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PORTUGAL-VENICE: HISTORICAL RELATIONS

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PORTUGAL'S RELATIONS WITH ITALY BECAME FORMALIZED IN THE MIDDLE AGES, THANKS TO INCREASING MARITIME TRADE BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE NORTH ATLANTIC. THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD LISBON FUNCTIONED AS A STOPPING-OFF POINT DUE TO ITS POSITION ON THE WESTERN COAST OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA. BETWEEN THE 12TH AND THE 15TH CENTURIES, VENETIANS AND GENOVESE CONTROLLED SEVERAL DIFFERENT TERRITORIES AND TRADING POSTS THROUGHOUT THE MEDITERRANEAN, WITH THEIR ACTIVITY STRETCHING AS FAR EAST AS THE BLACK SEA (AT LEAST UP UNTIL THE CONQUEST OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY THE OTTOMANS IN 1453). THE ASIAN LUXURY TRADE WAS ONE BASIS OF THEIR WEALTH.

The economic importance of Portugal lