundamentally on the observation and understanding of two principles: scale and rhythm", Santos Simões started analysing the decorative ability of the plain *azulejo*. Shortly after he focused on the use of two-coloured *azulejos*, which alternated can obtain the "checkered effect – the common chess" in which "(...) the linear rhythm is altered in its direction and the strength lines are no longer solely produced by the joining of tiles, but by the monochrome effect of diagonal schemes. It is the first movement from a *rectilinear* rhythm to a *spacial* one in which the *azulejo* somehow frees itself from its square shape to attain an area. (...) The strength lines, whether simply linear or chromatic, simultaneously cause rhythms and establish *scale*, that is the relationship between the parts and the whole (...) "⁹ (Simões, 1969: 93). After this realisation, we aim to analyse how these principles are applied



Fig. 04. Santos Simões at a conference organised by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF), Lisbon, 1968 (João Miguel dos Santos' / National Azulejo Museum's estate)

and especially, "(...) how its unspoken acceptance finally led to the Portuguese tile"¹⁰ (Simões, 1969: 93).

Next, Santos Simões analysed in detail the "checkered" compositions in which, amongst the *azulejos* he refers to as "normal", thinner rectangular elements were introduced, highlighting the effects engendered by these schemes and by the diagonally orientated linear rhythms in the spaces where they were applied (Simões, 1969, 96).

8. In the source text: "É vulgar, e natural, considerar o azulejo como «suporte» de pintura e, daí, pensar que a sua potencialidade decorativa depende dos ornatos ou figurações que lhe estão apostos. Se assim fosse, o azulejo, neste aspecto, confundir-se-ia com qualquer outro suporte de pintura e, quanto muito, deste se diferenciaria apenas pela natureza dos materiais pictóricos e, principalmente, pelos vidrados específicos deste tipo de cerâmica. Constatamos, no entanto, que o azulejo, mesmo desprovido de quaisquer ornatos pintados, tem, só por si, características plásticas suficientes para determinar ritmos decorativos. (...) Nestes casos o reticulado provocado pela junção entre azulejos determina o ritmo de decoração transformando uma superfície lisa e estática num conjunto dinamizado com centros de interesse visual – linhas de força. Temos assim que o azulejo, ou, melhor, o formato do azulejo, comanda e determina a sua potencialidade decorativa. O reticulado obtido pelo agrupamento superficial dos azulejos é o seu maior valor plástico e, quando há ligeiros empenos superficiais, esse valor é notavelmente aumentado com a criação de uma terceira dimensão. Vemos, portanto, que o azulejamento de uma superfície é sempre um acto de decoração, independentemente de desenhos ou ornatos adicionais nos azulejos."

9. In the source text: "(...) o ritmo linear é alterado na sua direcção e as linhas de força já não são apenas as produzidas pela junção de azulejos mas pelo efeito cromático de diagonais. É a primeira passagem de um *ritmo rectilíneo* para um *ritmo espacial* em que o azulejo como que se liberta da sua quadratura para adquirir uma área. (...) As linhas de força, simplesmente lineares ou cromáticas, ao mesmo tempo que provocam ritmos, estabeleciam *escala*, ou seja a relação entre as partes e o todo (...) "

10. In the source text: "(...) como da sua aceitação tácita resultou finalmente, a azulejaria portuguesa."

From the decorative point of view, the beginning of the seventeenth century marks the appearance of the first schemes "in which the square, plain white tiles are substituted by "patterned" tiles, that is, by ornamented elements"¹¹ (Simões, 1971: 15). This led to the development of compositions called «rich chequered»¹² (Simões, 1971: 15).

As the simple compositions were dropped in favour of the "riche" ones, Santos Simões concluded that these in turn were substituted, through a gradual evolution process, for the generalised use of "Carpet compositions" (Simões, 1971: 15), which kept the diagonal decorative rhythms of the former compositions. In his words, "The decorative rhythm, now well-defined by great diagonal lines and chromatically animated by the balanced inclusion of polychrome *azulejos*, would be the one to finally remain «constant» in the Portuguese tiles of the seventeenth century"¹³ (Simões, 1971: 17).

In addition, Santos Simões' theoretical contribution to the understanding of the Portuguese *azulejo* in the eighteenth century can be found, among others, in the "Introduction" to the posthumous work *Corpus da Azulejaria* (Simões, 1979).

In this text, the author highlights an idea already stated in previous decades: that what makes the Portuguese *azulejo* so deeply unique is its incorporation in the architecture of a building, serving to cover great surfaces. Although he lessens other points now valued by researchers of the Portuguese *azulejo*, Santos Simões underlines what he calls "the «variable» elements, that is, the ornamental grammatical terms"¹⁴ (Simões, 1979: 5) in favour of the figurative part that he saw as "(...) transfers of the models in their grammatical expressions, a copy of anecdotes and conventional figures in the ornamented cahiers or in religious and profane prints"¹⁵ (Simões, 1979: 5).

This sometimes depreciative approach to the Portuguese *azulejos* of the eighteenth century is recorded in older texts, such as "A intenção decorativa do azulejo" (The *azulejo*'s decorative purpose), published in 1944 (Simões, 1944: 286-297). However, one should note, like José Meco did, the appreciation Santos Simões showed for the baroque artistic values, which at the time were associated with the alleged national decadence that happened after the Discoveries (Meco, 2007: 23).

We should also keep in mind that the use of international inspirational sources (such as engravings) was not limited to mere transposition of different scale images for *azulejos*, but in fact consisted on the use of diverse iconographic elements in order to obtain the sought composition, thus the creativity of the artists was valued (Simões, 1979: 5-6).

Nineteenth century tiles were never studied in-depth by Santos Simões and, from his writings, we may state that their analysis was not a priority for him (Simões, 1970: 229-234). Nevertheless, he was fully aware of how the use of *azulejos* in buildings' façades was important for the country's sense of identity, as he wrote: "(...) we owe the creators of glazed ceramic tiles used as exterior claddings the development of a new trend in the shape of our cities, which still lasts, despite the desperate efforts made to make it disappear... (...)"¹⁶ (Simões, 1970: 234).

This interpretation of the issue was extended to Brazil where Santos Simões developed an inventory and studied Portuguese tiles as well. There too the author realised façade tiles had great pre-eminence in the shape of some cities (Simões, 1974).

In a somewhat controversial manner, Santos Simões considers that Brazil kept "(...) the continuity of the Portuguese tile that, without it, would have probably

11. In the source text: "em que os elementos brancos, quadrados, são substituídos por azulejos «de padrão», ou seja, por elementos ornamentados."

12. In the source text: "caixilho compósito"

13. In the source text: "O ritmo decorativo, agora bem definido por grandes diagonais e animado cromaticamente pela inclusão cadenciada de azulejos de ornatos policromos, seria aquele que finalmente haveria de ficar como «constante» na azulejaria portuguesa do século XVII."

14. In the source text: "os elementos «variáveis» ou sejam os termos gramaticais da ornamentação,"

15. In the source text: "(...) decalque dos modelos nas suas expressões gramaticais, a cópia de anedotas e figurações convencionizadas nos «cahiers» de ornamentos ou nas estampas religiosas e profanas"

16. In the source text: "(...) ficámos a dever aos criadores do azulejo de fachada um nova expressão na fisionomia das nossas cidades, fisionomia que perdura, malgrado os desesperados esforços para a fazer desaparecer... (...)."

been lost in the subversive slumber caused by the French invasions and by the so-called «liberal» wars”¹⁷ (Simões, 1960).

Furthermore, in the challenge he left to Brazilian researchers, it is quite clear the importance he gave to the Portuguese tile employed in Brazil as well as its bond to the *azulejo*’s use in Portugal: “It is the author’s wish that this last chapter is especially handled by his Brazilian colleagues and disciples, since in his opinion it is them who must carry the torch further on as an extension of a renewed tradition worthily inserted into a complex Portuguese-Brazilian cultural framework, which is unified in its shapes and spirit”¹⁸ (Simões, 1979: 9).

As he identified the main features of the use of the *azulejo* in Portugal, Santos Simões took as a point of comparison the employment of tiles in other countries, namely in Spain. Due to his great knowledge of Spanish tiles, he had all the required means to, at the same time, assess both how the Portuguese tiles borrowed from the Spanish tradition and how they had freed themselves from that very influence. Much like Alfonso Pleguezuelo highlighted, Santos Simões was a great admirer of Spain and of the Spanish culture, having started his studies in tiles with the productions made in his neighbour’s country, to whose historiography he gave a substantial contribution (Pleguezuelo, 2007).

More than the singular features of the Portuguese *azulejo*, what is essentially at stake is how it is used differently in Portugal, a fact which, according to Santos Simões, can be clearly seen in how the Spanish-Moorish *azulejos* produced in Seville were used in the sixteenth century.

In other words, for this researcher, in Portugal there was no need to wait for a Portuguese production in order to develop new paths for the *azulejo*. They were followed early on by the innovative application



Fig. 05· Santos Simões with Mário Barata at the 1st International Tilework Symposium, October 1971 (João Miguel dos Santos’ / National Azulejo Museum’s estate)

found in the Sevillian copies; as he underscored: “(...) although the first tiles were imported, and, in fact, we can only take into account the production of Portuguese *azulejos* in the last third of the sixteenth century, it is fairly certain that their application was different from the one executed in other production centres. The recognition of the *azulejo*’s rhythmic possibilities was precisely what led the Portuguese to consider it a «unit» and, as such, to use it for ornamental compositions that differed from the ones found in the walls of Seville, where there was a simple repetition of the same tile”¹⁹ (Simões, 1969: 93).

As a point of comparison, Santos Simões mentions the applications found in Coimbra’s Sé Velha, most of them

17. In the source text: “(...) a continuidade da azulejaria portuguesa, que, sem ele, se teria provavelmente perdido no marasmo subversivo provocado pelas invasões francesas e pelos guerras chamadas «liberais».”

18. In the source text: “É desejo do Autor que este último capítulo seja especialmente tratado pelo seus colegas e discípulos brasileiros, já que na sua opinião é a eles que compete levar mais longe o facho, como prolongamento de uma tradição renovada, dignamente inserida num complexo cultural luso-brasileiro unitário nas formas e no espírito.”

19. In the source text: “(...) ainda que os primeiros azulejos fossem importados e que só, praticamente no último terço do século XVI, se possa considerar a existência de uma fabricação portuguesa de azulejos, o certo é que a sua aplicação diferia daquelas seguidas nos centros produtores. Precisamente teria sido o reconhecimento das possibilidades rítmicas do azulejo o que levou os portugueses a considerá-los como «unidade» e, como tal, a utilizar esses ladrilhos para composições ornamentais, à margem daquelas que, por simples repetição de um mesmo azulejo, se obtinha nas paredes de Sevilha.”



Fig. 06· 6th Temporary Exhibition – Tilework, National Museum of Ancient Art, Lisbon, 1947 (Portuguese Tilework Collection | CGF-Art and Archive Library, CFT009.1541)

destroyed at the beginning of the twentieth century, and in S. Paulo de Frades. Concerning both cases, the author stated, "(...) we can clearly see a differentiating element that characterises the Portuguese tile, that is, the monumentality sense that could be obtained from the tile combination, which could be adapted to the architecture regardless of its drawings or individual ornaments"²⁰ (Simões, 1969: 93-94).

In another paper, in which he identifies monumentality, modernity and flexibility as features of the *azulejo*'s use in our country, he does it, once again, by taking Spain as a counterpoint: "In the seventeenth century, the features of the *azulejo* were set: *monumentality* – we took advantage of the *azulejo* in a way that was unknown elsewhere: the extraordinary notion of scale that can be provided by that 14x14cm square; *modernity* – in Spain, the *azulejo* was stereotyped

to half a dozen styles, but in Portugal we made the *azulejo* a living thing that grew and was developed side-by-side along with any other art form; we had as many types of *azulejo* as each technical trend demanded; *flexibility of its employment* – in Spain the *azulejo* was used to brighten the patios of Sevillian houses while in Portugal it nearly became a construction material; *the amazing way it is able to adapt itself as a complement to a building's architecture* is another feature of the *azulejo*"²¹ (Simões, 1961).

The comparison between the Portuguese and the Spanish tile has a political dimension, which is necessarily controversial and disputable but also allows Santos Simões a distinction among those who have suggested that the idea of identity linked to this art form is connected to the development of a sense of nation as well. When discussing the Portuguese production

20. In the source text: "(...) observamos nitidamente uma diferenciação que caracterizaria a azulejaria portuguesa, ou seja, o sentido da monumentalidade que se podia obter com a combinação de ladrilhos adaptando-a à arquitectura, independentemente dos seus desenhos ou ornatos individuais."

21. In the source text: "No século XVII, fixaram-se as características do azulejo: a *monumentalidade* – tirámos dele um partido desconhecido em qualquer outro meio: extraordinária a noção de escala desse quadrado de 14x14 cm; a *modernidade* – em Espanha, o azulejo ficou estereotipado em meia dúzia de tipos; em Portugal, fizemos do azulejo qualquer coisa de vivo, que cresceu, que se desenvolveu paralelamente com qualquer outra arte; tivemos tantos tipos de azulejos quantos os que as correntes técnicas exigiam; a *versatilidade do seu emprego* – em Espanha empregou-se para alegrar os pátios das casas sevillanas; em Portugal tornou-se quase um material de construção; a *forma espantosa como se adapta como complemento da arquitectura* é outra característica do azulejo."



Fig. 07· Azulejo Museum, 17th century room, c. 1965-1971 (Portuguese Tilework Collection | CGF-Art and Archive Library, CFT009.1414)

of the sixteenth century, he considers “the will to state a position progressively less Spanish in its forms and applications”,²² a “lesson” taught by the national tile and one of the ways in which the Portuguese of the sixteenth century upheld “their independence and showed their geniality”²³ (Simões, 1971: 12).

Through his inventory, study and theorizing, Santos Simões asserted himself as an inescapable figure in the Portuguese historiography of the *azulejo* in the twentieth century. Yet, there is another chapter of his work that must be addressed due to its up-to-date significance and connection to identity issues: the research that focused on the *azulejo* as a tourist attraction.

Not only did Santos Simões perceive that the *azulejo* was “the most unique and one of the most captivating manifestations of Portuguese Art”²⁴ (Simões, 1964), but he also realised that it could be a relevant element

in the assertion of the Portuguese culture abroad and greatly added to its international promotion, having underscored its appeal in what we now call cultural tourism. Therefore, in the eleventh and last proposal he made out of a set of proposals to the First National Tourism Conference in 1964 – all of which were of great scope and vision – Santos Simões claimed “that in every international display of touristic interest in which Portugal might be present, the Portuguese *azulejo* must be drawn attention to as one of the main cultural attractions”²⁵ (Simões, 1964).

In this matter, Santos Simões believed it to be crucial to use the term *Azulejo* in Portuguese in every touristic publication in a foreign language, “explaining in endnotes or in brackets the meaning of the term”²⁶ (Simões, 1964), a strategy that is still used by the National Azulejo Museum today in all its publications.

22. In the source text: “exemplo de vontade de afirmar posições cada vez menos «espanholas» nas formas e nas aplicações.”

23. In the source text: “a sua independência e demonstrar a sua genialidade”

24. In the source text: “a mais original e uma das mais cativantes manifestações da Arte Portuguesa”

25. In the source text: “que em todas as manifestações internacionais de interesse turístico onde Portugal esteja presente, se chame a atenção para o azulejo português como uma das principais atracções de ordem cultural.”

26. In the source text: “esclarecendo em «chamada de fim de página» ou entre parêntesis o seu significado no idioma em questão”

In addition, Santos Simões claimed: "It is not only in the great monuments and main museums that we can find the best pieces, so even regarding this matter the *azulejo* could help tourism in general, since it may become a feature of attraction in the smaller means, which are further away from the main itineraries"²⁷ (Simões, 1964). Therefore, he foresaw yet another point that concerns tourism and its increase throughout

national territory beyond the most obvious urban centres, or even within them but in outlying areas.

In my opinion, because the very issue of harnessing the differentiating value of the Portuguese tile by the tourist industry is naturally grounded on an idea of identity, it seems desirable that all the likely implications of this phenomenon should be studied in-depth in the future.

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27. In the source text: "Não é apenas nos grandes monumentos e nos principais museus que se encontram os melhores exemplares e, até aqui, o azulejo pode servir a causa de um turismo total, já que poderá ser elemento de atracção para os pequenos meios afastados dos itinerários principais."

IDENTIDADES FRENTE AL ESPEJO: AZULEJOS EN PORTUGAL Y VALENCIA

IDENTITIES IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR: TILES IN PORTUGAL AND VALENCIA

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ABSTRACT

La Península Ibérica posee en Portugal y Valencia dos áreas en las que la azulejería ha jugado un papel relevante a través de la historia. Ambos territorios la flanquean al Este y al Oeste, por lo que parecen proyectarse en una imagen especular aunque cada uno de ellos posee una personalidad distintiva y singular, a veces convergente y a veces divergente, que permiten su comparación para encontrar sintonías, diferencias o especificidades propias de cada uno de estos focos de irradiación universal del azulejo.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Azulejería | Portugal | Valencia (España)

ABSTRACT

The Iberian Peninsula has in Portugal and Valencia two areas in which tile has played an important role throughout history. Both territories flank it in the East and in the West, reason why they seem to project themselves in a specular image although each one of them possesses a distinctive and singular personality, sometimes convergent and sometimes divergent, allowing comparison to find tunings, differences or specificities of each of these foci of universal irradiation of the tile.

KEYWORDS

Azulejo | Portugal | Valencia (Spain)

LOS ORÍGENES

En Al-Andalus encontramos los primeros ejemplos del uso de la azulejería en la Península Ibérica. Sus inicios modestos son poco conocidos, aplicaciones de azulejos sueltos en las torres de las murallas de Sevilla o en los minaretes de las mezquitas (Zozaya, 2000). En Valencia, los azulejos más antiguos pertenecen a fuentes o andenes de los jardines de casas o palacios musulmanes, como los hallados en Onda, en el barrio del Fortí de Dénia o en la almunia que se encontró bajo las ruinas Palacio Real de Valencia¹. A finales del siglo XIII surgió la tradición del alicer que arraigó en el reino nazarí de Granada. Se basaba en la utilización

de piezas geométricas recubiertas de un vidriado monocromo, en forma de cruces, candilejas o estrellas de seis u ocho puntas, formas que poseen precedentes en la azulejería iraní o norteafricana precedente. El alicer se transmitió a los reinos cristianos y tras la conquista se utilizó para construir fuentes, como la hallada en la plaza de La Figuereta de Valencia (Fig. 01), o composiciones pavimentares para palacios de nobles o reyes, como los que Jaime II encargó a Abdulhaziz de Bocayrén en 1306, o Pedro IV y la reina Leonor para sus palacios de Tortosa y Barcelona (1367, 1370, 1376, 1382); también el rey Carlos de



Fig. 01· Museo Nacional de Cerámica "González Martí", fuente de aliceres hallada en la Plaza de la Figuereta, Valencia, inv. CE1/11507 (foto ©MNCV)

1. Para el caso de Denia véase <<https://lamarinaplaza.com/2015/07/15/el-rey-desconocido-de-denia/>>. En Valencia han aparecido varias fuentes, de cronología controvertida, que no han sido nunca estudiadas conjuntamente y la información está dispersa. La fuente de la almunia era de ladrillo de barro cocido. Fuentes con alicatados vidriados, probablemente ya cristianas, han aparecido en excavaciones de unas casas anteriores a la construcción del convento del Carmen, en la Almoína, en la Calle de la Paz y en la calle del Mar (inf. personal V. Lerma) (Ribera et al., 1998: 81, 97).



Fig. 02· Azulejo con la heráldica de la reina Margarita de Prades, inv. CE1/00685 (foto ©MNCV)



Fig. 03· Valencia, Castell d'Alaquàs, pavimentos (foto de Jaume Coll)

Navarra para el castillo de Olite (1406) e incluso el cardenal Audoin Aubert para el palacio de Avignon (1364) (Coll, 2009: 55, 101).

Pero más singular fue la utilización del azulejo con los emblemas heráldicos, con lemas o divisas caballerescas, que se instalaban en los inmuebles para expresar su posesión, incluso en el caso de instituciones públicas como en la Casa de la Ciutat de Valencia (González Martí, 1952, II: 140, Coll, 2009: 108). Un hecho histórico testimonia esta aseveración ya que se conoce documentalmente que Maître Robert, rey de armas del Duque de Berry, dibujaba al moro Jean de Valence los motivos que debía pintar sobre los azulejos (1384) (Norton, 1992, 2000; Bon, 1992, 2000: 156; Jugie, 2000). Por citar sólo algunos casos, Martín el Humano encargó unos grandes tableros con las barras de Aragón para la tribuna real de la Catedral de Barcelona y Alfonso V para el palacio Real de Valencia, el Castel Nuovo de Nápoles o la fortaleza de Gaeta (Coll Conesa, 2009: 105; González Martí, 1952, II: 7ss). Caballeros como Ramón de Perellós encargaron azulejos con sus divisas para la casona de los Rabassa de Perellós en Valencia donde también instaló azulejos con el escudo de la reina Margarita de Prades de quien era devoto servidor (Fig. 02) (González Martí, 1952, II: 7). Esa azulejería cubrió también con emblemas gremiales las capillas devocionales de sus parroquias

y fue exportada a Portugal instalándose en el Palacio de los Infantes de Beja o en el lavatorio del convento de Jesús en Setúbal, entre otros lugares (Coll, 1992).

La influencia renacentista introdujo nuevas composiciones, como la que Pere Compte trazó para la lonja de Valencia, o las que aún cubren el castillo de Alaquàs (Fig. 03), con azulejo de arista combinado con piezas geométricas monocromas y diseños que se inspiran en los suelos marmóreos de *opus sectile* (Coll, 2008). Pero la mayor innovación renacentista fue la introducción de una amplia paleta de color, desarrollada en La Toscana en Italia por maestros como Luca Della Robbia, que incorporaba el amarillo de antimonio o el rojo de hierro y que se desplegó con un nuevo repertorio de temas manieristas de la mano de ceramistas flamencos como los Floris. Sevilla fue pionera gracias a la llegada de Niculoso Francisco el Pisano, pero Toledo y Talavera de la Reina, al ser los centros ceramistas más próximos a las grandes obras de la corona, se convirtieron en los mayores focos de irradiación hispánica hacia Barcelona, Zaragoza o Valencia. Niculoso había introducido el azulejo pictorialista creando retablos y pinturas parietales complejas, como vemos en el altar del Monasterio de Tentudía (Badajoz) o en el de la capilla del Alcázar Real de Sevilla. Estas decoraciones se abandonaron hasta la llegada de discípulos de Guido di Savino, como Jan Floris, que se instaló en Plasencia (1550) y

luego en Talavera de la Reina (1562), o incluso Frans Andries, hijo de Guido, que sabemos se asentó en Sevilla desde 1561. Desde Talavera, Floris realizó azulejería para Felipe II para el Pardo, Segovia y el Alcázar de Madrid. En 1550 firmó el retablo de la iglesia de Garrovillas y probablemente un retablo para la iglesia de Santo Domingo (Plasencia) y se le atribuye el panel de San Nuflor (Museo Arqueológico Nacional). Juan Fernández le sucedió en los encargos del Escorial y sabemos que fue el autor del retablo de San Antonio Abad de la ermita de Nuestra Sra. Del Prado de Talavera (1570) y del retablo de la iglesia de Candeleda (Ávila) con la *Última Cena* como tema central, así como algunos frisos hoy conservados en el pórtico de la ermita de la Virgen del Prado de Talavera, entre los que destaca el panel de arcabuceros (c. 1580). Otro autor de esos momentos fue Hernando de Loaysa, el pintor más destacado de Talavera en los años finales del siglo XVI. Sabemos que trabajó en Valladolid realizando los frisos del palacio Nelli, en los que usó emblemas en medallones circulares como elementos decorativos, también en Plasencia y en el palacio portugués de Vila Viçosa, realizando las salas del gigante Goliath y de la Medusa (1603). Finalmente es conocida la actividad de Alonso de Figueroa desde 1601 (Coll, 2013).

De ese modo, en los años en que Portugal se incorporaba a la producción de los primeros retablos policromos, los principales focos de azulejería se centraban

en torno a la corte española, en especial en Talavera y Sevilla como pujante centro económico gracias a la apertura de las rutas con América, y de ahí irradió hacia Barcelona mientras Valencia vivía aletargada produciendo sólo azulejo seriado policromo para edificios emblemáticos como el Palau de la Generalitat, el Monasterio de San Miguel de los Reyes o el Colegio Seminario del Corpus Christi, siempre contando con azulejeros castellanos desplazados ex-profeso a Valencia con modelos de inspiración serliana, repetitivos y escasamente creativos, con “puntas de clavos”, “palmas” o “ferroneries” (Pérez Guillén, 1996; Coll Conesa, 2009: 154-155). A partir de esas bases se dio un renacimiento en Valencia a lo largo del siglo XVII (Pérez Guillén, 1991, 2006), desarrollándose una tradición policroma figurativa con zócalos con cartuchos que contienen simbología religiosa (Seminario de Segorbe, Iglesia del Carmen de Valencia), a veces imágenes de santos como en el caso del convento de San José y Santa Teresa donde vemos a los santos titulares encerrados en panoplias de bordes enrollados (Soler, 1989: 41; Coll Conesa, 2009: 197). Además han llegado hasta nosotros escasos paneles religiosos para exteriores, como el *Ecce Homo* de la alquería de Julià (Valencia) tratado con una policromía basada en cobalto y manganeso con algunos toques de cobre y antimonio (Pérez Guillén, 1989: 195), que ya anuncian el desarrollo del pictorialismo en azulejo que tomará fuerza en el siglo XVIII.

EL SIGLO DEL ESPLENDOR POLICROMO

A finales del siglo XVII ya existe una tradición consolidada, asentada en la ciudad de Valencia, capaz de acometer obras singulares y de calidad como el pavimento de la capilla de San Jerónimo del Colegio del Arte Mayor de la Seda de Valencia (Soler, 1989: 138-139), o los roleos de la capilla de la Comunión de la antigua parroquia de San Andrés, hoy de San Juan de La Cruz, o de la capilla de la Comunión de la parroquia de Montcada. Una obra muy singular, concluida en 1714, es el pavimento de los Cuatro Elementos del Palacio Ducal de Gandía, en la que se representan el Agua, el Aire, el Fuego y la Tierra, con elementos emblemáticos asociados, que cuando se construyó el Salón Dorado en el que se encuentra, fue concebido como un elemento más de la composición

de la sala combinando con la decoración parietal y del techo (Pérez Guillén, 1985; Soler, 1989: 152-153). Todas esas obras presentan un predominio del color azul de cobalto como rasgo más específico y que se abandonará hacia el segundo cuarto del siglo XVIII con el uso de colores más cálidos.

El siglo XVIII es el momento cumbre de la azulejería cuya producción radicaba en la ciudad de Valencia. Los propios paneles nos informan sobre fábricas de azulejos de la ciudad. En el caso de zócalo del refectorio del convento de Santo Domingo de Orihuela, leemos “Luis Domingo lo diseñaba en 1755”, “Luciano Calado lo pintaba”, “Vicente Navarro lo fabricaba en Valencia”. Existen a su vez crónicas eruditas que ha



Fig. 04. Museo Nacional de Cerámica "González Martí", fragmento de un pavimento con banquete central, Valencia, c. 1780, inv. CE1/00531 (foto ©MNCV)

recopilado Inocencio V. Pérez Guillén, como la que encontramos en el libro conmemorativo del quinto centenario de la conquista de Valencia de Pascual Esclapés (1738), donde hace constar la reedificación, en 1737, de la fábrica de azulejos de Manuel Alapont sita en la calle del Paradís, fábrica que sirvió muestras para la edificación del palacio Real de Madrid. En estos documentos algunos fabricantes son llamados "ladrilleros de obra de Manises", de donde derivará probablemente la popular denominación de *manisetas* con que se conocen los azulejos en Valencia.

Algunos años después (1762) el jesuita Tomás Serrano, en su Loa a San Vicente Ferrer, alude a "algunas fábricas establecidas en este siglo en la Ciudad" y por supuesto en primer lugar, por delante de las sederías, destaca las de azulejos. Indica que hay "cinco casas" intramuros que compiten entre sí, "... y esa competencia es la causa que origina el progreso". Menciona

que fabrican gran variedad de "muestras" (modelos) y que con ellas componen vistosas "alfombras" (pavimentos) (Fig. 04) y "tapices" (arrimaderos). Comenta que se hacen colores "nuevos y antes no vistos" como elogio a la creatividad de los azulejeros valencianos. Todavía en el mismo siglo, el viajero francés Gourmay, manifiesta tras su visita a la ciudad que conoció tres fábricas de azulejos (1778). Pero las referencias más concretas llegan de la obra Valencia Antigua y Moderna de Marcos Antonio de Orellana (1780), autor que indica expresamente que las fábricas de azulejos se asientan exclusivamente en la ciudad de Valencia y no en Manises, a pesar de la denominación *manisetas* o *manises* que los azulejos reciben en algún caso.

En 1793, Tomás Ricord menciona la existencia en la ciudad de Valencia de cuatro "obradores" en los que trabajan quarenta operarios llegando a producir más de 150.000 piezas (azulejos) al año, parte de las



Fig. 05- Museo Nacional de Cerámica "González Martí", escena de cocina, 1789, Fábrica de Faure y Disdier, inv. CE1/00525 (foto ©MNCV)

cuales se exportan "a Castilla y Andalucía". Buena prueba de ello son los azulejos valencianos que recubren el claustro del Hospital de San Juan de Dios en Granada y también sabemos, por datos documentales y por conjuntos que permanecen in situ, que las exportaciones de azulejos se realizaron además a Aragón, Cataluña, Baleares, Norte de Africa, Canarias y América. Las últimas noticias del siglo XVIII las transmite otro viajero francés, J. Fr. Bourgoing (1797), quien dice: "Les valenciens tiren assez bien parti de toutes les productions de leur sol. Ils ont une espèce de terre dans ils font ces carreaux de faïence colorée connus sous le nom d'azulejos et qu'on ne fabrique qu'à Valence" (Pérez Guillén, 1989: 20). Efectivamente, como recoge María Paz Soler (Soler, 1989: 201), el azulejo del siglo XVIII lo llenó todo: "pavimentos, zócalos, cocinas y frontales de escalera, via crucis, paneles conmemorativos en las calles, aleros en los balcones, frontales de altar, retablos de santos, dinteles y jambas en las puertas", aunque debemos decir que se realizaba en su mayoría para interiores excepto en el caso de los *via crucis*, los *misterios* y los *gozos de María*, los paneles de compromiso matrimonial, que mostraban parejas de novios con sus nombres, o los santos tutelares de la familia, de cofradías o de barrios, que se colocaban en las calles simulando a veces grandes composiciones de retablo como ocurría en el conocido panel de Játiva con sus hijos ilustres: los papas Calixto III y Alejandro VI y el pintor José de Ribera, pagado "a expensas del barrio" (Soler, 1989: 206). Los voladizos de sotabalcones se recubrían con azulejos para ser vistos por la cara inferior ya desde época medieval, mientras las contrahuellas de escalera, que cubren los frentes de los escalones, son una creación manierista y exhibían

desde azulejos seriados a rameados vegetales, a veces pequeñas escenas cinegéticas o marinas, paisajes, pero también escenas narrativas como procesiones de San Vicente Ferrer.

Con las fábricas colaboraban diversos artistas, muchos de ellos pintores que solían trabajar al fresco o sobre lienzo aunque los había especializados en la pintura del azulejo. En general, estos pintores eran llamados *delineantes*, autores del boceto o pintura que se trasladaba al azulejo mediante estarcidos. Cuando junto a la firma aparece el término *pintor*, se refiere al ceramista que conocía la técnica cerámica y aplicaba los colores de óxidos metálicos. De unos y otros conocemos los nombres de Manuel Alapont, Josep Benedito, Luís Domingo, Dionís Vidal, Francisco Ceballos, Francisco Diago, Valero Llorens, Vicente Miralles, Vicente Moya, Pere Navarro o Luciano Calado (Pérez Guillén, 2006: 73-82). Algunas obras se conservan todavía in situ, como las capillas de la iglesia de San Andrés (hoy San Juan de la Cruz), de la fábrica de la Corona de Vicente Navarro, el pavimento de la Fama y las cuatro partes del Mundo, del Colegio del Arte Mayor de la Seda, obra de Vicente Navarro de 1757 (Pérez Guillén, 2013: 130), la cocina de la Casa de los Miquel de Benicarló, obra probablemente realizada en la fábrica de Alejandro Faure (Pérez Guillén, 2010: 64), junto a la cocina Mansó del Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas (Cabrera et al., 2013), la del Palacio de Exarch, conservada aún en ese edificio en Valencia o la cocina Dordà de la Fundación La Fontana (Gironés et al., 2016). Éstas representan una tipología muy típica de la producción valenciana del rococó y el neoclasicismo: cocinas de trampantojo (Fig. 05), concebidas como escenarios especulares a

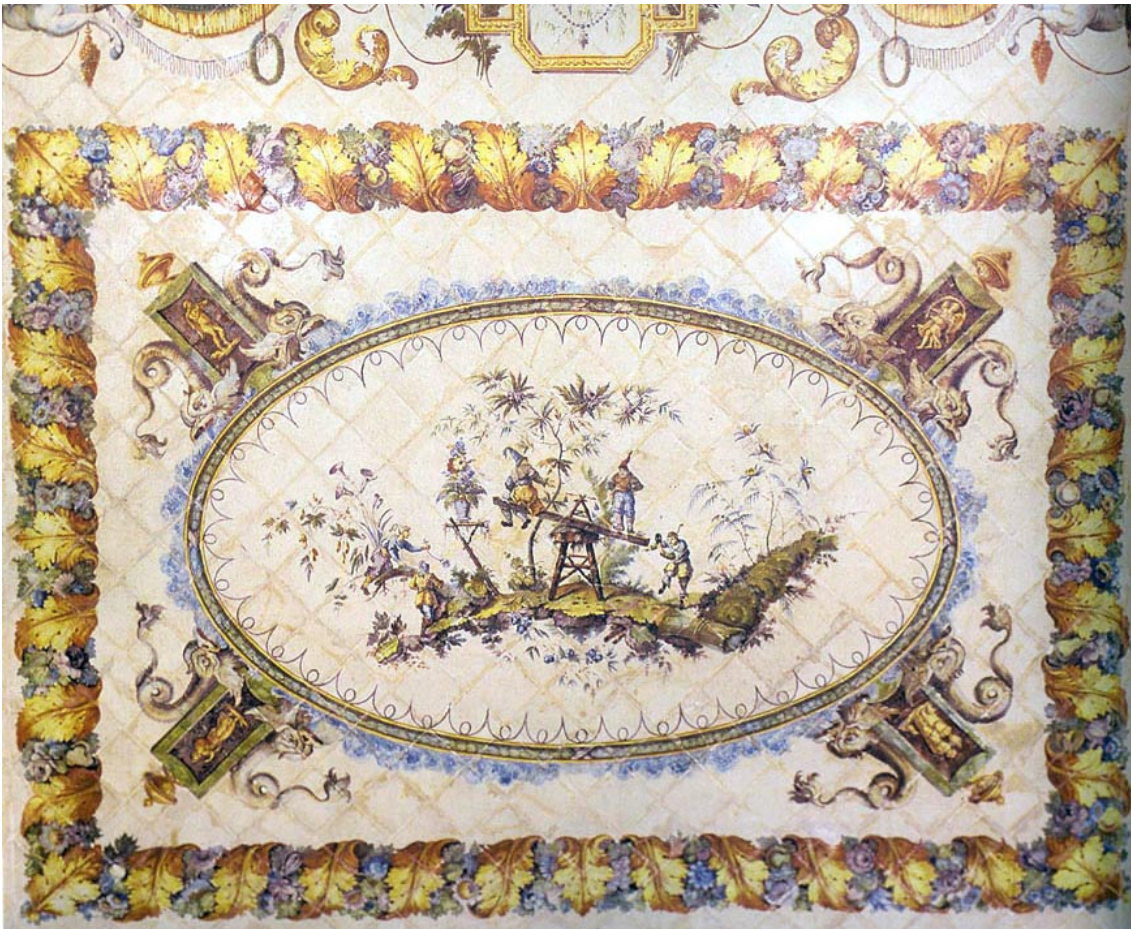


Fig. 06. Museo Nacional de Cerámica "González Martí", pavimento de Salvadora Disdier, Reales Fábricas de Valencia, 1808, inv. CE1/11655 (foto ©MNCV)

tamaño real, siempre policromas, en las que las escenas de elaboración de los alimentos conviven con sirvientes que traen la compra o sorbetes para festines, e incluso sirven turrone y chocolate. En algún caso, como en la escena conservada en el Museo Nacional de Cerámica, reproducen una vívida imagen de la vida cotidiana con los señores de la casa realizando actividades como la lectura (él) y el bordado (ella), los niños jugando y los sirvientes alrededor con sus tareas propias. Un caso excepcional lo constituye el Hospital de Sacerdotes Pobres de Valencia ya que presenta no sólo la azulejería seriada que cubre corredores y celdas, sino además varios paneles con alegorías: *Salus Infirmorum*, la Caridad y la Hospitalidad, exaltaciones marianas, el árbol genealógico o árbol de la Cofradía, y otro árbol que representa a la Junta de Cofrades del Hospital junto a la extraordinaria Capilla de San Luis Beltrán, repleta de los milagros del santo en su predicación a América, y la Iglesia del Milagro, con alegorías de la Virgen María (Pérez Guillén, 1994; Vizcaíno, 1998).

A finales de siglo, algunas de las fábricas de la ciudad de Valencia son impulsadas a ser reconocidas como reales fábricas por la Real Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País. Así ocurrió con la fábrica de la calle de las Barcas, antes de Alejandro Faure, cuando fue adquirida por Marcos Antonio Disdier, que alcanzó ese reconocimiento junto a la fábrica de la calle Mosén Femades y la de la calle Ruzafa. De éstas salieron algunas piezas de singular importancia como el pavimento de la Sala Capitular de la Seo de Zaragoza, producido en las Reales Fábricas en 1808 y firmado por el pintor Juan Bru (Cebrián et al., 2010: 8) o un gran pavimento hoy conservado en el Museo Nacional de Cerámica que representa una alfombra pintada inspirada en las francesas de *Savonnerie* (Pérez Guillén, 2005: 116), pintado probablemente por Miguel Chisbert bajo diseño de Juan Bru Plancha (Fig. 06). La denominación permitía que se exhibiera en la fachada el escudo real, con la heráldica coronada de los antiguos reinos y el Toisón de Oro, de lo que tenemos alguna muestra tanto en el Museo Nacional

de Cerámica atribuido a la fábrica de Esteban Pérez (Pérez Guillén, 2005: 132-13), como en el Museo Nacional do Azulejo de Lisboa. Las obras de las Reales Fábricas nutrían un amplio mercado nacional, ya que se localizan además en Teruel (Pérez Guillén, 1992), Murcia (Jorge, 1961; Santiago, 2013), Alicante (Castells et al., 2013), o Mallorca (Cabot et al., 1990), pero se conocen también encargos para Cuba.

Por otra parte hay que considerar la producción de alta calidad, aunque comparativamente menos abundante, de la Fábrica de Loza de Alcora, fundada en 1727 por el Conde de Aranda. Producidos en su "quadra de baldosas" se conservan escasos pero significativos ejemplos, como el calvario del monasterio

del Desierto de las Palmas o los zócalos con emblemas de la pasión de la Iglesia de la Sangre, ambos en Castellón (Coll, 2009: 183). El tratamiento cromático de esta producción es completamente diferente al que podemos encontrar en las producciones valencianas. En las segundas, el color es plano, a veces reforzando bordes con otros colores o creando nuevos tonos por superposición cromática por pinceladas gruesas o en extensión. En el caso de Alcora, el dibujo es siempre excelente, de un gran academicismo, y el color se aplica a varios niveles con diferentes tratamientos: en el fondo como mancha mientras el relieve se trabaja con pinceladas finas y cuidadas, yuxtapuestas, de modo que ópticamente se consigue el deseado cromatismo, de manera muy efectista, por adición.

UNIVERSALIZACIÓN

En el siglo XIX las fábricas proliferaron en la ciudad de Valencia. La expansión urbanística, primero por fragmentación de las antiguas viviendas generando apartamentos y luego por urbanización de nuevas zonas, así como por la aparición de nuevas necesidades de acuerdo con las teorías higienistas, promocionó el azulejo. Además de las ya mencionadas Reales Fábricas de Azulejos, existieron la Fábrica Royo, la de Esteban Pérez, de Fos, de Belén, de la calle Corona o de Sanchís, de Capuchinos, del Matadero, de Ramón Peris, de José Monserrat, de San Pio V, de Zaidia, de Miguel Torell, de la calle Murviedro, de Burguet, del Huerto de la Lana, del Llano del Remedio y La Ceramo en la pedanía de Benicalap. Esta expansión de la industria en el medio urbano generó un cierto conflicto por lo que el azulejo valenciano tuvo que deslocalizarse y asentarse en otras poblaciones de la región, proceso que finalmente culminaría con la creación de un *cluster* excepcional como es el actual foco industrial de Castellón (Feliu, 2005). Por citar sólo algunas de las pioneras, aparecieron la fábrica de José Gayá en Alicante, *La Primitiva* en Castellón, la fábrica de González Valls en Manises (Pérez Camps et al., 1987), la de Bautista Valldecabres en Quart de Poblet, o *La Valenciana* de Novella y Garcés en Onda (Estall, 1997), así como la

Fábrica del Pilar en la Font d'en Carrós (Pérez Guillén, 2006: 55-72).

Poseemos además mucha más información sobre los autores de las decoraciones como Juan Bru y Plancha, Pascual Bru, Vicente Camarlench, Joaquín Ceballos, Antonio Cañete, Miguel Chisbert, Manuel Garcés, Valentín Garcés, Thomas Hill, Enrique Marzo, Carlos Mateu, Antonio Bergón y Francisco Tos (Pérez Guillén, 2006: 73 a 82; González Teruel, 2017). Josep Sanchís y Cambra que dirigió en la fábrica Royo, fue un pintor destacado del que poseemos un San Lorenzo conservado por el Ayuntamiento de Carcaixent (Guerola, 2002: 130-131) Onofre Pedrón tuvo su propia fábrica y Ramón Peris y Ramón Sanchis, y Vicente Sanchis, fueron propietarios y dirigieron la antigua Real Fábrica de Azulejos (Pérez Guillén, 2006: 73-82). En la segunda mitad de siglo encontramos a otros autores como Manuel Lluch, Benito Martínez Pertegaz o Rafael Monleón, aunque destaca entre los pintores Francisco Dasí Ortega (1834-1892) como uno de los principales innovadores en cromatismo y calidad pictórica, cuyas obras se acercan a la pintura de caballete contemporánea, con suaves carnaciones, amplia variedad cromática y un inmejorable rigor de trazo.² Dasí fue autor de numerosos

2. La calidad pictórica y la biografía de Francisco Dasí ha sido analizada extensamente por Mercedes González Teruel y Javier Jordá (2017).



Fig. 07. Valencia, Farmacia San Antonio de Valencia, techo, obra de Francisco Dasí y José Ros, 1888 (foto de Jaume Coll)

pavimentos florales, retablos religiosos y elementos de variada tipología, desde jambas de puertas, placas o frisos con temas de carácter mitológico, costumbrista o meramente ornamental. Una de sus obras más interesantes, realizada con el arquitecto Lucas García y el ebanista José Ros, fue el artesanado de la farmacia de San Antonio de Valencia, obra de 1888³ (Fig. 07).

El azulejo se expandió no sólo para cubrir los interiores de las viviendas, en especial en los zaguanes, zócalos de las entradas, cocinas y comedores; se adaptó a frisos y empezó a utilizarse tímidamente para resaltar elementos arquitectónicos de la arquitectura vernácula, como las jambas de las puertas. Un magnífico ejemplo de esta amplia utilización es

conocido para el caso de la Casa de los Huerta en Manises (Pérez Camps, 2001), descendientes de Ramón Huerta a su vez propietario de una fábrica de cerámica. La ornamentación, fechada en 1884, resume el uso del azulejo tradicional, desde la utilización de paneles devocionales onomásticos hasta azulejos decorativos en la cocina, paneles históricos de asuntos eruditos para los interiores de la casa, otras escenas populares o las coloristas jambas con imágenes exóticas y vegetación. En las casas nobles siguieron instalándose grandes pavimentos ahora sí ya utilizando gamas cromáticas comedidas basadas en las grisallas de azul, como vemos en el pavimento de la casa de los Saavedra en Valencia que representa escenas del Quijote (Pérez Guillén, 2001), el pavimento de Diana y Apolo conservado en el Museo del Azulejo de Onda, o la escena central con la representación de Cibeles del Museo Nacional de Cerámica. Sin embargo también es característico de la época el desarrollo de grandes composiciones pavimentales monocromas en otros colores, como el verde, que vemos en pavimentos instalados en el Palacio de Dos Aguas en 1867 o en el llamado pavimento de la Casa de las Coronas, palacio de los condes de Cervelló, realizado probablemente hacia 1849 (Coll Conesa, 2013: 162). Sin embargo los pavimentos monocromos van quedando relegados y se producen grandes composiciones pavimentales policromas en las que influyeron autores como Francisco Dasí, trabajando en varias fábricas como la de Llano y White, Novella, Monleón o Gastaldo. De éste autor se conserva un ejemplo de gran calidad en el Museo de Cerámica de Manises, varios fragmentos en el Museo Nacional de Cerámica y algunos todavía "in situ" en casonas de Valencia.⁴ Un último caso emblemático de la utilización de la azulejería en construcciones de carácter público fue el edificio de la Beneficencia de Valencia, construido en la calle Corona, obra de Joaquín M^a Belda Ibáñez (1839-1912) de 1876-77, ya que cubría sus patios con zócalos de azulejería policroma realizada ex profeso con los emblemas de la casa, completada con piezas seriadas decorativas. Desgraciadamente, la restauración realizada en 1995 privó al edificio de su azulejería original.

3. La noticia se publicó en el diario Las Provincias del 23 de diciembre de 1888. Agradecemos la información a Elvira Mas Zurita. Interesa destacar que el ebanista José Ros sería uno de los fundadores de la fábrica La Ceramo en 1889 desde la que recuperaría y desarrollaría la técnica del reflejo metálico local, que utilizó extensamente para aplicación arquitectónica.

4. Dados a conocer sin explicar su procedencia en M. Paz Soler Ferrer (2009: 203-205). Últimamente hemos identificado este pavimento en el palacio Exarch y comprobado por las marcas dorsales, ya que es azulejo modelado por presión desde polvo y posee entre las costillas la marca en relieve, que los azulejos fueron fabricados en la fábrica de San Pio V.

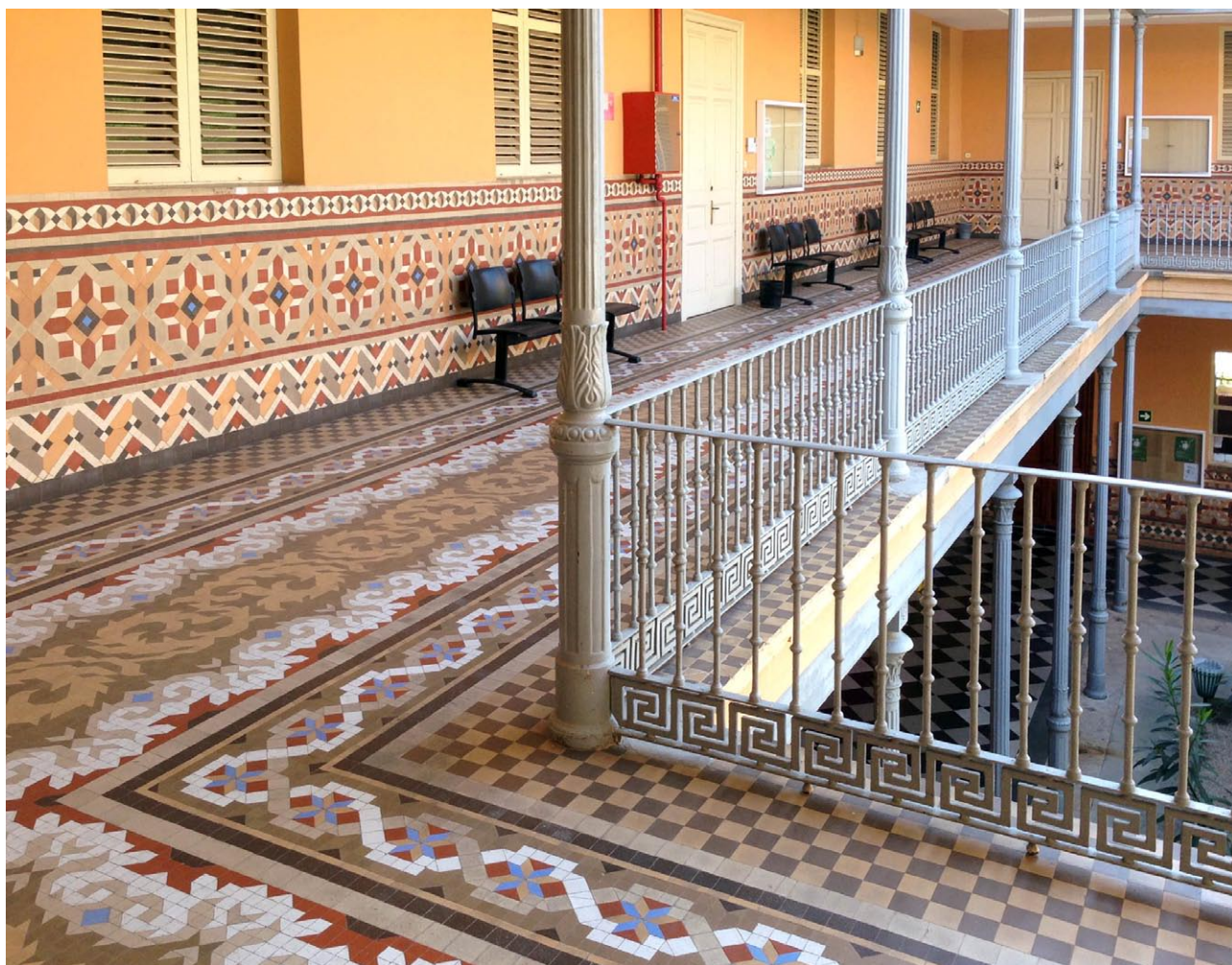


Fig. 08· Valencia, Asilo de San Juan Bautista, mosaico Nolla en suelo y muros, 1873 (foto de Xavier Laumain)

Pero no sólo fue objeto de interés el azulejo tradicional. El inicio de la producción de nuevos materiales como el mosaico cerámico, impulsó la fundación de la fábrica de Mosaico Nolla por el industrial Miguel Nolla y Bruixet (o Bruget) (1815-1879) y su socio Luis Sagrera desde 1860 (Reig et al., 2010; Coll et al., 2016). Nolla fabricó un mosaico de gres blanco, de baja porosidad y elevada sinterización, conformado desde polvo por vía semiseca y cocido en hornos botella a unos 1200 °C con carbón. Su modulación era inglesa, denotando el origen de la tecnología ya que se inspiró en los desarrollos industriales de Minton y Maw. Introdujo no sólo azulejo monocolor sino incrustado o encáustico, con masas de varios colores en la misma pieza. El mosaico no sólo servía para suelos, zócalos o apliques decorativos para fachadas sino que se usó para la realización de mosaicos figurativos parietales, como el que presenta el gran retrato de Miguel Nolla que preside la fachada del edificio de protocolo de la fábrica,

a su vez vivienda del fundador. Algunos edificios de Valencia conservan íntegramente los mosaicos de la primera etapa de Miguel Nolla, como el Asilo de San Juan Bautista construido en 1874 por el arquitecto Sebastián Monleón (Fig. 08). No deja de ser curioso este caso ya que Sebastián Monleón era propietario de la fábrica de azulejos de San Pio V desde 1858 y eligió para el asilo un material de altas prestaciones, seguramente más funcional aunque menos expresivo cromáticamente que el que él mismo fabricaba. Pocos años después inversores constructores fundaron *La Alcudiana* para producir también gres, bajo la dirección y luego también propiedad del ingeniero Miguel Piñón (Reig, 2009; 2016).

Menos estudiada está la utilización de relieves de barro cocido en la arquitectura de Valencia a lo largo de la segunda mitad del siglo XIX. El Palacio de Dos Aguas, renovado entre 1863 y 1867, incorporó para la ornamentación del patio notables elementos



Fig. 09. Valencia, fachada de los almacenes La Isla de Cuba, azulejos de reflejo metálico y azul, 1895 (foto de Jaume Coll)

figurativos en relieve de barro cocido trabajados en estilo neoclásico representando temas mitológicos, musas y alegorías a los intereses del marqués, todo ello obra de maestros italianos que se afincaron en Valencia (José Nicoli y Cayetano Francini) que trabajaron en algún momento en la fábrica de Sebastián Monleón. El último desarrollo de la producción de terracota de aplicación arquitectónica y carácter neoclásico se debe a *La Ceramo* y en concreto al escultor y co-propietario de la misma Francisco Pallás y Puig, autor de los frisos mitológicos de la fachada de la llamada Casa de Hierro (1901) obra del arquitecto José Juan Camaño Laymon.

En la arquitectura finisecular y durante el primer tercio del siglo XX la azulejería y los elementos cerámicos se convierten en protagonistas de la arquitectura. En ello fue de singular importancia la producción de fábricas como *La Ceramo*, que realizó obra para numerosos edificios, como, en un primer momento los almacenes La Isla de Cuba (1895) y la Casa Sánchez de León (1896). Ambos fueron trazados por el maestro Lucas García Cardona, uno de los impulsores de la aplicación cerámica en arquitectura del eclecticismo. En el primer edificio comparte la azulejería con ménades danzantes que se trazan en grisalla de cobalto y fondos geométricos de reflejo metálico (Fig. 09) que combinan con numerosos elementos en relieve (pilastras, molduras, placas con grifos) en los que el reflejo metálico es el protagonista. En el segundo la decoración es más simple y se utiliza el azulejo en frisos, con elementos de carácter clásico como palmetas o azulejos con relieve en voladizos. *La Ceramo* participó en la decoración de otros edificios como en los relieves de guirnalda de naranjas, escudos, flores, etc. realizados para

la Estación del Norte (1906-1917), o los pináculos, coronas y guirnalda del mercado de Colón (1914-1917) y del Mercado Central, los relieves de la Finca Roja, las tejas del Ayuntamiento, en apliques la Casa de Miguel Gil (Paseo Ruzafa 12 y 14), en el Palauet d'Aiora.

Fuera de Valencia en el Seminario Comillas (Comillas, Santander) y en el Parque de la Ciudadela de Barcelona en el llamado *Castell dels Tres Dragons* por encargo del arquitecto Domènech i Montaner. Esta fábrica no fue la única suministradora, ya que encontramos otras como la de Francisco Monera Gil (1848-1932) junto con Francisco Valldecabres, al menos desde 1893, que funcionó bajo la firma "Monera y Compañía". Un proyecto emblemático concebido como monumento desde sus orígenes fue la Estación del Norte de Valencia (1906-17), del arquitecto Demetrio Ribes (1875-1921). En él, los elementos de relieve de la fachada combinan con la azulejería de la cafetería realizada por la fábrica La Valencia Industrial, a la sazón dirigida por Gregorio Muñoz Dueñas quien firma la mayor parte de los paneles con escenas regionalistas de carácter folclórico llenas de color que exaltan la naturaleza y los paisajes de las tierras valencianas (Fig. 10). El Mercado de Colón (1914-1916), del arquitecto Francisco Mora Berenguer, destacó por sus aplicaciones cerámicas, por el trencadís, por el uso de elementos de reflejo metálico o policromos en relieve y por el mosaico, ya que Mora Berenguer defendía la necesidad de la colaboración de las artes en arquitectura. Las fábricas valencianas surtieron numerosos elementos cerámicos en relieve y azulejería para otros muchos edificios, como la vivienda privada conocida como la Casa de



Fig. 10. Valencia, cafetería de la Estación del Norte de Valencia, obra de Gregorio Muñoz Dueñas, 1917 (foto de Jaume Coll)

las Naranjas, o instalaciones públicas como el Palacio de la Exposición construido para la Feria de Valencia, el Edificio del Ayuntamiento o el Mercado Central. La azulejería tuvo un último episodio de esplendor al ser utilizada en interiores y fachadas de las casa de verano o de huerta, recubriendo la arquitectura de color, dejando barrios emblemáticos en ese sentido como el

de El Cabanyal-Canyamelar en Valencia, pero también en La Habana o Montevideo. Este cromatismo de fachada se extendió hasta momentos muy recientes y dejó testimonios de gran calidad estética en el edificio Gil (1931-32), almacén textil diseñado por Joaquín Rieta Síster (1897-1982), con azulejos diseñados por la ceramista Dionisia Masdeu Agraz en 1932.

CONCLUSIÓN

Se debe destacar esta voluntad histórica del uso del azulejo en la región valenciana coincidiendo con Portugal en ese aspecto. Destaca su producción para edificios emblemáticos religiosos, públicos y privados y el uso de la policromía desde el periodo manierista del que sólo se alejará durante el romanticismo. La policromía retomará la arquitectura en el siglo XIX y se

extenderá cada vez más hacia las clases populares. Finalmente, con la entrada del eclecticismo y modernismo la arquitectura no sólo se nutrirá de azulejos ya que recurrirá a elementos de carácter escultórico y a la recuperación de técnicas históricas, como el reflejo metálico, que darán unas señas de identidad propia a las creaciones valencianas.

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TILES AND IDENTITY BY PATTERN CLASSIFICATION

IDENTIDADE E AZULEJOS PELA CLASSIFICAÇÃO DE PADRÕES

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ABSTRACT

Walled tiles can be figurative or patterned. Whereas the figurative tiles can better be described by theme or author, tile patterns are traditionally classified using more abstract rules that describe either the motif or the pattern itself. In this paper, we present a traditional mathematical classification of plane patterns, the Washburn and Crowe Algorithm, and use it to identify or distinguish tile patterns. We present a complete mathematical classification of the tile patterns present in all places of public access in the Almada region and show how this classification can help recover damaged tiled walls and floors, in order to preserve our heritage. We extend this mathematical analysis to 20th century patterns and quasipatterns, hoping to show that this classification can add to our knowledge of the identity of these patterns.

KEYWORDS

Classification | Tile patterns | Mathematics | Symmetries

RESUMO

Os revestimentos azulejares podem ser figurativos ou de padrão. Enquanto os painéis figurativos podem ser melhor descritos por associação a um tema ou a um autor, os padrões de azulejos são tradicionalmente classificados usando regras mais abstratas que descrevem o motivo ou o próprio padrão. Neste artigo, apresentamos uma classificação matemática tradicional de padrões no plano, o algoritmo de Washburn e Crowe, e utilizamo-lo para identificar ou distinguir padrões de azulejos. Apresentamos uma classificação matemática completa dos padrões de azulejos presentes em todos os locais públicos ou de acesso público na região de Almada e mostramos como essa classificação poderá auxiliar na recuperação de paredes e pisos com azulejos danificados, a fim de preservar o nosso património. Estendemos essa análise matemática a padrões e quase-padrões do século XX, na esperança de mostrar que essa classificação pode contribuir para o nosso conhecimento da identidade desses padrões.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Classificação | Padrões de azulejos | Matemática | Simetrias

INTRODUCTION

After visiting the famous Alhambra Palace, M. C. Escher (1898-1972) devoted himself to the study of patterns which could be obtained from the careful repetition of a certain motif. He came to learn that there are seventeen different types of plane patterns and seven different types of frames, all seen in this magnificent palace¹.

Is there more diversity? In artistic terms, of course there is, in mathematical terms, it is proved that there is not. There are several algorithms, such as the one formulated by Washburn and Crowe (Crowe and Washburn, 1988), which allow us to classify into one of those seventeen or seven types any plane pattern or frame, according to the geometric transformations it displays: translations, rotations, reflections and glide reflections.

In Portugal, despite the diversity of patterns that can be observed in tiles, namely from the 14th to the 19th centuries, there seems to be no complete representation of the seventeen types of mathematical plane patterns. The very shape of most tiles, square or rectangular, prevents the appearance of some types of patterns, which would require triangular or hexagonal tiles. In addition, there are patterns that, despite being visually distinct, end up having the same mathematical classification. For instance, the patterns in Fig. 01 have the same classification, since the only geometric transformations that keep them unchanged are rotations of 90 degrees (and multiples of 90 degrees) and translations in two directions. The second and third patterns have no reflections that would keep them unchanged, due to the interlacing observed. The first pattern has no reflections because the interior of the two kinds of leaves is different. This pattern tiles can be observed in the Capuchos Convent, in Almada.

There are already some well-known studies of this type. In the bibliography related to Portuguese tiles, the 1st volume of the 4th tome of the monumental work "Corpus da Azulejaria Portuguesa" (Simões, 1971) presents a classification of the patterns based on the tiles that are used. This has the same intention as the mathematical



Fig. 01 - Almada, Capuchos Convent. Distinct tile patterns with the same classification (photos by Fátima Rodrigues)

classification, even if it distinguishes patterns which are mathematically the same. This classification involves associating a code to each tile and to each pattern formed with this tile. The study also links this information with the place where the tile pattern is located. A similar type of classification is done in the

1. In the context of the study of tile patterns, the word "frame" is the one that describes, in the most general terms, a pattern that is repeated in only one direction. In the context of pattern classification, the word usually used is "frieze", but in the context of tile patterns, this word has a more strict meaning.

Az Infinitum database², which we will use later in this paper. As we have noticed, these classifications have the same intention as the mathematical classification,

but they go a little further: some patterns which are distinct in these classifications may have the same mathematical classification, as we will see.

CASE STUDY 1

In 2013, there was a study carried out within the MATER exhibition (FCT NOVA)³, which surveyed the patterns on the south side of the Tagus river, namely in the Capuchos Convent, S. Paulo Seminary, Igreja do Monte, Casa da Cerca and Solar dos Zagallos.

The Director of the Museum of the City of Almada provided the mapping of the tile heritage and the public tile art of the region. In the study, an exhaustive analysis and a photographic report of all the patterns and frames, made of different materials, including tiles, was carried out. A script with the classification of the frames and patterns existing in all places of public access was produced. In a panel of the MATER exhibition the result of the study was portrayed, including a photographic representation of each of the places above mentioned and all the respective patterns and frames that can be found in such locations, appropriately classified.

As a result of that extensive study we point out that only a total of 9 mathematical types of patterns and 6 mathematical types of frames were identified, considering all types of materials. However, if we only consider the patterns present in tiles, just 3 mathematical types were identified: those unchanged only by translation (p1), those unchanged by translation and 90-degree rotation (p4), and those that, besides the already mentioned geometric transformations, are also unchanged by reflections whose axis draw a 45-degree angle (p4m).

Moreover, no tile patterns were found at Igreja do Monte and Casa da Cerca. At Capuchos Convent, four tile patterns were found, all of the same type, p4. At S. Paulo Seminary, there are six patterns of type p4m and one of type p1, and Solar dos Zagallos contains one pattern of each type: p1, p4 and p4m.

Since the tiles are old and were handmade, we must ignore some imperfections that may occur, otherwise

we would never find a pattern. However, the details of color or design applied by the artist must be considered in the mathematical classification. That is the case of the above-mentioned patterns in Fig. 01, from Capuchos Convent. It is also the case of the three patterns of Solar dos Zagallos (Fig. 02) which have different mathematical classifications despite seeming to remain unchanged by the same geometric transformations.



Fig. 02. Almada, Solar dos Zagallos. Tile patterns p1, p4 and p4m (photos by Fátima Rodrigues)

2. Azulejo Indexation and Referencing System. Available at <http://redeazulejo.fl.ul.pt/pesquisa-az> (2018.05.28).

3. MATER exhibit – panels “A Matemática na Arte”, Building VII - FCT NOVA (since 2013)

For the first pattern (p1), color details prevent the existence of reflections that would keep the pattern unchanged. In the second pattern (p4), the same occurs but with details of design. Only the third pattern (p4m) is kept unchanged by reflections (with respect to the diagonals of the tile and to the lines parallel to the sides of the tile that go through the center).

Regarding the frames, out of the seven types of mathematical classification, only one was not found. That type of frame is the one that remains unchanged by the following geometric transformations: translation, reflection in a vertical axis, glide reflection and 180-degree rotation (pma2).

As for the distribution of the various types of frames between the locations, we found that: at S. Paulo Seminary, there are twenty frames of five types; at Casa da Cerca and Solar dos Zagallos four and

five respectively, of four different types; at Igreja do Monte only three frames each of a different type; and at Capuchos Convent we find six frames of the same type and two of another.

It would be interesting if a study were to be conducted about the relationship between the age of each tile pattern and frame and their complexity, regarding both color and design. For example, at Capuchos Convent there is only one type of pattern, which has small details in the design of each tile that prevents reflections. It is also at Capuchos Convent where we find the least diversity of frames, with only two types present. Both have translations and reflections in vertical axis, but one has a reflection in the horizontal line in the middle of the frame and rotation of 180 degrees (pmm2), while the other does not have horizontal nor glide reflection, nor 180-degree rotation (pm11).

CASE STUDY 2

For a second panel of the MATER exhibition another kind of mathematical study was conducted, based on fragments of tiles from the 16th century coming from Palácio Nacional de Sintra, Mosteiro de Santa Clara-a-Velha, in Coimbra, and Museu do Teatro Romano, in Lisbon, all of Hispano-Moresque origin. These tiles were being investigated by Susana Coentro from VICARTE, in particular, their chemical properties and the analysis of their materials.

The Hispano-Moresque ceramic tiles were the first to be used on a large scale in Portugal. They appear in religious buildings such as churches, convents and seminaries, but also in palaces. The vast diversity of patterns is related to the evolution of the production techniques which took place from the 14th-16th centuries. The evolution of tiling techniques (*alicatado* technique, *cuerda-seca*, *arista* tiles) followed the evolution of the society tastes, from the typically Islamic patterns to figurative motifs, such as vegetal and anthropomorphic patterns. By the mid-16th century, these techniques were no longer used. They were replaced by a new technique: the *majolica* tile. Hispano-Moresque ceramic tiles from the 15th-16th centuries show a wide range of decorative patterns, essentially geometric, as told by Susana Coentro (2017) in her PhD thesis "An Iberian Heritage: Hispano-

Moresque Architectural Tiles in Portuguese and Spanish Collection".

The study of the patterns can be associated to other studies, namely those of the chemical identification of glazes and ceramic pastes of the tiles, in order to better characterize the tastes of a certain time or place, or even the provenance of each tile, through the materials used to produce it.

This mathematical study can also apply to heritage conservation, related to the work of recovering tile patterns, walls and floors of monuments in which the original is degraded. From a piece of broken tile, one can reproduce the tile and, through the various geometric transformations, arrive at a type of mathematical pattern that is identified with the artistic pattern.

The authors believe that this classification of patterns can also contribute to the determination of the historical and geographical identity of pattern tiles, providing a means of bringing together or telling apart patterns and tiles and highlighting which ones are more frequent. Exactly because one pattern may be visually different from another and have the same mathematical classification, this study may provide a newfound, less visible, proximity.



Fig. 03. Coimbra, Santa Clara-a-velha Monastery, artistic pattern produced from a tile fragment (photo by Susana Coentro and pattern design by Fernanda Barroso)

In this mathematical study, we considered the highest number of fragments with an identifiable design and proceeded to create the patterns based on a fragment, after drawing the stylized tile, as illustrated in Fig. 03.

Analyzing the patterns produced, a very reduced number of mathematical patterns can be found: $p1$, $p2$, $p4$, $p4m$ and pmm . The pattern of type $p2$ is the one in Fig. 03, where we find 180-degree rotations (and its multiples) in addition to the translations in two distinct directions. Two patterns of type pmm were obtained from two tile fragments from Santa Clara-a-Velha. In these, besides the 180-degree rotations and

translations in two directions, there are also reflections in axis with distinct directions and all the centers of rotation are on the reflection axis.

The patterns produced and their respective classification are part of a panel in the exhibit “MATER – A Matemática na Arte”, produced by FCT NOVA.

Comparing both case studies, the diversity of patterns produced based on tile fragments – a total of five – is higher than the diversity of patterns found in the places of the Almada region – only three.

MATHEMATICAL CLASSIFICATION

Without going into too much detail, we will say that this mathematical classification of the patterns depends on the *symmetries* of the tiles used and of the patterns that can be built with them. By symmetry, we mean any transformation of the plane that keeps the pattern unchanged. Most known examples are rotations, reflections, and translations. In this approach, all transformations considered are isometries, that is, transformations which preserve distances and angles within the pattern, and therefore do not deform, increase or reduce the images.

A pattern is a drawing in the plane formed by a composite motif that is repeated periodically in two directions. A frame is originated by a composite motif that is repeated periodically in one direction. The composite motif results from performing one or more isometries on a minimal motif that will be the basis of the entire pattern.

Thus, to create a pattern, we need to make the composite motif and translate it, periodically, in two different directions. With the same composite motif, we can obtain distinct patterns depending on the two directions of the translation chosen, but all of them with the same mathematical classification.

Furthermore, with the same minimal motif we can obtain all the seventeen kinds of patterns and all the seven types of frames, given that every one of them depends on the composite motif that was created. This can be observed in one of the panels of the MATER exhibition, where we can see displayed all types of patterns and frames generated from a stylized “boat sail”.

But what isometries can we use to produce the composite motif? By mathematical arguments of linearity, the isometries we can use are translations, rotations (of 60° , 90° , 120° or 180° , by the Crystallographic

Restriction Theorem), reflections and glide reflections (a reflection followed by a translation in the direction of the reflection).

Why seventeen kinds of patterns and seven types of frames? By mathematical arguments of Group Theory, we can prove that there are only seven types of one-dimensional patterns, seventeen types of two-dimensional patterns, and two hundred and thirty types of three-dimensional patterns. See for instance (Perez

and Reis, 2002) for a full proof of this classification for the patterns in the plane. We can also prove that the isometries that leave an invariant pattern are the same ones that are used to produce the pattern, although not in a unique way, as we can see in Fig. 04.

In fact, we can produce the composite motif of the Fig. 04 in two different ways: by vertical reflection followed by a rotation of 180° or by vertical reflection followed by a glide reflection.

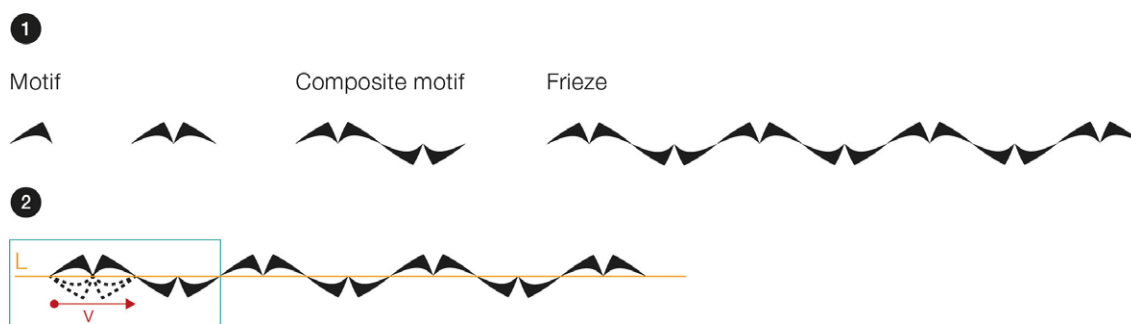


Fig. 04. Mathematical frieze description: two different ways to produce the same frieze (pma2) (design by Camy)

In fact, we could enumerate the isometries that keep each pattern or frame unchanged. However, there is no need to exhaustively observe all isometries in order to classify the pattern, since they are interchangeable in the production of the composite motif, as illustrated in the example above.

These results are the base for algorithms like the Washburn and Crowe Algorithms for frames and patterns, which in an optimized way allow us to classify each frame and pattern as one of the seven or seventeen types respectively.

The Washburn and Crowe Algorithm for frames begins with their division in two types:

- a) with vertical reflection
 - a.1) with horizontal reflection – pmm2
 - a.2) without horizontal reflection
 - a.2.1) with 180-degree rotation – pma2
 - a.2.2) without 180-degree rotation – pm11
- b) without vertical reflection
 - b.1) with horizontal or glide reflection
 - b.1.1) without horizontal reflection – p1a1
 - b.1.2) with horizontal reflection – p1m1
 - b.2) without horizontal nor glide reflection
 - b.2.1) with 180-degree rotation – p112
 - b.2.2) without 180-degree rotation – p111

The Washburn and Crowe Algorithm for patterns begins by separating the patterns in five categories according to their minimal angle of rotation:

- a) 60 degrees – p6, p6m
- b) 90 degrees – p4, p4m, p4g
- c) 120 degrees – p3, p3m1, p31m
- d) 180 degrees – p2, pgg, pmg, pmm, cmm

without rotations that keep the pattern unchanged: p1, pg, pm, cm

In this last category, the patterns produced are the same type as Fig. 05.

The name code of each pattern and frame starts with a "p", except for two patterns: cm and cmm. In both cases, the composite motif was obtained through the reflection of a minimal motif, whose reflection axis is not parallel to the directions of the translation. The letter "m" means there are (mirror) reflections, and when repeated it means there are reflections in a non-parallel axis. The letter "g" is for glide reflections and the numbers 2, 3, 4 or 6 stand for the minimal angle of rotations being 360° divided by the respective number. These techniques also allow us to quantitatively distinguish some works of 20th century tiles, in which the uniformity of the pattern is broken, while maintaining symmetries, sometimes with a local, non-global character. We present a few examples in the next two sections.

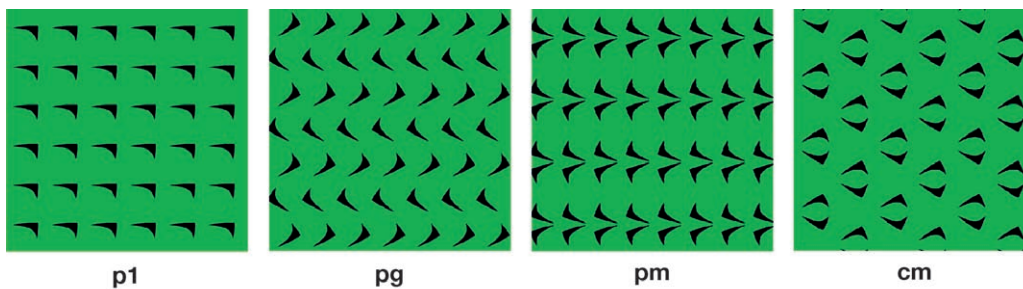


Fig. 05. Examples of pattern types: patterns having no rotation that leaves them unchanged (design by Camy, using software GeCla available at <http://www.atractor.pt/soft.html>)

COMPOSITE MOTIFS

In this section, we present some recent examples of tilings in which the pattern is preserved, but is achieved either with several different tiles that fit together, or with a single tile, which is placed in different positions in order to form a motif composed of several copies of this same tile.

This type of composite motif appears very frequently in pattern tiles from past centuries (it is not characteristic of the 20th century). Fig. 01 already presents patterns in which the motif is created by a single tile, which is then rotated to form a 2x2 motif, which then generated the pattern by simple repetition. In (Simões, 1971) one can find a very big variety of such patterns formed by more than one tile. There are several 2x2, 4x4 and 6x6 examples, most of them formed in very much the same way as the motifs in Fig. 01: there is a small 1x1, 2x2 or 3x3 design, which is then rotated, so that the final motif has 4 repetitions of the initial pattern, rotated around its center. In the Az Infinitum database, many examples of 18th and 19th century patterns of this type can be found, such as P-18-00002 with P-18-00003, a combination of two tiles, from the times of Marquês de Pombal, which forms a 2x2 motif, or P-19-00039 (the well-known “estrela e bicha” pattern, from the 19th century).

In tiling patterns of the 20th century, the idea of composite motif is taken to greater lengths, see for instance (Henriques, 1998/99) for examples and analyses. We present here a few examples. The first one is the tile pattern of José de Almada Negreiros at Rua do Vale do Pereiro no. 2, Lisbon (Fig. 06). The pattern, which has global symmetries (rotation and translation), is of type p4. It is achieved using tiles of six types, which fit together: an empty tile, a corner turn, an arc of circle, a wave, a symmetric wave and a cross. The

motif can be taken as an 8x8 square of tiles, in which case it has no symmetries. If, however, one takes as a motif a square, positioned at 45 degrees with the horizontal, with vertices at the centers of the tiles with a cross, then it has the same rotational symmetries of the square, but not the reflection symmetries (precisely due to the wavy structure of the sides). This is a remarkable fact about this pattern: that the most symmetric motif is positioned diagonally, and the lines that define the boundary of the motif are obtained by changing the sides of the square appropriately. This also happens in the famous plane tilings of M. C. Escher, in which a standard plane tiling, using squares or hexagons, is turned into a tiling with lizards of knights, by a careful deformation of the polygonal motif.



Fig. 06. Lisbon, Rua do Vale do Pereiro no. 2, tile pattern by José de Almada Negreiros, 1949, in a building by architect Pardal Monteiro (photo by José Vicente, 2013, © CML, DMC, DPC)

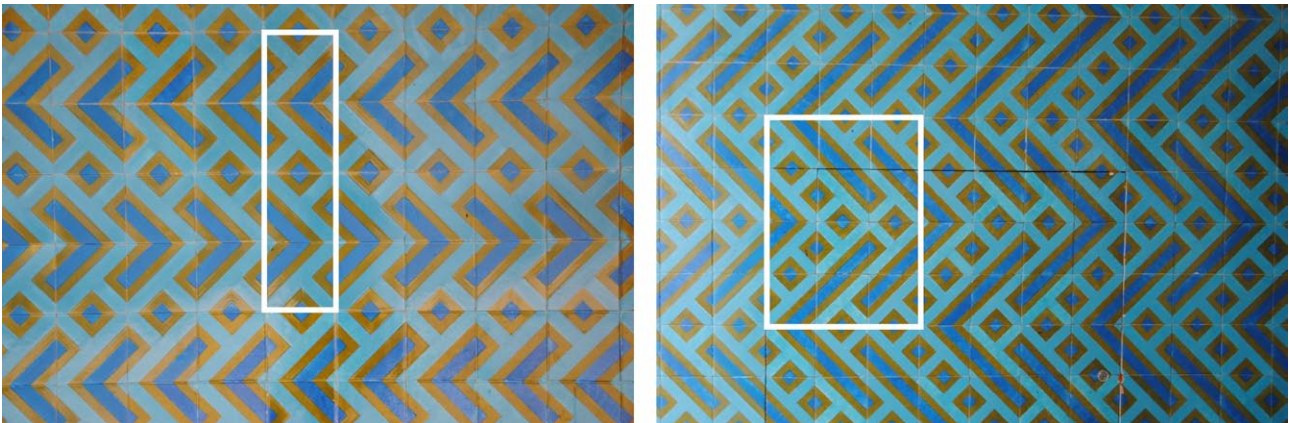


Fig. 07· Torres Vedras, Banco Nacional Ultramarino (currently Caixa Geral de Depósitos), two tile patterns by Eduardo Nery, 1971-72 (photos by Matilde Rebelo)

Another approach to composite patterns is to take one single tile and form a motif with it, but using various types of transformations, instead of the simple rotations that appear in Fig. 01.

Fig. 07 shows two patterns made with a single tile by Eduardo Nery, at a dependency of Caixa Geral de Depósitos in Torres Vedras (former agency of Banco Nacional Ultramarino, 1971-72). There are two more examples of use of this tile: the Mértola health center (1981) and the Contumil train station in Porto (1992-94), which has 65 panels with patterns that use this tile alone.

These patterns have composite motifs of 4x1 tiles and 4x3 tiles, respectively (marked in the figure). The tile itself has a diagonal symmetry, the motif for the first pattern has a rotation symmetry with respect to its center and the motif for the second pattern has a reflection symmetry with respect to a horizontal line. It is remarkable, thus, that both patterns have the

same classification, pmg, in the system we are using. Therefore, this classification actually brought together two patterns that seemed very different at first sight, even having motifs of different sizes.

The paper (Resende, 2016) presents a more detailed analysis of patterns obtained with this tile, describing all symmetries for possible patterns with a 2x2 motif.

Ana Almeida presents more examples of Modernist pattern tiles in her Course on History of Tiles⁴. This document contains examples of tile patterns of Eduardo Nery, Querubim Lapa or Homero Gonçalves, created from a single tile, which then originates a composite pattern, following rules of their own, as in Fig. 05, instead of the simple rotations, as we see in Fig. 01. The tiles used by Querubim Lapa and Homero Gonçalves actually have no symmetries at all (except the identity), and yet, they can give rise to more than one regular pattern.

BREAKING THE PATTERN

In the mid 20th century and also in the 21st century, a different approach to pattern tiles emerged in the work of several authors. The pattern is judiciously broken, yet still keeping a sense of repetition of a motif, even

though this repetition is not regular. One can use the word *quasipattern* to describe this type of work⁵, just as the word *quasicrystal* is used in physics and crystallography to describe coverings of the plane that are *ordered but not periodic*.

4. Curso de História do Azulejo - Azulejaria Modernista, Moderna e Contemporânea. Available at http://www.museudoazulejo.gov.pt/Data/Documents/Cursos/azulejaria_2009/AA_01.pdf (2018.05.28)

5. We wish to thank Henrique Leitão for suggesting this word.

Our first example comes precisely from Maria Keil's work. Fig. 08 shows a detail of the tile panel *O mar* (the sea), located at Av. Infante Santo, Lisbon. At the bottom one can distinguish a pattern with a square motif, placed at 45 degrees, with a green triangle pointing left and a black triangle pointing right (as we move from left to right, a drawing of a shell is added to this motif). However, the panel is not a tile pattern. Unlike what happens in a tile pattern, the motif does not remain the same throughout the panel — the colors of the motif change and the motif itself is transformed by dilations. We list the dilations found in the panel.

- Vertical dilation. There are two transformations of this type: the motif is stretched by a factor of 2 and by a factor of 3 (see top left, with motif in green and blue).
- Partial vertical dilation: the motif is stretched in the vertical axis, by a factor of 2, but only in one direction (up or down), in the other direction, it is not modified. On the right side of the panel, the right half of the motif is stretched downwards and the left part upwards. In some cases a factor of 3 is used in half the motif, and brought together with a full vertical dilation, with a factor of 2, of the other half of the motif (see right side).
- Total dilation (vertical and horizontal) by a factor of 2. This appears only once, in the bottom left, and the motif is also changed to include more lines and three colors.

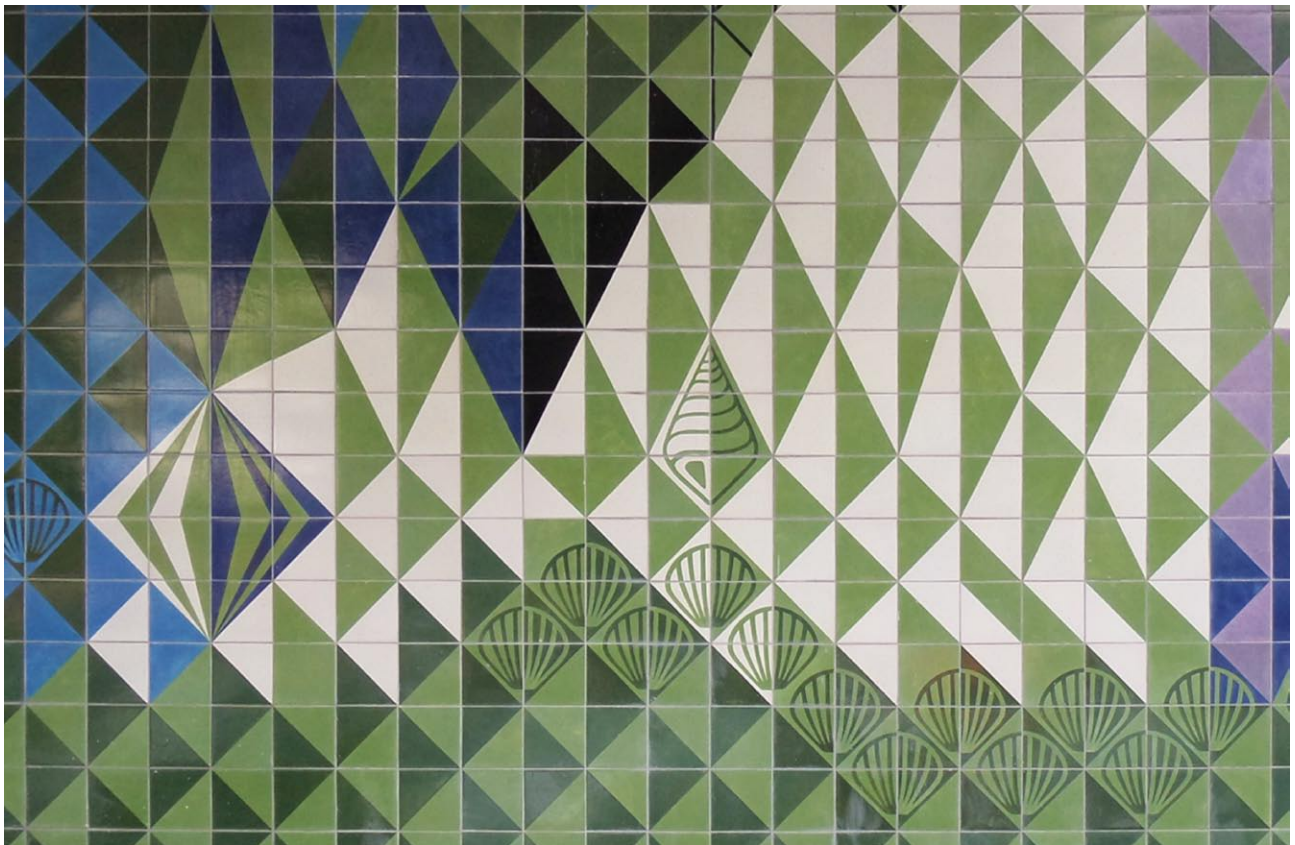


Fig. 08· Lisbon, Av. Infante Santo, detail of the panel *O Mar*, by Maria Keil, 1958-59 (photo by Pedro Freitas)

Many panels made by Maria Keil for the Lisbon Metro also present this type of dilations or reductions of a motif, which turn a simple tile pattern into a richer, non-periodic tiling, in which one can, however, still distinguish elements of a periodic tiling. This happens, for instance, in some panels located at the Metro stations of Praça de Espanha, Intendente, Picoas, Marquês de Pombal, etc. We consider the panel at Av. Infante Santo to be the richest one in this regard.

Catarina and Rita Almada Negreiros have recently created a tile panel, called *5pm*, which also uses this type of transformations (Fig. 09). For the most part of the panel, they use only one 17th century tile. Four of these tiles can be used to create the traditional “camelia” motif, using the same process as in Fig. 01: the tile is rotated, and the rotated versions are placed around a center. This can be seen in the center of Fig. 09, close to the bottom.



Fig. 09: Lisbon, Paço da Rainha, panel 5pm by Catarina and Rita Almada Negreiros, 2016 (photo by Catarina and Rita Almada Negreiros)

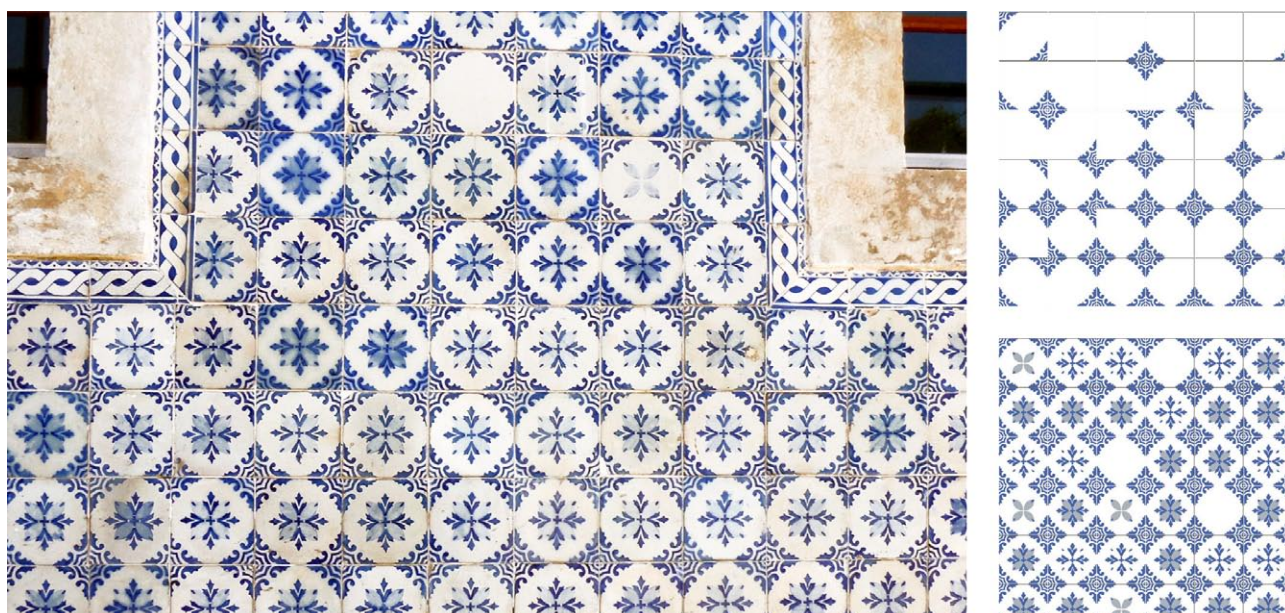


Fig. 10: Lisbon, Av. da Índia, Casa das Galeotas, tiled wall by Catarina and Rita Almada Negreiros, 2016, and schematic drawing of the tiles used (photo by Pedro Freitas, schematic drawings by Catarina and Rita Almada Negreiros)

For most of the area of the panel, however, the tile is not rotated to form the 2x2 motif. Instead, it is repeated without change, forming a sort of background with very few symmetries (just one reflection). On some areas, this pattern is broken, and the tiles are adjusted in order to make the motif appear, covering a somewhat round area on the wall – this is what happens at the lower right part of the panel in Fig. 07. In this area, the motif is then enlarged by a factor of 2, at the center of the area, in order to make the motif more prominent. The fact that the underlying pattern has very few symmetries reinforces the impact of the symmetric enlarged motif.

This phenomenon of inclusion of dilations or reductions of pattern elements seems to be characteristic of the second half of the 20th century and of the 21st century.

Another way of breaking the pattern without losing a sense of repetition is to change the motif. We have already seen this in Fig. 06: when the motif is doubled in size, more lines are added, in order to make it more elaborate. In the Metro station *Cidade Universitária*, one panel by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva has a similar structure: the motif is just an isosceles right

triangle, drawn with legs parallel to the sides of the tile, and this motif is drawn differently from one tile to the other – either changing the color, or taking away one of the sides.

A similar effect appears in the tiled walls of Casa das Galeotas (Av. da Índia, Lisbon). This house was recently rehabbed, by an architecture project of Appleton & Domingos, and the exterior tiles were redone by Catarina and Rita Almada Negreiros (Fig. 10).

The tiles originally used as a motif for these walls were blue and white square tiles, from the late 19th century, with a central motif and decorations at the four corners. At human height, the original tiles were kept, and because they were handmade, there were slight differences in hue between them, which, to the viewer, breaks the aspect of strict uniformity. In order to keep this effect, while using mechanically made tiles, a choice was made to rarify the elements in the motif, as the tiles were placed higher up on the wall: generally speaking, the higher the placement, the less elaborate the tile. The central motif was decomposed in three parts, which were gradually removed as the tiles went up, and the same happened with the corner decorations. The top tiles are completely white.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we intended to show how the mathematical study of pattern tiles can make a valid contribution to the characterization of artistic taste and production in different times. This can be done by determination of the type of pattern or frame that is more common in a certain geographical area or period of time, in the context of what is known from Art History. In more recent works, mathematics can be used to distinguish the transformations used to reinterpret tile patterns, by showing which transformations are used to break this pattern.

In this paper we only wished to present mathematical forms of describing tile patterns (and quasipatterns) and to show, with a few examples, the type of contribution mathematics can bring to this description. There is, of course, a lot of work to be done if such a classification is to be done extensively.

We hope that mathematics can participate in the description of the identity of the tiles and the culture that produces it.

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PUBLICITY TILE PANELS IN PORTUGAL: A SINGULARITY WITHIN IDENTITY

AZULEJO PUBLICITÁRIO EM PORTUGAL: UMA IDENTIDADE SINGULAR

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ABSTRACT

In mid-19th century when tiles turn to the outside of the buildings, covering façades, a singularity in tile production came to light: their use as advertising or publicity support. From the third quarter of the 19th century on, very simple signs made of tiles start to inform about products, shops, workshops or services. Since then, until mid-20th century, this sort of production never stopped, being able to update itself to new artistic styles following graphic arts and publicity concepts evolution. Work of unknown artists as well as of consecrated painters and designers, it evolved from the simple lettering to the most exuberant colourful figurative representations. Despite its decline from mid-20th century, this sort of panels never completely disappeared and continued to be produced until nowadays. The present article aims to analyse the publicity panels, a singular tile production scattered all over the country, relating them to the Portuguese artistic identity.

KEYWORDS

Portugal | Tile | Publicity | 19th-20th century

RESUMO

Em meados do século XIX, quando o azulejo é transposto para o exterior dos edifícios, cobrindo fachadas, emergiu uma singularidade na sua produção: a sua utilização como suporte publicitário. Numa fase inicial, a partir do terceiro quartel do século XIX, observam-se pequenos cartazes em azulejo, meramente informativos, integrados nas fachadas, referindo apenas produtos, lojas, serviços ou oficinas. Desde então, até meados do século XX, este género de painéis continuou a ser produzido, renovando-se de acordo com os novos estilos artísticos e seguindo a evolução dos conceitos das artes gráficas e da publicidade. Trabalho tanto de artistas desconhecidos como de pintores ou *designers* consagrados, evoluiu do simples *lettering* para as coloridas e exuberantes representações figurativas. Apesar do declínio sentido a partir de meados do século XX, o uso do azulejo como suporte publicitário permanece ainda hoje. O presente artigo pretende analisar os painéis publicitários, uma singularidade no contexto da produção de azulejos aplicados um pouco por todo o país, relacionando-os com a identidade artística portuguesa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Portugal | Azulejo | Publicidade | Séculos XIX e XX

INTRODUCTION

The long tradition – more than five centuries – of using tiles in Portugal has become recognized as a singularity of this art. If its initial use focuses inside religious buildings, quickly this spreads to the civil space decorating palaces and houses, thus reaching a popularity that will transform the Portuguese architectonic landscape, giving it an identity. Religious, gallant, everyday life and country life scenes and patterns give colour and light to the interior of the buildings that will be transformed, assuming painting on tiles a national character quite often inspired by engravings made by foreign artists, not always faithfully reflecting the reality whether it was Portuguese or not.

In early 19th century tile production decreases, because of social, political and economic transformations, to which the departure of the royal family to Brazil, along with an important part of the nobility and bourgeoisie, will not have been indifferent¹. These circumstances almost lead to an ending of a productive cycle and to a temporal gap of more than thirty years until it's retaken. When this happens, it will present new forms of use, decoration and production.

It is in the 40's of the 19th century that a semi-industrial production system appears – a faster and therefore cheaper manufacturing process – that will lead to the democratisation of the tile use. If, by the end of the 18th century, the use of tiles was confined to the interior of the architectural spaces and gardens, not turning to the streets, from mid-19th century on, the path will be the reverse. Tiles turn now to the outside, covering façades, lighting severe *pombaline*² architectures or of *pombaline* origin, assuming a prominent role in the urban space, giving it a new identity, which can only be found in Portugal and Brazil.

Whether this movement originated overseas as Santos Simões claims³ or whether it was endogenous as Ana Margarida Portela Domingues (2009) says in her

doctoral thesis, it is important to emphasize the identity prominence of its use in Portuguese and Brazilian cities.

It is in this artistic background that in Portugal we will assist to an original phenomenon that will become a singularity feature in tile production, either for its precocity, variety, transversely and longevity: the creation of advertising panels. In no other country has this condition been observed (given its prematurity) as in Portugal, where we already can find publicity panels on tiles in 1840's.

Inseparable from the urban growth and industrialization that the country experienced in the second half of the 19th century, as well as, from the rise of a small commercial bourgeoisie, this was not, however, exclusive to urban centres and spread to small towns, far from larger cities.

From the initial simplicity of anonymous production of grocers' orders to the exuberant panels of *Art Nouveau* (made by well-known artists) and *Déco*, one hundred years have passed, confirming the updated taste in this segment of production.

The present article will observe these different phases of publicity tile panels in Portugal, highlighting some of the most important examples in order to discuss their meaning of identity. Although the extension of a text like this does not allow for a comparative perspective of tile publicity all over Europe, a mention to the Spanish production will be included, due to some similarities observed when compared with the Portuguese tiles.

1. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (F.C.G.), João Miguel dos Santos Simões, 10^o palestra, 1968. This manuscript is part of a book project entitled "Manual de Azulejaria" and the original is available online at the Gulbenkian Art Library – <http://www.biblartepac.gulbenkian.pt> (2018.06.22).

2. Referring to Marquis of Pombal, the minister of King Joseph I.

3. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (F.C.G.), João Miguel dos Santos Simões, 10^o palestra, 1968. This manuscript is part of a book project entitled "Manual de Azulejaria" and the original is available online at the Gulbenkian Art Library – <http://www.biblartepac.gulbenkian.pt> (2018.06.22).



Fig. 01· Abrantes, Fabric's store N. J. FIALHO (photo by Francisco Queiroz / IPC)

FROM THE INITIAL PRODUCTION

In Abrantes there is a figurative panel with the representation of an *albarrada* (a flower vase) on a blue patterned background dated from 1847 (Fig. 01). It belonged to a fabric store and exhibits the owner's initials and nickname – *NJ Fialho* (Narciso José Fialho) (Tavares, 1982). The inscribed date might refer to the precocity of its execution or eventually to the store's foundation date. Its original and exceptional character is given by its location away from the large urban centres and by a possible early execution in a period characterized by the absence of figurative painters, which will only reappear fifteen years later. Since information is very limited and concise we cannot speak about seduction or to the call to purchase, but only of the desire to draw attention to a space, given by the exuberance of the decoration and by the novelty that it created.

From the third quarter of the 19th century, in an urban environment, particularly in popular neighbourhoods

that were then being built in Lisbon, a new kind of tile panel develops. In a period when the shortage of tile painters is remarkable, small traders probably without economic and artistic knowledge create an innovative solution: tile bands running through the façades and / or small panels installed between doors advertising the establishment, perfectly integrated on the front's decoration.

The use of tiles as signboards giving them an advertising purpose is an innovating solution, showing continuity both in the process and in form, since the wooden signs were already used along with the painting of the area surrounding doors and windows in commercial establishments. The transposition to tiles, a well-known and recognized support, was only a matter of time and opportunity.

In the third quarter of the 19th century, when this solution was adopted, it is its simplicity that stands out:

only useful and succinct lettering decorates bands and tablets, practically excluding any type of decoration, except the frame. The bands generally run over the doors covering the entire width of the façade or of the establishment, while tablets are integrated between doors' stonework, at potential costumers' eye level. Both merely indicate in a telegraphic way, the shop or the owner's name and some of the products sold there. It was an advertising solution frequently adopted, but not exclusively, by food stores, being common words such as *waters, wines, tobaccos, groceries*, consequence of the popular environment where they were created and the targeted clients.

The graphic design was simple and made with the utmost care allowing an easy reading and internalization of information (not yet the message, which will appear later). The typeface generally sans serifs was in capitals and emphasised by shading, simplifying the reading, preferably choosing blue conjugated with yellow and sometimes with green. These bands and tablets were framed by simple friezes, carefully integrated into the tile façade, having become part of it.

This sort of panel is essentially found in Lisbon, although it may appear in other cities such as in Setúbal (in this case not between doors) where, on São Cristovão Street, *ANTÓNIO JACINTHO DA FONSECA's* shoe store panel presents blue capital letters with sans serifs,

with the owner's name and the type of product sold there – *CALÇADO DE DIFERENTES QUALIDADES*⁴ – standing out from the pattern which is part of, by the white background defined by a frieze in two shades of blue.

In Lisbon, on São Tomé Street, there was a façade that originally had a band running along it and three tablets between doors reproducing a painted advertising model, popular in that period. The strip, as can be seen in photographs from early 20th century, informs *ARMAZEM D'AGUAS ARDENTES VINHOS E AZEITE POR GROSSO E MEUDO*,⁵ while the signs (recently destroyed / disappeared) probably present the owner's initials – *DRF* –, the date of execution of the panel or the store's opening – *1880* – and the products sold there – *tabacos e cervejas e gazozas*⁶.

Although there are also bands in the city of Oporto and in other localities in the north of the country, they differ from those in Lisbon both in the typeface and in the decoration, possibly consequence of a more recent execution, as well as, a production of the northern factories.

As the century approached the end, this type of "advertisement" tended to disappear, being replaced by another kind of panels, due not only to a stylistic evolution but also to an economic and social change.

THE RETURN OF FIGURATION: LUIS FERREIRA

The exception in the universe of serial production (third quarter of the 19th century) was given by Luís António Ferreira da Silva (1806-1873) (Fevereiro, 2017) a tile painter to whom some tile coverings are attributed, having signed a façade in Setúbal. He is considered by the historiography a pioneer in the (re) use of figurative tile⁷, as well as in the use of tiles as an advertising medium.

Transposing a model of some allegorical figures, previously used in interiors such as the Carreira Palace in Santiago do Cacém and the Trindade Brewery in Lisbon, Luís Ferreira or *Ferreira das Tabuletas*, as he was known, does not hesitate to reuse the same model several times. He represents allegorically the Trade and the Industry through the Greek god Hermes and goddess Athena or Fortuna in *Barateira*

4. Shoes of different qualities

5. Brandy wine and olive oil grocery

6. Tobacco beer and soda

7. About this matter: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (F.C.G.), João Miguel dos Santos Simões, 10^o palestra, 1968. This manuscript is part of a book project entitled "Manual de Azulejaria" and the original is available online at the Gulbenkian Art Library – <http://www.biblartepac.gulbenkian.pt> (2018.06.22).



Fig. 02. Lisbon, Viúva Lamego ceramics factory (photo by Francisco Queiroz / IPC)

(Santarém) and in a fabric store in Setúbal, with not only a decorative purpose but also an advertising one. He has done the same in Lisbon on the façade of the *Viúva Lamego*, a ceramic factory to which he worked for several years (Fig. 02).

Although obvious, this sort of advertising (particularly in *Viúva Lamego* factory) is also innovative. The execution, colours, motifs, letterings and information, everything was carefully selected in order to structure an attractive composition. At a time when the poster and other types of advertising media had not yet spread on a regular basis, a colourful façade displaying the products manufactured there, was something revolutionary and certainly appealing to the potential customer.

Luís Ferreira had an innovative role in the concept and decoration on this type of support, going beyond the use of lettering panels. His work far exceeded the purely informative concept, drawing the public's attention

through an elaborate decoration referring directly or indirectly to the activity and products promoted. To these aspects he associated an aesthetic concern in the use of vibrant colours and exotic subjects as a way of drawing possible buyer's attention. The appeal to emotions made through the image becomes obvious, but now with the intention of selling and buying.

Towards the end of the century, a new path was opened for increasingly lush panels, as new products and more sophisticated stores appeared leading to an evolution in the role played by these "posters that announce" that will begin to seduce and induce to the purchase.

Gradually, the very first simple typologies (bands and tablets) will disappear giving place to the Naturalist figuration and the *Art Nouveau*.

FROM NATURALIST PERSISTENCE TO ART NOUVEAU



Fig. 03. Lisbon, A Camponesa, dairy (photo by Francisco Queiroz / IPC)

From 1884, the year of the Caldas da Rainha Factory foundation, is the *Tabacaria Monaco* (tobacconist) panel that still uses “traditional” colours such as blue and yellow, but with iconographic innovations. Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1846-1905) represented a caricature or a satirical panel, as was his specialty, where frogs read, smoke and socialize with cranes and where the chubby frog smokes a cigar and the crane offers him a snuffbox. The decoration creates a direct association to the activity of the space, in a naturalistic style prized by Bordalo Pinheiro, guessing a new taste and reassuming this way the figuration, after a hiatus of about twenty years.

At the turn of the century, the *Art Nouveau* starts to appear, particularly at a decorative level (Rio – Carvalho, 1993). Stonework, balcony guards and tiled details give the touch of modernity desired by a petty bourgeoisie with a smattering of cosmopolitanism, for whom these models were considered a sign of evolved good taste.

Art Nouveau publicity panels spread also in a continuous taste updating. However, paradoxically, this element of modernity was often associated to the picturesque taste and “trust” granted by the persistent representation of the Portuguese tradition, being the contemporaneity touch frequently given by the *Art Nouveau* framework.

A paradigmatic example are dairies and bakeries where the “return to the origins” and the confidence in the traditional product are transmitted by the naturalistic representation, like the one that Jorge Pinto (1875-1945) gave to the façade of *A Camponesa*, dating from 1908, in Rua dos Sapateiros, Lisbon (Fig. 03). Here, in an apparent paradox, two aims were fused: the tradition given by the figure of a peasant woman dressing the *minhota*⁸ costume and the modernity brought by the *Art Nouveau* frame (on a *pombaline* façade), thus appealing to the consumer’s trust through a well-known image and at the same time a touch of



Fig. 04. Vieira and Lopes Limitada buttery (MNAz 15 Fot.)

modernity. As in easel painting the naturalistic taste will persist through the first part of the 20th century. A similar situation can be seen in the dairies *Leitaria Minhota* and in *Vaccaria da Anunciada*, also in Lisbon, whose panels dating from the 20s and 30s continue to reproduce this traditional and picturesque taste by representing peasants in popular clothing and agricultural activities.

In *Vieira and Lopes Limitada* buttery (Fig. 04), located in Largo do Calhariz n.º. 6, in Lisbon, there was a panel (according to the date on it) made in 1919, which probably have been of great chromatic exuberance.

Representing a female figure dressed in the traditional way of Madeira Island and holding a plate with butter, announcing it, this tile panel keep up this way with the picturesque naturalistic speech. The use of a Madeiran figure is justified by the fact that the brand is *Funchalia, manteiga da Madeira*,⁹ thus associating directly the image and the message, confirming once again the option for the tradition that generates confidence, used by butteries, dairies and bakeries as a way of being recognized by the public. The author¹⁰ has chosen various typefaces, as well as baskets of country flowers, to reinforce the public's attention.

8. From Minho region in the north of Portugal.

9. Madeira's butter

10. The image and a sketch representing the figure's head are part of Jorge Colaço's assets, nowadays belonging to Museu Nacional do Azulejo. Thus, the possibility of this painter being the author of the panel cannot be excluded.

This type of artistic choice did not only happen in Lisbon but also in other Portuguese cities, as shown by the panel of *Padaria Popular de Agostinho Rodrigues Bela*, a bakery in Coimbra, in which a peasant carries wheat, being the representation modernised by the framing of undulated ribbons and *Art Nouveau* type-face.

But there were also areas of business that preferred a more contemporary taste as a way of transmitting their message since their products were the most recent on the market. In a recently electrified and evolving Lisbon, *Júlio Gomes Ferreira's* electrical equipment store presents one of the most exuberant panels in an updated and cosmopolitan taste (Fig. 05).¹¹

The painter, *Júlio César da Silva*, chose an iconographic speech in which he used pastel shades to represent a feminine figure with long, wavy hair and a flowing dress, holding a lamp, referring to the modernity of the products sold there. The novelties *Art Nouveau* and electricity were associated to attract clients to a store that intended to be modern, showing it through an updated advertising tile panel.

Part of the new artistic movement that then spread all over Europe, are the panels of *António Luís de Jesus* for the paint and brush factory – *Fábrica de Tintas Pomba* – at Largo do Corpo Santo in Lisbon. The author represented technical innovations and products such as cans, boxes, brushes and even the interior of a factory, framed by wavy motifs in pastel colours of *Art Nouveau* taste.

Advertising tiles can be found across the country in many different cities like Oporto, Coimbra, Aveiro, Setúbal, Leiria, Figueira da Foz but also in smaller towns such as Sines, Águeda and in places far away from the production centres, like Funchal in Madeira island and Madalena do Pico in the Azores. This wide application is indicative of the popularity reached by tiles, in spite of being “different” from the traditional advertising supports, but at the same time so easily recognizable by the public.

In Oporto, also due to its geographical proximity to several ceramic factories such as *Fábrica do Carvalhinho* and a little further south in Aveiro,



Fig. 05· Lisbon, *Júlio Gomes Ferreira's* electrical equipment store (photo by Museu de Lisboa/Câmara Municipal de Lisboa – EGEAC)

11. Unfortunately, the store disappeared and the tile panel is now part of the Museu de Lisboa's collection.



Fig. 06. Oporto, Araújo e Sobrinho stationary (photo by Francisco Queiroz / IPC)

Fábrica Aleluia, the use of publicity panels also flourishes in parallel with the decoration of façades. Nevertheless, these panels present some peculiarities that are characteristic to the northern region, such as the integration in the architecture which they perfectly reproduce like in semi-circular pediments of eclectic taste adorned by wreaths, branches and baskets of bucolic flowers of mixed bright colours, characteristic of *Fábrica do Carvalhinho*.

Of great exuberance is the decoration dated from 1906 of the former stationery *Araújo e Sobrinho*¹² founded in 1829, signed by Carlos Branco and executed by *Fábrica do Carvalhinho* (Fig. 06). Of eclectic taste, it associates a decoration of classic elements such as the head of Hermes, God of Commerce, with dolphins, masks, foliage scrolls, flower wreaths and ribbons, panels of bucolic landscapes and decorative elements

directly related to the products sold there – palette with brushes, squares, compasses, ruler, plumb bob, roll of paper – not forgetting the monogram of the house. The client's attention is drawn by the decorative exuberance and by the blue colour contrasting with the stone façade.

From the same factory is the panel dated from 1918 belonging to the *Grande Bazar do Porto* a toys, perfumes and trinkets shop owned by *Luiz Soares* (Fig. 07). The panel takes advantage of the available spaces between masonry to develop an exuberant and colourful decoration, targeting children by displaying some of the products that can be found there such as cube games, wooden carts and dolls. In a skilful strategy, the author plays with the cubes by using them as an information sign, immediately attracting the public's attention, both to the shop's name and to

12. Nowadays hotel.



Fig. 07. Oporto, Grande Bazar do Porto (photo by Francisco Queiroz / IPC)



Fig. 08. Oporto, Grande Bazar do Porto, detail (photo by Francisco Queiroz / IPC)

the game, even using the car's registration plate to write the initials GBP (Grande Bazar do Porto) (Fig. 08). The modernised aesthetic language is given by using a wavy Art Nouveau typeface.

Adriano Vieira da Silva Lima's new deposit of soles and leather (Fig. 09) was inaugurated in 1917 as reported on the newspaper *Ilustração Portuguesa* from April 2. This thirty-year-old firm was then forced to move to Rua

Passos Manuel, following the urban transformations of the city. The news given by the *Ilustração Portuguesa* allows us to date the panel that is still on the original sight. With a façade of integrated decoration made from the start in which stone, iron, glass and tile are combined, producing a global effect, the panel presents a touch of modernity given by the chosen font of rolling shapes and rounded serifs alternating fine and full-bodied stems.



Fig. 09· Oporto, Adriano Vieira da Silva Lima & Comp (photo by Francisco Queiroz / IPC)

ART DÉCO ADVERTISING PANELS

Opposing to *Art Nouveau* taste, the Paris Exhibition (in 1925) introduces simple geometric lines and strong colours changing the art paradigm. In the Portuguese Decorative Arts the evolution will be slow and gradual, resulting in a continuity of the previous taste that will coexist with the new trend, consequence of the interest and creativity of updated artists.

In this period, an important evolution in advertising and in propaganda associated with the graphic arts took place: their role to the industrial and economic development was recognized. Now the poster is deeply coloured, with geometric lines, transmitting a short but strong message. The information is carefully selected, disregarding the accessory and the “visual noise”, strongly appealing to emotions.

At the same time, helped by new advertising means such as electric light panels and radio, as well as, by a new concrete architecture, it would be expectable that publicity tiles tended to disappear. Nevertheless, this did not happen, being noteworthy the relative large number of panels identified in this period.

For this “proliferation” of Déco panels, the *Companhia das Fábricas Cerâmica Lusitânia* and the *Fábrica de Loiça de Sacavém*, two of the largest factories at the time, contributed a lot. In fact, these two companies made the panels that we know of this period.

Currently in the *Berardo Collection* in Funchal, the panel of the *Grandes Armazéns das Ilhas*, a store that sold furniture, originally located in Rua de São Bento



Fig. 10. Lisbon, *Grandes Armazéns das Ilhas* (photo by The Berardo Collection)

in Lisbon, is one of the best examples of Déco aesthetics (Fig. 10). The background decoration of triangular motifs and the typeface of linear capital letters sans serifs highlighted by a contour, clearly show this taste. In this case, the unknown author used store's pieces of furniture reproductions to create a greater impact on the consumer in order to seduce him.

Completely different but within this taste is one of the most exuberant panels in the city of Lisbon, from the *Fábrica Florescente* in Rua da Boavista, where it is possible to observe an unprecedented association between figurative and linearity with the products sold there forming letters in contrasting colours such as grey, red, blue and yellow.

Panels from the *Companhia das Fábricas Cerâmica Lusitância* were less common in the northern part of

the country, probably due to the distance from the factory, situated in Lisbon. Because of that, the panel of *Padaria Auxiliadora* (bakery) in Rua de São Dinis, in Oporto, deserves mention. Dated from 1932, it presents a simple typeface sans serifs on an ink blue tone opposing to the white background, framed by stylized floral motif, within the simplicity promoted by the Déco taste.

Within the same aesthetics and from the same factory, the former grocery *A Primorosa*, in Sines, bears a perfectly integrated panel on the Déco cement façade, whose decorative motifs were the source of inspiration for the panel decoration. It only features a geometric lettering¹³ with the name of the store, framed by a border of triangular motifs, in two shades of blue that contrasts to the white background, being part of the architecture that supports it.

ADVERTISING IN PORTUGAL IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Teresa Lobo attributes the beginning of advertising in Portugal to Raul de Caldevilla (1877-1951), who founded the first agency with this purpose – *Empresa Técnica de Publicidade (E.T.P.)* – in 1914, in the city of Oporto (Lobo, 2001). Caldevilla introduces the

concept of the advertising company and its importance in the dissemination of products and services. According to him, the poster should be the main mean of communication or divulgation in which, appealing colours but not too exuberant, informative and

13. Partially using Broadway font created in 1929.

convincing letterings that lead to the consumption of the product, should be employed (Lobo, 2001). *E.T.P.* was thus a revolution in advertising in Portugal, by professionalizing this activity, at a time when few artists were connected to advertising agencies, which were practically non-existent. This void leads us to believe that many contacts made by the advertisers were established directly with the artists, without intermediation of the agencies. We trust that this *modus operandi* has also been used in tile advertising, given the scarcity of projects as well as of identified or signed copies that have come to us.

In Lisbon, the first advertising agency was *Atelier Arta*, which developed its activity in the 20s. Here, Fred Kradolfer (1903-1968), an artist of Swiss origin who came to Portugal in 1927, introduced a new geometrical taste, focusing the attention of the observer on the essential rather than on the accessory

(Silva, 1999). An “emphasized” image opposed to an austere and imposing lettering as demonstrated by the projects for the tile panels executed for example for *Nicola Cafés* and for *Vinhos Borges*.¹⁴

The disruption with the type of poster and publicity made until then in Portugal was done. Profusion of colours, letterings, decorative motifs, humour messages, undulating movements, and so on were left behind, reaching a new era in which simplicity, pure colours and lines were supposed to highlight the essential. Advertising tiles were not immune to these changes, being updated in parallel with the poster, as evidenced by the stylistic evolution registered in the cases analysed above. The progressive recognition of publicity and the importance of its role led several renowned artists to produce posters to survive, in the beginning of their careers when they were still unknown.

LISBON / MADRID: COMPARATIVE ROUTES?

Although publicity tile panels are known in other European countries, like in England and in the Low Countries, we think Spain presents a similar situation to ours, justifying this way a brief analysis / mention to it.

In Madrid, as well as in other Spanish cities (specially in Seville), painters and pottery workshops from several regions of Spain created publicity tile panels that, can be found on the façades still nowadays. Though there was an analogous path in the two Iberian countries, the evolution of the tile development process did not mature exactly the same way. In Spain, we cannot speak of tiles of serial patterned production covering façades as in Portugal, so there is no parallel in this type of situation, except in Brazil.

The decoration of commercial façades in Madrid appeared in late 19th century, when an evolution and specialization in the typology of the existing stores such as dairies, fishmongers, cafes, breweries, bakeries, pharmacies, herbalists, etc. took place (Agromayor, 1990).

In Madrid, as in other Spanish cities, the use of tile as an advertising vehicle prevailed mainly in the period from the end of the 19th century to the forties of the 20th century, with a development in the twenties, characterized by the *Art Déco* taste, a period in which, as in Portugal, the number of produced examples was significant.

This type of panels generally followed the predominant aesthetic models at the time that combined lettering and iconography, in a similar way to what was being made in Portugal, using appealing phrases and colours. As in Lisbon, in general, the panels were carefully outlined by friezes and bevels. However, there were some details in which they differ from the Portuguese, as the fact that they frequently integrated the door number into their décor.

The Spanish painters, like the Portuguese, have used the allegorical speech in the conception of their works, by using certain motifs and colours to define

14. Coffee and wine advertising panel projects belonging to *Museu Nacional do Azulejo* collection.

the advertising message: they have used, respectively, spikes, grapes and cows in bakeries, taverns and dairy. The colours also had meanings: white for milk and pharmacies, green for fruit, cream and brown for coffees, blue for fisheries, as well as green and red for taverns (Agromayor, 1990).

In both countries, façades of shops can bear a tailor-made decoration, ordered by the shop's owner for a specific space, being therefore unique. From the examples we know, it seems to exist a preference for a profusion of decorative motifs including, masks, putti, scrolls, vases, birds, medallions, foliage, ribbons, etc. framing the information, "...coexisting then several artistic currents on the decoration of publicity [tile] panels..." (Agromayor, 1990). On the other hand, national and international brands have created or transposed to tile, posters advertising well-known products such as beverages, tires...that can be found all over the country.

Despite a comparable reality in Madrid, in Lisbon there is an earlier production that anticipated about forty years, creating (informative) advertising messages on

tile as we do not (seem) to find in Madrid: a production of bands, tablets and even figurative, as early as in the sixties of the 19th century.

Madrid's production seems to be associated with renowned craftsmen / painters and tile workshops who have left recognized work, while in Lisbon, we also find a high percentage of anonymous works, particularly in the first phase of its use with a publicity purpose. As in Portugal, the 40's of the 20th century marked the beginning of the decline of these workshops and several of them disappeared until the beginning of the 60's, ending this way a chapter of the Decorative Arts.

The existence of tile advertising panels in Madrid, in other Spanish cities and even in other countries, does not diminish the identity character they have assumed in Portugal since, according to us, this concept does not have to be exclusive. This fact does not invalidate that, in the two countries, tiles have been used with this purpose because they are a recognized support, being part of the artistic-cultural identity in both cases.

FINAL COMMENTS

This analysis intends to draw up a brief overview of the development of a specific area in tile production in Portugal, which can only have happened since tiles are an identity feature of the Portuguese art, having been part of it over the centuries. Its recognition, in generally speaking, led to their use as an advertising vehicle.

In this article, we have tried to emphasize the importance of its precocity, location all-over the country, periods in which was produced, diversified activities it covered, tracing its stylistic and decorative evolution over one hundred years, from the use of simple letterings made by anonymous workers to the most elaborated panels. The later underlined advertising concepts made by consecrated artists, thus reflecting the importance of this type of support in advertising and artistic terms, creating a singularity within tile production.

The innovative nature of the tile as an advertising mean is the result of a variety of circumstances, such as the

fact that it was an alternative that precedes the use of posters and advertising agencies. Tiles were colourful and used figurative language which contrasted with the concept of bill in vogue in the mid-19th century, having been able to modernise itself over time.

As an advertising vehicle, we consider that tiles present an identity character since they are part of one of the most "remarkable" production cycles in Portugal, which reinvented themselves by giving a new feature to Portuguese cities, to which they became part of. Either they were combined or not with a tiled façade, they were used for a new purpose: to announce. This would only have been possible given the recognition of tiles in general and its long existence in national territory, having become an integral factor of Portuguese art. On the other hand, the precocity of its execution, the geographic transversally and activities that covered, as well as the long use in time, reinforce this idea only possible when recognized as being part of the Portuguese artistic and cultural identity.

Finally, even when we talk about posters made by and for international companies or products, like the *Nitrato do Chile* or the *Fernet Branca*, they were specifically adapted and transposed to tiles in Portugal and Spain, reinforcing once more the singularity of this support acknowledged by international companies, as an identity element.

Despite the decline of its use from the 1940s onwards, however, tile panels with an advertising purpose have never completely disappeared, tenaciously persisting to present day.

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THE AZULEJO AS COLONIAL SYMBOL OF POWER: A DECONSTRUCTION THROUGH SUGAR AND ART

O AZULEJO COMO UM SÍMBOLO DO PODER COLONIAL: A DESCONSTRUÇÃO ATRAVÉS DO AÇUCAR E DA ARTE

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ABSTRACT

I create murals that look like azulejos, depicting caravels and many decorative features seen in traditional *azulejos*, but my murals are made entirely of sugar. I make the sugar tiles and hand paint them with edible inks. I am interested in the *azulejo*, specifically with imagery of ships, as a symbol of colonial power and of national pride (the Nation of Portugal), but only for the means to subvert this pride. I developed this work in Brazil, addressing the country's history of colonization and the slave trade that supported Portugal's sugar empire. I continue to use the blue tile reference, even outside the context of Brazil, because I want to reference the general construct of colonization and slavery, showing how oppression has found new forms. I install my ephemeral murals on city walls, where they wash away, fade, crumble and decay, animating a more realistic version of history.

KEYWORDS

Sugar | Street Art | Colonization | Social justice

RESUMO

Eu crio murais que se parecem com azulejos, representando caravelas e muitas características decorativas que podem ser observadas nos revestimentos azulejares tradicionais, mas os meus murais são feitos inteiramente de açúcar. Eu faço azulejos de açúcar e pinto-os com tintas comestíveis. Interesse-me pelos azulejos, em especial os que apresentam imagens de navios, como símbolo do poder colonial e do orgulho nacional (a nação portuguesa), mas apenas como forma de subversão desse orgulho. Desenvolvi este trabalho no Brasil, abordando a história de colonização do país e o tráfico de escravos que apoiava o império açucareiro de Portugal. Continuo a usar a referência azul, mesmo fora do contexto do Brasil, porque quero referir-me à colonização e escravidão, mostrando como a opressão encontrou novas formas. Instalo os meus murais efêmeros nas paredes da cidade, onde eles se esvaem, desbotam, desmoronam e decaem, animando uma versão mais realista da história.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Açúcar | Street Art | Colonização | Justiça social

I am a visual artist from Montreal, Canada, working primarily in public spaces, creating public art, street art and working in the milieu of community engagement. The primary material I am known for is my work with sugar. I create murals that look like traditional ceramic azulejo murals, in monochrome blue, but mine are made entirely of sugar. They are also ephemeral and they wash away in the outdoors.

Working with sugar as a medium for twenty years, I initially chose this material for its use as a superfluous decoration, associated to women's domestic labour and low-brow craft practices. I used it to reference other types of decoration and classical art forms like architectural ornamentation typical of Baroque and Rococo architecture. I first used this treatment on domestic objects, then interior walls, and eventually in the urban landscape, on city walls. I have created sugar and cake sculptures to critique ideas of social taste, indulgence, consumer culture, waste, excess and greed. I am interested in decadence and the relationship between high art vs low art, want vs need, luxury vs necessity. Sugar is a material rich in history and cultural significance, continually providing me with a wealth of inspiration.

After working with sugar for almost ten years, I went to Brazil in 2004 for two months to attend the Sacatar Foundation artist's residency program, on the island of Itaparica, near Salvador, Bahia. Initially, I thought I would forego working with sugar during this residency, and instead research new ideas. Looking back now, it seems almost comical that an artist interested in sugar would be in the land where the commercial global sugar trade essentially began, and not explore that history. After a few weeks of being on this island, in the heart of the Recôncavo region, I changed my mind, and delved into the local history.

My interest in using the azulejo as a symbol and visual referent in my work began during this first trip to Brazil. My first attempt to create a sugar azulejo was using piped sugar to create colorful decorative tiles, in blue and yellow, mimicking the style of domestic azulejos on houses. I applied these to an abandoned building, essentially sugar-coating the crumbling structure (Fig. 01). I titled the piece "Sugar Coated". The dictionary describes the phrase "sugar coating" as "*a thing used to make something else considered unpleasant or disagreeable seem attractive or palatable*". I considered how this title and the general expression "to sugar coat" could be interpreted in the context of Brazil.



Fig. 01 · *Sugar Coated* (detail), 2006, Shelley Miller, Itaparica, Brazil. 144 cm x 98 cm. Piped icing sugar on abandoned building wall. January, 2006. Sugar lasted 3 weeks before washing away (photo by Shelley Miller)

At this time I was also learning more about the role that sugar played in Brazilian history and in the formation of Brazilian society. To provide a very brief review, the Portuguese colonized Brazil in the early 1500's when the Portuguese navigator Pedro Álvares Cabral, and his thirteen vessels, officially discovered Brazil in 1500, and claimed the land for the Kingdom of Portugal (Cavendish, 2000). By 1526, Brazil was shipping sugar to Lisbon in large quantities and by 1625, Portugal was supplying nearly all of Europe with sugar from Brazil (Mintz, 1986: 38). Large numbers of African slaves began to be imported by the 1570's to work in the cane fields, but it should be noted that the Brazilian sugar-plantation colony began with the extensive use of Indian slave labor for nearly fifty years (Schwartz, 1985: 51). This fact often gets overlooked, given that African slaves were used for nearly three hundred years following this initial period. Although not all slaves remained in Brazil, and they did not all work in the sugar industry, between 1826



Fig. 02. *The Wealth of Some and Ruin of Others* (triptych 1/3), 2007, Shelley Miller, Salvador, Brazil; 164 x 175 cm. Sugar tiles, hand painted, applied to exterior wall with additional icing. Photo taken on December 7, 2007 (Day one). Mural lasted 9 weeks (photo by Shelley Miller)

and 1830, Bahia's slave trade reached its height, with close to ten thousand slaves arriving a year (Schwartz, 1985: 345).

Keeping these historical facts in mind, during my first visits to Brazil, I was seeing a large number of azulejo murals, an obvious symbol of the Portuguese history in Brazil. Some are purely decorative, covering houses, both inside and out. I was also noticing the presence of ship imagery on many of the larger public murals. I took this to be a symbol of pride in colonial conquest; a reference to those first pioneering ships of Cabral that established Portuguese rule in this new land. But is there truly reason to be proud of this history, I questioned.

In my home city of Montreal, Quebec, there is a large diaspora community of Portuguese people. The area I live is referred to as "little Portugal", with flags of Portugal seen in nearly a third of the shops in the area. There is also, I realized when I became more interested in *azulejos*, the prevalence of blue and white *azulejo* murals in this area, in banks or restaurants, many with

ship imagery. It seemed this symbol from the past was an important identity marker for diaspora communities, emphasizing their National identity within the general Canadian context. I found this very interesting, especially since they are more like kitsch replicas, not tin-glazed, but facsimile's, acting as stand-in for the real. All the same, I have observed their importance to the Portuguese community.

I wanted to explore how I could link sugar to the imagery of ships in *azulejos*. I began to perfect my technique for making sugar tiles, allowing me to create a mural that was a true *trompe l'oeil*. I achieved this by making a rolled sugar fondant tile, and hand painting the images on the tiles after they dried and hardened. By connecting the materiality of sugar with the *azulejo* form and the imagery of the ship, I created my first *azulejo* style sugar mural in Salvador, Brazil in 2008 (Fig. 02). It certainly succeeded in fooling the eye, as the curious passers-by questioned what I was doing, and insisted I eat pieces of it, in front of their eyes, to offer proof that it was in fact sugar.

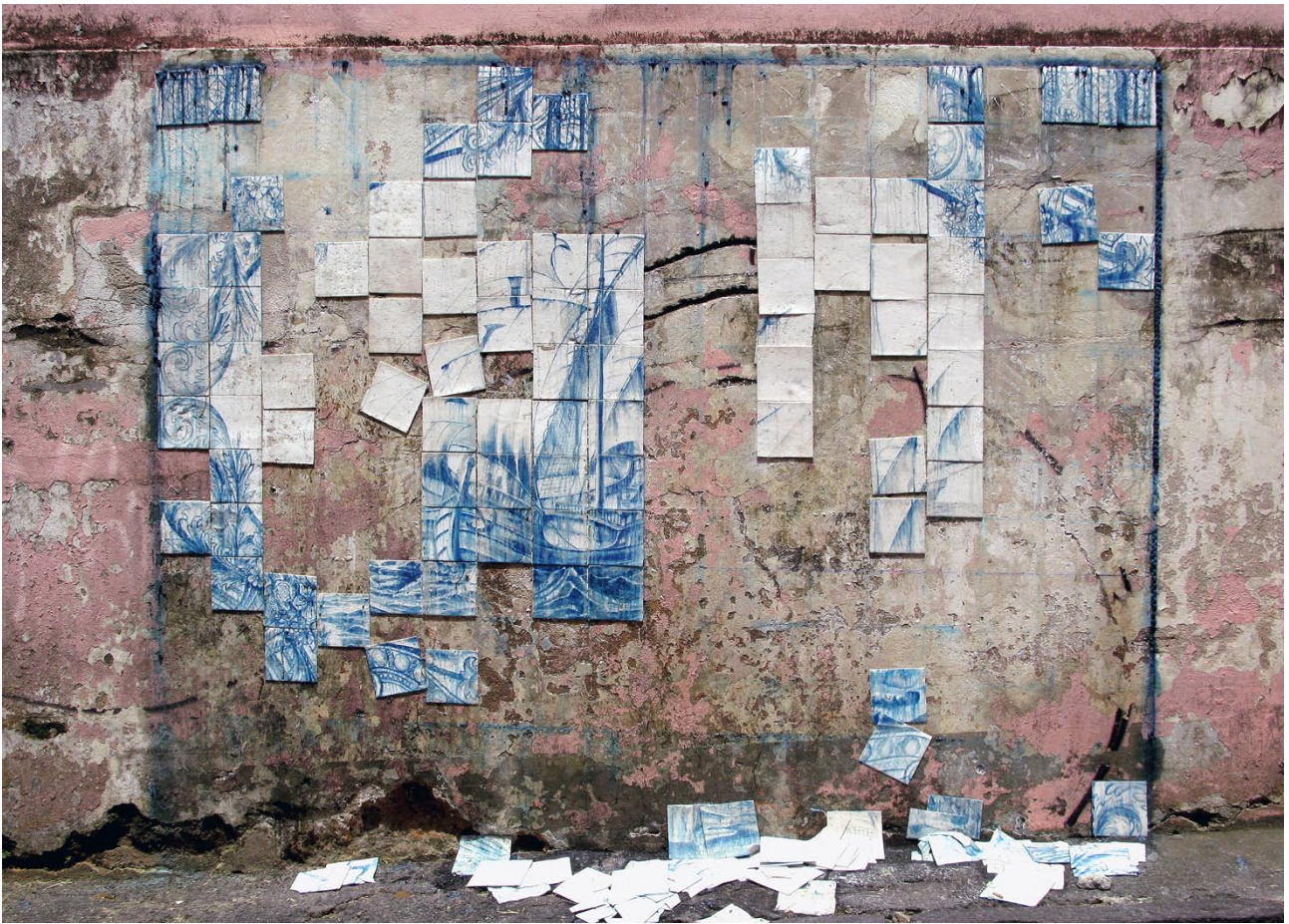


Fig. 03. *The Wealth of Some and Ruin of Others* (triptych 3/3), 2008, Shelley Miller, Salvador, Brazil; 164 x 175 cm. Sugar tiles, hand painted, applied to exterior wall with additional icing. Photo taken on January 24, 2008 (week 7). Mural lasted 9 weeks (photo by Shelley Miller)

The central image of this inaugural mural was inspired by an actual historical azulejo mural and represents a Caravel as the central image, with the Order of Christ's Cross on the sail, which was originally used by the Portuguese Order of Christ. The title of my sugar mural, "The Wealth of Some and the Ruin of Others", was chosen because it references the contrast that the mural undergoes as it washes away and literally falls into a state of ruin (Fig. 03). It also offers a more immediate contrasting perspective that traditional ceramic azulejos with heroic ship imagery do not embody, since the lifespan of my murals are merely a few weeks, at best. In this sense, I wanted to show the destructive side of colonization by creating a time-based *vanitas* installation. Like the tradition of Dutch *vanitas* still-life paintings, my murals are a reminder of mortality and of the worthlessness of worldly goods and pleasures.

This sugar mural was up for about nine weeks, while I regularly returned to document its slow destruction in photographs. I chose three final images to represent

this time-based ephemeral work, and it is these three images that I exhibit and show as document of the work. As with all of my sugar murals, I consider photography to be an important aspect of the work, since this is how most people will experience the work. After I install these sugar murals, my physical work is done, but the life of the concept just begins. I want viewers to consider the entire process of the piece, because it is the erosion and contrast from start to finish that fully encapsulates the concept of this work. I often face the question, "but couldn't you coat the sugar with something to preserve it?". My answer remains the same: it is precisely the loss, decay, erasure, and association to destruction that I want the work to embody. I want them to have a baroque aesthetic. Photography then, through time-lapse, becomes a way for me to present the story that presents itself in each mural.

I have since made several more of these sugar murals in Brazil, Canada, India, United States and Australia. I have used a blue and white colour palette even in

works outside the context of Brazil because I want to continue referencing not only Portugal's role in colonization and the global sugar trade, but the entire system of the sugar slave trade that accompanied European colonization in the 16th-19th centuries. This includes implicating France, England, the Netherlands, and Spain.

As sugar began to be more widespread throughout Europe, the demand and taste for it increased. The successes for growing in different colonial regions varied over the centuries with some countries having greater success than others. Although Portugal had initial successes in the 16th century, by the following decade, the French, and more so the British (with help from the Dutch) became the western world's dominant sugar makers and exporters (Mintz, 1985: 35).

There was much competition throughout history for gains to be made in sugar production and trade. It was Spain who pioneered sugar making, the use of African slave labour and the plantation form in the Americas (Mintz, 1985: 32). However, in the end, it was England who conquered the most colonies, imported the most slaves and made the fastest gains in creating a plantation system (Mintz, 1986: 38).

As trade and travel increased, it also affected the sharing of visual styles and techniques between cultures. Due to this cross-pollination effect of styles and materials, other European countries involved in colonizing lands for sugar production also have traditions of ceramics with paintings of ship imagery, as well as the use of monochrome blue, notably by the Dutch. I use hybrid compositional features and decorative styles in my murals, intentionally evoking multiple European origins, be it azulejos, or English porcelain dishware with painted scenes. My aim is to reflect aristocratic, colonial society.

Each time I create a new mural, I customize it to reflect either local history or a current event. In a mural installed in Australia in 2013, I looked at the unique conditions of slave labour within the sugar industry history there, in the 1800's when it was still a self-governing British colony. In the late 19th century to early 20th century, recruiters brought Indigenous peoples from nearby Pacific islands, primarily Vanuatu, New Guinea and Solomon Islands, to work in the sugar cane fields. This practice, referred to as "blackbirding", involved kidnapping or coercion to work in the cane fields.

My mural for Sydney shows small archival images of cane workers and actual blackbirds amongst the main image, a ship called Velocity, which was the actual name of one such blackbirding ship.

I then wanted to show how my own country of Canada had involvement in the sugar trade. In my home city of Montreal, which is a port city on the St. Lawrence River, I created a sugar azulejo titled "Cargo" which shows contrasting sides of the sugar trade: export and import (Fig. 04). The right side represents the sugar producing islands with images of workers cutting cane, and loading barrels of raw sugar onto small boats to be exported. On the left is an historical image of the Old Port of Montreal, receiving the raw sugar in barrels. In the far distance is a land mass that could be interpreted as Africa, easily missed within the busy composition, but whose significance is still integral to the ocean trade depicted.

The island imagery I have painted on the right is a composite that I constructed from several paintings done by William Clark (1770-1838) from his series called "Ten Views on the Island of Antigua" dated 1823. Clark was a British naval painter who was posted in Antigua for three years to document not only the landscape and the scenery but also the various processes involved in the production of sugar, including the human labour (Nelson, 2017: 218).

I used his works because I wanted to create a scene that was neither extreme nor overly violent, but one that still showed the imbalance of power in the labour dynamics of the subjects working in the cane fields. Clark's imagery shows the exertion of the black labourers, pushing, carrying, lifting; compared to the more passive stance of the white owners, showing the labour distinction between blacks and whites (Nelson, 2017: 221). His series also shows people of all ages working, revealing that even children and the elderly were not spared the burden of labour in plantation life (Nelson, 2017: 289).

The central area of Cargo again focuses on ship images. Instead of a singular ship, as I had done in other murals, I have a variety of ships, taken from disparate times in history, as a means to show the lengthy time gap that this triangle trade occurred. On the top, within the decorative border, there is a globe showing what is known as the triangle trade, which arose in the 17th century and links the areas of Europe



Fig. 04. *Cargo*, 2009, Shelley Miller, Montreal, Canada; 138 x 292 cm. Sugar tiles, hand painted, applied to wood panels with additional icing. Photo taken on July 2, 2009 (Day two). Mural lasted 10 days (photo by Shelley Miller)



Fig. 05. *Cargo*, 2009, Shelley Miller, Montreal, Canada; 138 x 292 cm. Sugar tiles, hand painted, applied to wood panels with additional icing. Photo taken on July 6, 2009 (Day 5). Mural lasted 10 days (photo by Shelley Miller)

to Africa and the New World. Canada is not included in the triangle trade route illustrated on this image, and is often left out of the global consciousness of the sugar trade subject. This is a prime inspiration for why I chose to do the mural showing a Canadian port city. In her book, "Slavery, Geography and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica", Charmaine Nelson points out that the traditional triangle referenced when speaking of the Transatlantic slave route is too simplistic to accurately reflect the complexities of trade routes, and often neglects some areas of the Caribbean and Canada (Nelson, 2017: 4).

The title "Cargo", seen at the bottom, bracketed by chains and anchors, affirms the reality that ships did not only travel the seas carrying adventurous explorers, and finished products for trade but also human lives. In an act of subversion, I have replaced cherub-like figures that are often seen on *azulejo* murals with images of bodies carrying heavy barrels; representing the people whose bodies and labour supported this architecture. Instead of the sugar tiles falling off the wall in an act of self-destruction, like other murals have, this mural simply faded, like an old photo, or like memories can fade, with facts getting lost or forgotten (Fig. 05).

In 2016, I decided to use the blue *azulejo* reference to create a sugar mural that speaks about a different form of power and oppression; but one that I believe is linked to colonization. In "Legacy" (Fig. 06) I draw parallels between slavery and the current epidemic of young black men disproportionately imprisoned or targeted by police with lethal consequences. I chose to focus this theme in the context of Brazil, but I feel it can be used to represent the global issue of injustice at the hands of police. I also focused this mural on Brazil, because I have a personal connection of losing a loved one in Brazil at the hands of the police.

The central image represents the atmosphere of a police state. I have positioned a large contingent of fictitious armed officers in an actual area of Salvador, Brazil called *pelourinho* (English translation is pillory, a device used to whip and humiliate). When Salvador was founded as the first capital city of Brazil, in the year 1549, the Portuguese placed the *pelourinho* in the central area of its acropolis, a symbol of the slavery system administration, and later was used to name this entire historic district (Nobre, 2002: 110).

Today, it is largely a tourist area, but the legacy of this painful location and the institutions that supported this slave practice remains in the consciousness of the social fabric of Brazil.

The three portraits of young men in the border of the mural were all killed by police in Brazil, and were not armed. The sad truth is that there were hundreds of faces I could have depicted. In Brazil, as in many other countries, notably the United States, racial profiling is a massive social justice issue that can be considered as the legacy of colonization. In her book, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness", Michelle Alexander argues that the mass incarceration rate in the United States is the new metaphorical form of racial segregation. No other country in the world incarcerates so many of its ethnic or racial minorities as the US does, and has higher percentage of black populations in prison than South Africa did at the height of apartheid (Alexander, 2012: 6).

As described throughout this essay, I have used the *azulejo* in my sugar murals in different ways, beginning by mimicking the imagery I saw in real *azulejos*, notably ship imagery, and the classical ornamentation and decorative motifs, and over time, I embellished, and added new images, subverting the traditional with new meaning, each time with symbolic references to different forms of oppression and power systems. I continue to be inspired by the art form of the *azulejo* and by the myriad of ways that it can be subverted to question new forms of colonization and power dynamics, whether that be by a ruling nation or corporate interests.

Within my art practice, decorative art forms, represent the margins, the peripheral, that which blends into the background. The decorative arts have long been considered a lesser art form than modern architecture or painting. In his famous essay "Ornament and Crime" from 1908, the architect and theorist Adolf Loos (1870-1933) comments that ornamentation represents backwardness and signs of a degenerative society, even hampering the evolution of culture (Miller and Ward, 2002: 32). I play off of these theories, creating decorative works that literally degenerate and decay, becoming living *momento mori* sculptures.

Today, the decorative is still around, used to cover, to embellish, to distract, to beautify. Especially in the case of repeated patterns, decoration can be easily missed,



Fig. 06. *Legacy*, 2016, Shelley Miller, Montreal, Canada; 178 x 203 cm. Sugar tiles, hand painted, applied to concrete city wall with additional icing. Photo taken on August 16, 2016 (Day one). Mural lasted one week (photo by Shelley Miller)

easy to take for granted, our eyes missing the details, forgetting to take notice. I use the decorative form and its long history as a means to ask, both myself and

others, what else do we not see? What new forms of oppression or unjust social practices do we walk past each day, not taking notice of?

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THE CONTEMPORARY AZULEJO: AN IDENTITY ISSUE?

AZULEJO CONTEMPORÂNEO: UMA QUESTÃO IDENTITÁRIA?

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ABSTRACT

One of the aspects that has supported the idea of the *azulejo* (tile) as a cultural heritage of the Portuguese identity is its continuous employment since the end of the fifteenth century until today, now having become a part of the projects of artists, architects and designers. This article seeks to ponder upon the relationship that contemporary authors have established, or not, with this appreciation of the *azulejo* as an art connected to identity, discerning the reasons that have led them to select it for their pieces.

KEYWORDS

Identity | Tile | Authors | Contemporary

RESUMO

Um dos aspectos que tem sustentado a ideia do azulejo como herança identitária portuguesa é a sua aplicação contínua, desde o final do século XV, integrando, na contemporaneidade, projectos de artistas, arquitectos e *designers*. O presente artigo procura reflectir sobre a relação que os autores contemporâneos estabeleceram, ou não, com este entendimento do azulejo enquanto arte identitária, observando as razões que estiveram na base para a opção de recorrer ao azulejo no contexto das suas obras.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Identidade | Azulejo | Autores | Contemporaneidade

INTRODUCTION

Over the last years the idea that the *azulejo* is an art that defines the Portuguese cultural identity has been the focus of a growing academic and public debate, which is also connected to its appreciation that is, in turn, linked to a *taste* rooted in Portugal. Also, as a result of its continuous employment for over five centuries, the *azulejo* is an artistic frame which artists, architects and designers frequently resort to, therefore prolonging its use while updating its application in contemporary production. This article seeks to observe the tile production since 1950, aiming to assess whether the purposes that lead artists, architects and designers to use the *azulejo* are connected to this notion of “identitarian” art or not.

Even though the *azulejo*’s socio-cultural meaning as Portuguese heritage might be regarded as a hot topic, it is important to explain this debate started in the second half of the twentieth century, like other articles published by Nuno Rosmaninho, Alexandra Gago da Câmara and Rosário Salema de Carvalho, Sandra Leandro and João Pedro Monteiro in this volume have made clear. By reading the original texts and the considerations they later elicited, the importance of recognising the *azulejo*’s particular employment in Portugal is plain when compared to its counterparts in other countries. Equally vital is its recognition as a national art of “unique expression in the world”, therefore worthy of being considered a separate, autonomous category in ceramic studies (Santos, 1947: 86-94). Although the term *identity* was not a part of these researchers’ texts, their ideas helped develop a discourse that values the differentiating characteristics of the Portuguese tiles and are echoed

in José Meco’s recent words: “Portugal seems to have been fated to become the land of the *azulejo*. Although it did not invent this material, it was its greatest producer and customer within Europe, surpassing by far the output of all other Western countries. (...) However, the most striking features of Portugal’s tile production are not its quantity and continuity, but the extraordinary creativity of its decorations, along with their outstanding ability to blend, in with the architecture, transforming and completing each space in the most original way, as well as with the other art forms, giving rise to artistic ensembles that reflect in a unique way the artistic qualities and taste of Portuguese people”¹ (Meco, 2017: 9-10).²

However, over the last couple of years, the concept of identity associated with the *azulejo* has been ever more present in official discourses and narratives conveyed by the National *Azulejo* Museum as well as by society in general. In fact, a set of touristic materials decorated with tile motifs, which are meant to be a symbol of Portuguese culture, has been growing. It is, therefore, from the synthesis that we have just outlined that, bearing in mind the ambiguity of what *identity* might be understood as today, that we seek to understand the contemporary tile production’s permeability to such issues connected to *national identity*.

On the one hand, in what concerns art practice, it is possible to acknowledge that contemporary production reiterates and develops the singular aspects mentioned by historiography. The *azulejo* continues to serve as an adjective for the spaces it is placed on due to its association with architecture and because it is applied

1. Original translation.

2. Let us recall the perspective of the author of the first history of the Portuguese *azulejo*, Reynaldo dos Santos: “The importance of the *azulejo*, in the history of the decorative arts in Portugal, is indisputable. To the eyes of the national and mostly foreign art historians, the *azulejo* is the prime example of our decorative art, the most unique, the one that impresses everyone because of the variety of its specimens, its continuous evolution, the range of its employment and as always, the charm of its colours and glaze. (...) The originality of an art does not rest essentially in technical discoveries; technique is only a means, and, in decorative arts, the unprecedented level of its creations lies on the ornamental concept that inspires and renews it. (...) From the very beginning, what characterised the singular nature of the Portuguese *azulejo*, which has mostly used the majolica glazing technique, that is, painting over a terracotta flat surface, was the monumental idea behind its employment - even in imported tiles - that renewed itself in the wide use in the mural and polychrome decoration of the seventeenth century, fully covering walls, doors, windows, altar fronts and even ceilings and vaults. Thereby, an atmosphere of colour and shimmer was created, mainly in churches, that surpassed the more ornamental function of a tile surface. A decorative art if not merely judged by the individual elements that it is made of, but by the application possibilities that are conceived from them and it is precisely in this that its originality rests on. (...) The *azulejo*’s evolution among us had such a continuous renewing spirit, which reached its golden age when it had already started to decline in the Peninsula. (...) One of the unique features of the Portuguese *azulejo* was that it had its own evolution from the 16th century onwards; its unity lies not on an unchanged traditional concept, but on the variety of inventions inspired by the adaptation to the style and spirit of each age.” (Santos, 1957: 7-8).

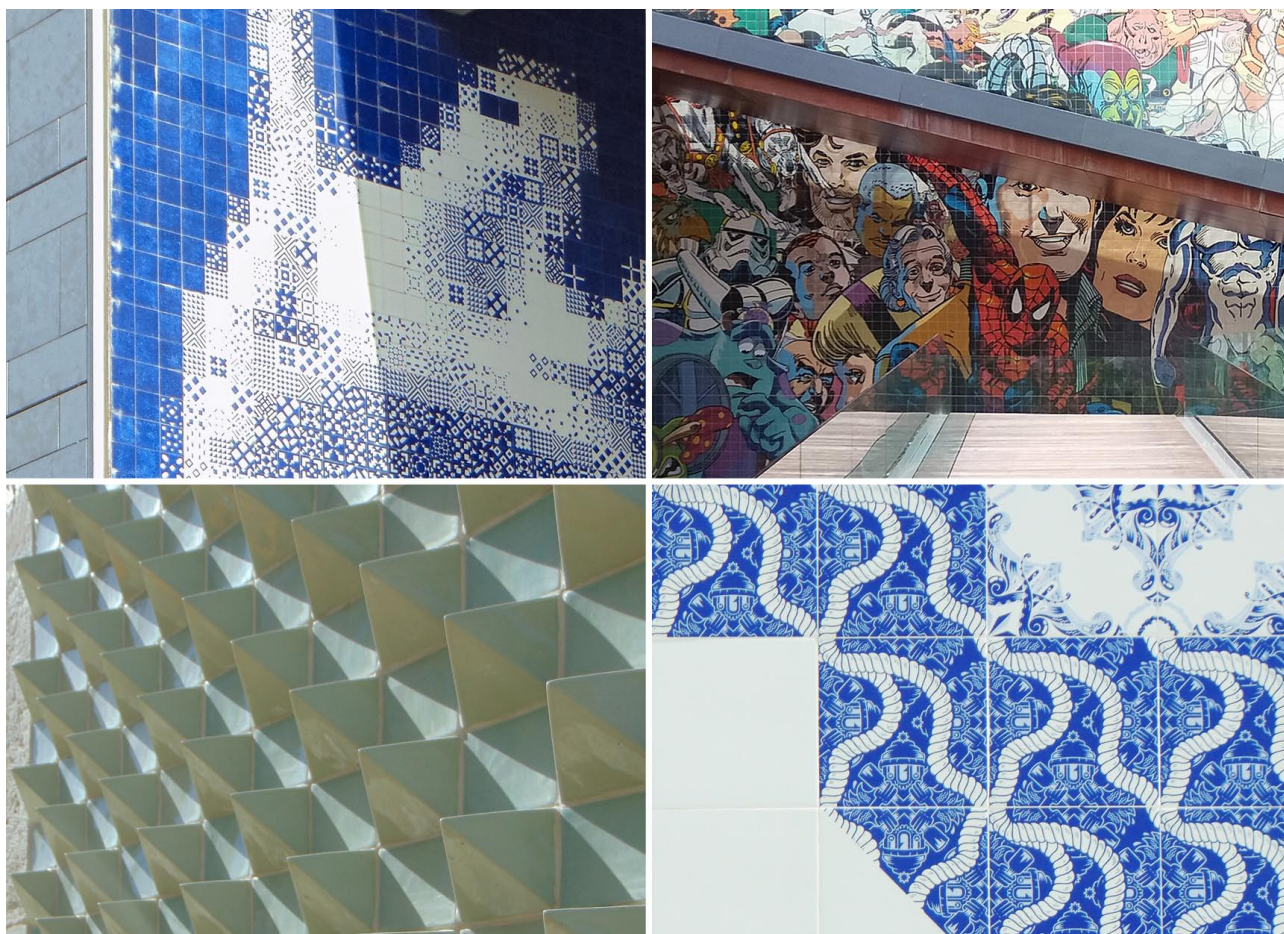


Fig. 01· Lisbon, Oceanário de Lisboa (Lisbon's Oceanarium), Administrative Building, west façade, Ivan Chermayeff (1932-2017), 1996-1998; Lisbon, Art's Business & Hotel Centre, Errö (b. 1932), 2004; Lisbon, Friendly Border Apartment, façade, Maria Ana Vasco Costa (b. 1981), 2016; Lisbon, Infante Santo Avenue, stairway, LOUVOR DA VIVACIDADE, Add Fuel aka Diogo Machado (b. 1980), 2017.

in a continuous renewal of discourses and forms, shaped according to the challenges set by the last decades.³ The use of computer pixels, the incorporation of language used in comics, the expansion of the square format to other settings, volumes and textures or even the integration of street art are examples of the adaptability and renewal that has always been a feature of the Portuguese tiles (Fig. 01). In the urban culture setting, the idea that the tile is *today* an integral part of the Portuguese daily life has also been reinforced over the last couple of years by the growing use of the themes related to the *azulejo* in artistic projects in which the ceramic material is replaced

by paper, wood or mural painting (Leitão, 2016: 40-43; Menezes, 2017: 219-222; Pais, 2018: 10).

On the other hand, in theoretical terms, what artistic discourse upholds these options and practices? Is the acknowledgement of the *azulejo* as "one of the most significant principles of Portuguese art" today a result of a discourse built around its *identity*? Can we consider the creations or the allusion to works in *azulejo* by contemporary artists, architects and designers are connected to this understanding of the tile as an art linked to identity? How do the different authors define identity as a concept?

3. Limited more specifically to a timeframe between the second half of the twentieth century until now, which is connected to the alterations made to the *azulejo* both at a technical and a formal level, from the 1950s onwards a generation of architects and artists led a nationwide reassertion of the *azulejo* that, under Brazilian influence, reinterpreted the combination between the ceramic material and its architectonic frames, therefore, allowing a reintegration of tiles in the national artistic stage wherein, though adapting to the different decades' characteristics, it has remained until *today* (Henriques, 2000: 70-82; Almeida, 2012; Leitão, 2016: 40-43; Menezes, 2017: 219-222; Pais, 2018: 10-13).

Aiming to think about these issues, in this approach we chose to privilege the analysis of the different authors' *discourse* concerning the *azulejo*, keeping in mind that this study will not cover the theme fully. On the contrary, it is only a complement to the critical analysis of the works, which we have been developing.

As methodology of work we selected a vast set of interviews published or conducted by us, more or less as conversations, with the authors; in total we collected thirty-one national testimonies and four international ones. The citations and references we used and published in interviews were, mostly, brought together from questions that were not directly focused on the issue of identity or why the authors at hand decided to work with *azulejo*. For this reason, it is relevant to draw attention to the fact that, if we faced the authors with direct questions on the subject under study, their answers would, most likely, be very different from the ones we obtained using this strategy. However, and considering that, on the one hand, many are not among

us anymore and, on the other, that these testimonies denote the discourse of certain authors about the *azulejo* and its employment in Portugal, we believe that, despite some acknowledged limitations, it is a pertinent approach in the context of a critical reflection on "the identity(ies) of the *azulejo* in Portugal".

Therefore, the work conducted has allowed us to divide the options regarding the *azulejo*'s use into three areas: 1) authors who acknowledge they decided to use *azulejo* due to its traditional nature ("Then we remembered to put *azulejo* [because] it is ours"); 2) the ones who, despite identifying the *azulejo* as part of the Portuguese heritage, do not directly claim that is the reason behind their option ("Acknowledging a tradition: "We are a country that has *azulejo* in its past"); and, 3) those who work with *azulejo* because it is one of the demands of the commission ("Azulejo: an obligation"). These are the three perspectives around which we have structured the analysis that follows.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE AZULEJO

"Then we remembered to put *azulejo* [because] it is ours"⁴

Most authors we observed justified their use of the *azulejo* as "something ours", traditional or connected to Portuguese identity. The first underground stations in Lisbon (1959), by the architect Francisco Keil do Amaral (1910-1975) and artist Maria Keil (1914-2012), who was responsible for the tile placement, are a relevant example of this. As Maria Keil mentioned in several

interviews about this project, the decision to integrate tiles in the underground stations in Lisbon was related to several factors, among which are the singular nature of the ceramic material in Portugal. Master Manuel Cargaleiro (b. 1927),⁵ ceramist Cecília de Sousa (b. 1937)⁶ and the artists Rogério Ribeiro (1930-2008)⁷ and Joana Vasconcelos (b. 1971)⁸ also share this perspective and acknowledge that the tradition regarding ceramics influenced them. Manuel Cargaleiro even suggests there is an unconscious

4. This expression was taken from an interview to the artist Maria Keil, when she explains the option to apply *azulejo* (tile) in the Lisbon Underground. The original phrase is: "Then we remembered to put *azulejo*. (...) It is ours, it is washable, it is durable, one can give the colour one wants and it was very cheap" (Mantas, 2012: 11).

5. "I have worked with this material for over 40 years and I have never stopped using it. Since Portugal is one of the countries with greater tradition in this artistic field, perhaps because of that, I have fallen in love with the *azulejo* from the very beginning" (Botelho, 1991: 39).

6. "I saw [*azulejo*] modelled by hand, I saw [it] being fired on the floor. This learning process has weighted a lot on what I do, even though I still enjoy glassmaking a lot and have been influenced by our tile tradition" (Tomás, 1993: 36).

7. On his work for Lisbon's underground, "The wall is regarded as a surface for the *azulejo*, because – as a material – it is convenient and because it is "from here", its recovery or its use and coexistence, as well as its cost, have indubitably elected it" (Botelho, 1991: 56).

8. "What I do is look at the traditions and legacy of the popular Portuguese arts, to what distinguishes us and is a part of our heritage and I decontextualize it, I reinterpret it in the contemporary world. To do this I often use material and techniques developed in our country; above all, what most interests me is to create discourses through the development of a clash and dialogue between cultures. Work in crochet and in *azulejo*, the introduction of *fado* in some works, the reinterpretation of ceramic pieces by Bordalo Pinheiro, all of these [endeavours] fit in an effort to value and preserve our memory for future generations, but also in developing a new take on these elements" (Aires, 2017).



Fig. 02. Lisbon, Infante Santo Avenue, stairway, *LOUVOR DA VIVACIDADE*, Add Fuel aka Diogo Machado (b. 1980), 2017; Lisbon, LX Factory, wall, *ANTIGA MENTE NOVA*, Add Fuel aka Diogo Machado (b. 1980), 2012

fondness of the *azulejo*, a statement sustained by other of the master's testimonies in which he refers that it is a part of his imaginary since his childhood.⁹ As for Joana Vasconcelos, this option is at the core of her work, as the artist explores popular Portuguese objects and traditions such as lacework, embroidery and filigree, among other cultural symbols that are a part of the national imaginary.

More recently, the street artist Add Fuel aka Diogo Machado (b. 1980), has incorporated a very similar speech in his work. Add Fuel reinterprets tile tradition through the ceramic material itself or its sign in mural

painting (Fig. 02), aiming to explore one of the "national heritages"¹⁰ so as "to bring Portuguese culture into the present, trying to rethink it and help preserve it" (Machado, 2018: 132). This intent to rehabilitate the tile patrimony matches the work done by Pedrita Studio that, comprising Pedro Ferreira (b. 1978) and Rita João (b. 1978), restores discontinued industrial *azulejos*, mainly from the 1960s and 1970s, placed in great figurative compositions that gain greater expression at a distance (Fig. 03).¹¹

Curiously, a great number of the authors that choose to allude to the *azulejo*, instead of using the material

9. "When I went with my parents to a beautiful church in Monte da Caparica, which was covered in eighteenth century *azulejos* – absolutely lovely – I was about five or six years old and instead of listening to the mass, I would amuse myself by looking at the *azulejos*, interpreting them and following their lines. Not only did the figures draw my attention, but also the material, especially the glaze and shimmer of the tiles. To me, it was fascinating" (Tomás, 1994a: 43).

10. "What I do is not mine, it is ours. What I do ends up being our heritage (...)" (RTP Play).

11. "(...) It also aspires to become an innovative option for the rehabilitation of the urban built heritage. It recovers discontinued production tiles, using them as units of decorative cladding panels, destined both to architectural façades and to the (re)furbishment of other urban elements" (Pedrita). Original translation.



Fig. 03. Lisbon, wall, *Pato Mudo*, Pedrita Studio, 2012

itself, have as a goal to draw attention to the decay of this patrimony. *Kneaded Memory* (2012-2015) by Dalila Gonçalves (b. 1962),¹² the projects *Recuperarte* (*Recoverart*, 2013) by Maria D'Almada¹³ and the first phase of *Preencher Vazios* (*To Fill Voids*, since 2015) by the designer Joana Abreu (b. 1992)¹⁴ as well as the *manifestos* ("the *azulejo* rebellion") by Manuela Pimental (b. 1979)¹⁵ are examples of this (Fig. 04). The fact that this group of authors aims at raising

awareness to the preservation of the tile tradition shows that their choice is made because they recognise its particular importance to national culture. In the project *AZULagir's* case (2015), by the architect José Pedro Santos (b. 1981) and artist Alberto Vieira,¹⁶ the goal was to reinvent tile tradition through colourful funnels that were meant to refer to the *traditional* Port wine, thus recreating sixty-six different modules (Fig. 05).¹⁷

12. "In the past century, there has been an increasing degradation, destruction and exclusion of the decorative element in architectural use. Along with the exclusion of traditional decorative elements, the past century has also seen an increase in the usage of cement and concrete on the façades of most public and private buildings. *Kneaded Memory* looks into this particular relation between past and present, between memory, remembrance and oblivion" (Dalila Gonçalves). Original translation.

13. On the reasons that have led Maria D'Almada to work with material that alludes to *azulejo*, she stated: "I realised this patrimony is unique, but also always at risk" (Flores, 2012).

14. "Beyond carrying out an artistic and creative intervention, *Preencher Vazios* aims at drawing attention to the urge to preserve the Portuguese tile patrimony" (Lopes, 2015).

15. "(...) It is as if I am showing my fellow countrymen that we live in our history and that all we have comes from the past. My relationship with traditional Portuguese *azulejos* is a reinvention, to create over what has already been done, in order not to lose this piece of history" (Museu Afro Brasil, 2017).

16. Alberto Vieira was the winner of the 2nd edition of the public art competition VIARTES, held by Via Catarina Shopping (in Oporto).

17. Concerning the choice of *azulejo*, "it is a secular Portuguese tradition, here reinvented through the use of a tridimensional object (the funnel, which is also associated with Port wine) and the possibility of creating a panel that does not have a uniform or predetermined pattern, even though it is constructed from modules of a set geometric structure" (José Pedro Santos | architect).



Fig. 04. Oporto, *Kneaded Memory / Memória Amassada*, Dalila Gonçalves (b. 1962), 2012-2015; Oporto, *Preencher Vazios*, Joana Abreu (b. 1990), since 2015; Manuela Pimentel (b. 1979), *Não se fala do mar a qualquer pessoa*, acrylic and varnish on street posters, on African derivative plywood, 2018



Fig. 05. Oporto, Via Catarina Shopping, façade, *AZULagir*, José Pedro Santos (b. 1981) and Alberto Vieira, 2015



Fig. 06· Lisbon, *Jardins da Água*, *Projecto das Sombras*, Fernanda Fragateiro (b. 1962), 1998; Lisbon, Marechal Gomes da Costa Avenue, flyover and EXPO 98 roundabout, Pedro Cabrita Reis (b. 1956), 1998; Matosinhos, New cruise terminal of Leixões, Luís Pedro Silva (b. 1971), 2015

This proposal also expected the users of that space to participate in the project, as they were invited to create some of the modules.

In what concerns the authors that occasionally use *azulejo* in their work, this intent remains (Fig. 06). The artist Fernanda Fragateiro (b. 1962) claims that the reasons why she chose to include ceramic material in her work *Projecto das Sombras* (*Shadow Project*, 1998) was precisely its connection to identity. Like Manuel Cargaleiro, the artist mentions the choice was made from a nearly unconscious idea.¹⁸ Pedro Cabrita Reis (b. 1956) also used *azulejo* in his interventions at Lisbon's International Exhibition in 1998 (Expo'98)

because this material is now an integral part of the national artistic imaginary and, therefore, one of the elements that most embodies the Portuguese urban landscape.¹⁹ In turn, the architect Luís Pedro Silva (b. 1971), concerning his project for the Port of Leixões' Cruise Terminal (2015), stated that, despite the fact that the selection of a ceramic covering was connected to its resistance, durability and its typical aesthetical effect, the weight of tradition, even if unconsciously, also influenced his decision.²⁰ This idea is also perceptible in his testimony in the seminar AzLab#35²¹ where he accredited the tile tradition as "something ours".²²

18. This information was collected through a conversation we had with the artist herself for our master's dissertation (Leitão, 2016), during which Fernanda Fragateiro explained some points regarding this project.

19. This information was collected through a conversation we had with the artist himself for our master's dissertation (Leitão, 2016), during which Pedro Cabrita Reis explained some points regarding this project.

20. This information was collected through a conversation we had with the architect himself, during which he clarified some points regarding this project.

21. AzLab is a monthly seminar that takes place at the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon and its goal is to create new analysis perspectives on issues connected to the *azulejo*. This initiative is organised by Az – Rede de Investigação em Azulejo (Az - Azulejo Research Network, ARTIS/IHA-FLUL) and the National Azulejo Museum (see <http://blogazlab.wordpress.com>). The aim of the 35th edition of the seminar was to debate "what is *azulejo*?", challenging artists, architects, designers, historians and the general public to answer this question. The initiative was later expanded to include 49 testimonies to be published in a book (Carvalho, 2018).

22. "Judging by its ability to endure, and renew itself, and serve the Portuguese language, the *azulejo* is already ours. For five hundred years, it has reinterpreted its own identity, in some of the most improbable places on earth: acquiring different forms and meanings this celestial place, attached to a plural sensibility and mode of organization" (Silva, 2018: 96). Original translation.



Fig. 07· Lisbon, Oceanário de Lisboa (Lisbon's Oceanarium), Administrative Building, west façade, Ivan Chermayeff (1932-2017), 1996-1998; Lisbon, Maria street and Andrade street, *Aposto n° 10*, Fábio Carvalho, 2015

In addition, the awareness of the singular nature of the *azulejo* in Portugal is also a part of the discourse of international authors (Fig. 07), like for instance the designer Ivan Chermayeff (1932-2017). In the ceramic covering of the Administrative Building of Lisbon's Oceanarium (1996-1998), Chermayeff used *azulejo* because, as he explained, it is one of the elements that distinguishes Portugal from the rest of the world – “the *azulejo* is Portuguese”.²³ Greek designer Charis Tsevis (b. 1967) also shares this idea and concedes that, despite the fact that tiles are used in other countries, in Portugal “it is not just an art form, it is part of an identity” (Fernandes, 2014). The work done by Brazilian urban artist Fábio Carvalho (b. 1965), who uses paper to create his *azulejo* sign, is associated with an “emotional memory” and to national identity, which according to the artist is not confined to

Portugal.²⁴ It should be added that, although Fábio Carvalho is an international author, we must bear in mind that Brazil also has a sound tile tradition, a point highlighted by the artist himself when he considers that the *azulejo* is not solely a part of Portuguese identity (Carvalho, 2018: 38).

In short, the symbolism which the *azulejo* is bond to in the Portuguese artistic culture is one of the factors that influences its use today. However, most authors under study see this aspect as something traditional that characterises Portuguese culture, so they address this tradition from a more or less critical perspective, reassessing its most defining elements. Among these, and beyond the singular nature they all concede to the Portuguese tile, it is how the *azulejo* can adapt to each epoch's specificity and, in particular, to

23. “The language of walls in Portugal is tiles. Not paint, not stone, not concrete, but tiles” (Chermayeff, 1997). Original translation.

24. “For beyond “this ceramic pieces, usually with a square shape, glazed and shiny on one side”, the *azulejo* are also, for me, chunks of emotional memory, sources of pride and national identity (mostly Portuguese, but not only!)” (Carvalho, 2018: 38). Original translation.

contemporary language that is most valued. Thus, a correlation between the past and the present, which is noticeable in some of these artists', architects' and designers' work, is achieved through references to archaic techniques or distinct aesthetical elements of very specific periods.

Acknowledging a tradition: "we are a country that has *azulejo* in its past"²⁵

Some of the authors who have used tiles extensively in their work do not explain why they have incorporated the *azulejo* in their artistic discourse. However, and considering their awareness concerning the history and the *azulejo*'s usage, along with, in some cases, their technical mastery, we need to consider that this option might be connected to their understanding of the *azulejo*'s singular nature in Portuguese culture. Master Júlio Resende (1917-2011), for instance, claimed the *azulejo* is "one of the techniques that is most related to the Portuguese way of feeling".²⁶ In turn, besides acknowledging the *azulejo*'s importance within the national artistic production, Master Querubim Lapa (1925-2016) praises its ability to renew itself throughout the centuries. Although these two perspectives are somewhat different, since for the first the *azulejo* has a poetic relationship with the Portuguese tradition and mood while, for the second, it is a matter of history and the relationship the author wishes to establish with it, both are aware that this material is a symbolic element in the collective imaginary. Although we were unable to find a testimony regarding the reasons why both authors – who are key references in the national artistic milieu,

namely in the ceramic production scene – decided to work the *azulejo*, the ideas we have mentioned show that the ceramic tradition has certainly influenced their choices.

Other artists that fit this group are Maria Emília Araújo (b. 1940)²⁷ and Eduardo Nery (1938-2013). The latter, proprietor of an extensive and important work in tile, believes the *azulejo* is an art "rooted in Portuguese culture" (Nery, 2007: 9), highlighting the importance of colour in cities and, especially, in Lisbon.²⁸ Much like Manuel Cargaleiro, Eduardo Nery supports that the *taste* for this material is due to the strolls he went on with his parents during his childhood and teenagerhood, as these stimulated in him an awareness to the "immense richness contained in our *azulejos*" (Nery, 2007: 9).

The architects Catarina Almada Negreiros (b. 1972) and Rita Almada Negreiros (b. 1969), who, in partnership with Viúva Lamego Factory, are the authors of the *kinetic tile*, revealed that "when we started studying architecture, we were far from thinking that the *azulejo* would become a form of expression for us (Fig. 08). The *azulejo* was a material that occasionally appeared, some more important than others, but it was not a means of expression, like we perceive it today" (Barbosa, 2012). However, both acknowledge the importance and influence of the tile tradition in contemporary production – qualities that their ceramic projects incorporate.²⁹ The artist Maria Ana Vasco Costa (b. 1981) also does not specifically refer what reasons led her to work the *azulejo*, but she outlines as a goal "to innovate in shape, design and depth, while preserving its tradition".³⁰ Thus, she proposes

25. This expression was taken from an interview to the artist Querubim Lapa, where he stated: "Although my things always hold on to the past, they belong in the present, in the period in which I live. Our tile tradition is rich in that sense. Having started in a distant past, it has moved on step by step and [re]appeared with [new] rich and exuberant elements, never discarding the past though. We have a country that has *azulejo* in its past (...)" (Tomás, 1994b: 37).

26. "First of all, ceramics, no matter what its physical purpose is, must be one of the techniques that has most to do with the Portuguese way of feeling, I was going to say perhaps nostalgia... There is a mood, even an atmosphere, of the sea, the temperatures, the reflection... / I think ceramics can translate that with great perfection given its glazed, translucent nature. The whole physical look, I guess, has a lot to do with the Portuguese people; that is why we get along well with *azulejos*. (...) This has to do with the so-called popular art" (1989: 29).

27. "The *azulejo* is (...) condensed energy narrating our Portuguese soul" (Araújo, 2018: 18). Original translation.

28. Eduardo Nery collaborated in a study about the behaviour of colour in urban interventions and its relevance for the construction of cities. In addition, the artist also delved into this idea in his artistic work (Nery, 1993; Nery, 2007: 50-55). Consequently, he drew attention to the *azulejo* as one of the best materials to be applied in cities.

29. "(...) From the 15th century, with its Mozarabic tiles decorations, to the present day, the *azulejo* has established itself as a protean material, evolving and adapting to the spirit and specificity of each historical period. (...) This long journey has become a solid work basis for contemporary intervention, which absorb this art form and create new images and languages (...)" (Negreiros and Negreiros, 2018: 14). Original translation.

30. This information was collected through a conversation we had with the artist herself, during which she clarified some points regarding her ceramic production.



Fig. 08· Lisbon, Ascensor da Bica, wall, *Vai Vem*, Catarina Almada Negreiros (b. 1972) and Rita Almada Negreiros (b. 1969)

the *azulejo*'s expansion to other configurations, textures and volumes (Fig. 09). Draw aka Frederico Campos (b. 1988), who used *azulejo* in one of his most recent works, does not disclose the reason behind his choice, but acknowledges that one of his purposes was to think about the tile production of the city that would welcome his work, Viseu.³¹

When it comes to the international setting, Belgian artist Françoise Schein (b. 1953), who was aware of the tile tradition and its cognitive importance in Portugal,³² started using the *azulejo* because of some of its characteristics.³³ She applied it for the first time in her project at the Concorde underground station in Paris (1989-1991). Yet, in her composition for Lisbon's underground, she displays a clear awareness of the symbolic value that this material bestowed on her work.

Previous knowledge of a tile tradition, which is at the core of this second group, is clear in some of the works done by aforementioned artists, like Querubim Lapa, Eduardo Nery, Catarina and Rita Almada Negreiros and Draw who, on the one hand, recover old techniques and, on the other, reinterpret iconic aesthetical elements. Therefore, and considering these authors' work, along with their conceptualisation of the *azulejo*, we believe this issue has influenced their choice, even if unconsciously.

Azulejo: an obligation

The last group consists of authors who only used *azulejo* because they were commissioned to do so, as is the case of the artists Charters de Almeida (b. 1935) and Jorge Martins (b. 1940),³⁴ or because they were

31. "We will paint in a more classical manner, though obviously with a contemporary twist in what concerns the painting, which is what we want to add to what Viseu already has in terms of tile technique" (LUSA 2018).

32. In her testimony, when answering the question "What is *azulejo*?", Françoise Schein states, it is "traditional Portuguese material" (Schein, 2018: 92).

33. "From now on, these mural compositions will be in ceramics, an ideal material: handcraft and industrial, universal and traditional, adaptable and inalterable" (Cartuyvels, 2014: 32).

34. The information concerning Charters de Almeida and Jorge Martins was collected through two conversations we had with the artists, in which they clarified some points regarding their works in tile.

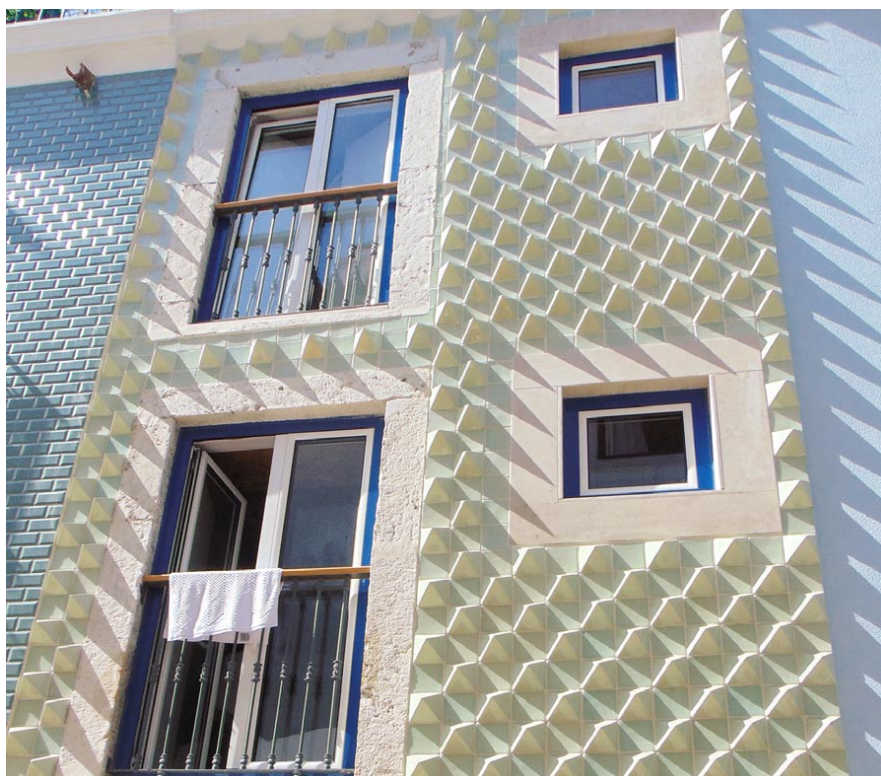


Fig. 09. Lisbon, Friendly Border Apartment, façade, Maria Ana Vasco Costa (b. 1981), 2016

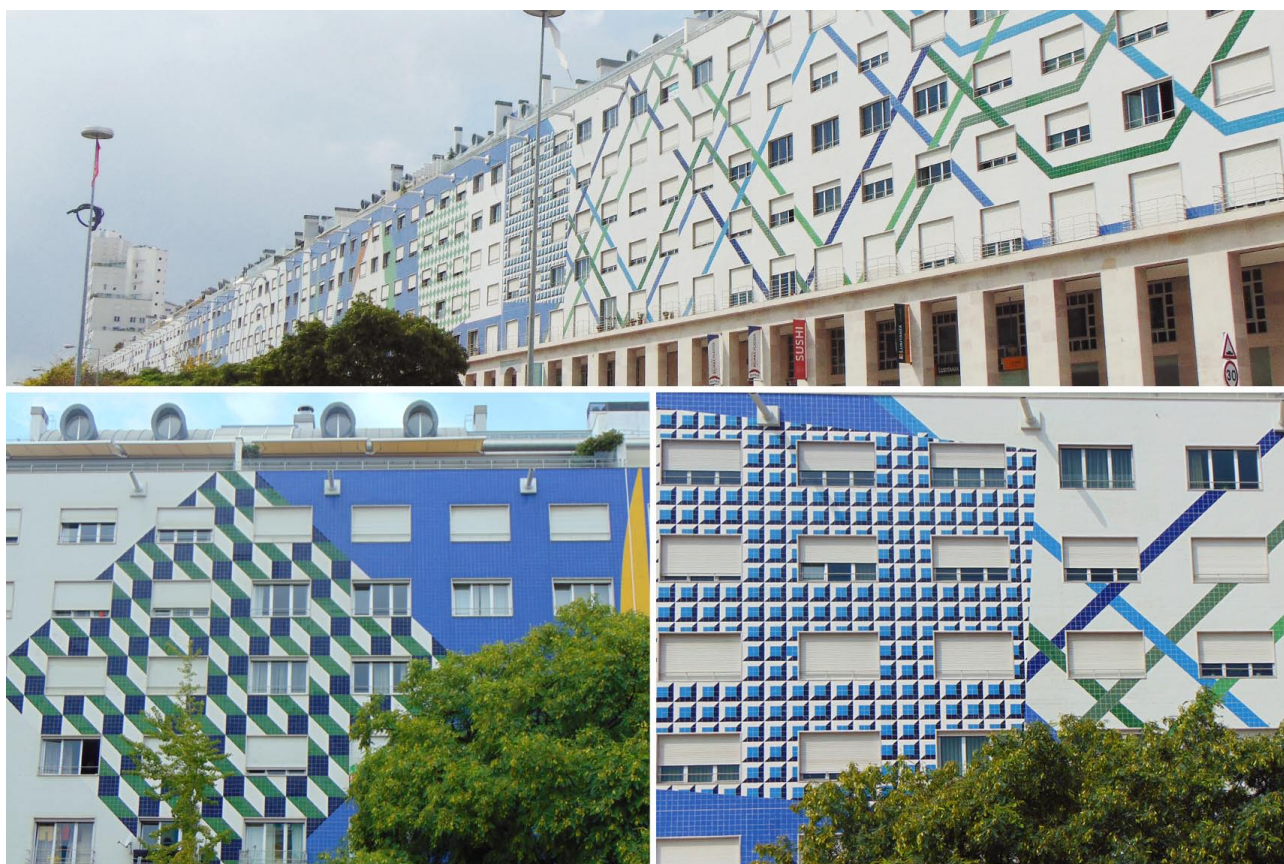


Fig. 10. Lisbon, Écran Building, façade, Jorge Martins (b. 1940), 2000

requested to do so by the architect, such as in the project for the Lumiar underground station in Lisbon (2001-2004) by Rui Ferro (b. 1971), Marta Lima and Susete Rebelo. Despite external constraints, some of these artists have implied in their statements that if it were not a challenge, they would not have used tiles. Nevertheless, they do acknowledge the *azulejo*'s importance in the Portuguese artistic scene, conceding that it is a singular form of art. Citing some elements

of this tradition in his work, Jorge Martins suggest that, concerning his public construction work, had it not been a demand made by the commission, he might have considered using *azulejo* just the same (Fig. 10). The artist justifies this choice because it is one of the materials that best responds to the challenges set by this kind of work, a perspective shared by artists like Júlio Resende who defines the *azulejo* as "an ideal material for art in cities" (1989: 28).

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Among the diverse aspects that characterise Portugal's artistic culture, the *azulejo* has taken a leading role as one of the arts that best identifies Portuguese heritage. Although in some historical periods this distinction may have been sustained by the nationalistic spirit of the time, the *azulejo*'s singular nature is clear when faced with its counterparts in other countries.

A part of the daily life of the Portuguese people for over five centuries, the *azulejo* has been continuously and diversely applied in architecture in incessant renewed forms that are often connected to the demands of each period. These characteristics feed many historiographic perspectives that identify the *azulejo* as one of the singular elements of Portuguese art. As mentioned earlier, our goal is to clarify how contemporary art understands the *azulejo*. To this end, using the research we have been developing as our basis, we believe "arts' workers" (artists, architects and designers) define the *azulejo* as a symbolic, traditional and characteristic material. For these authors, the points we highlighted helped build the country's collective *taste* and memory, which became particularly clear when they were faced with the question "what is *azulejo*?". Along with the technical and formal aspects, these "workers" define the *azulejo* as "something ours" and acknowledge that it is a national phenomenon.

However, although this issue is not, in any way, fully addressed by these authors' statements,³⁵ the analysis we conducted from the hypotheses initially determined, has allowed us to distinguish three key reasons that justify why the *azulejo* is used; they are: its traditional appearance; the acknowledgement of a tradition, even if somehow unconsciously; and an obligation imposed by the commission, which may be related to a public or private body or even to the work's own architect. Most authors do not raise the issue of identity, in fact the term is only mentioned by four of the twenty-five interviewees. Nevertheless, all the authors acknowledge the *azulejo*'s importance to Portuguese culture, regarding it as one of its characteristics and defining it as an unconscious *taste* or *something* traditional. This point becomes clear in most of the work completed by these artists, architects and designers, even in those cases for whom the *azulejo* was a request. They explore the tile tradition whether through references to some of its ancestral techniques or some of its aesthetical elements, offering an occasionally critical reassessment of this art so genuine in Portugal, valuing and preserving it as well as offering new aesthetical and conceptual readings.

35. On the contrary, these statements are a wealth of information through which we can learn the uses and interests of this tradition in depth.

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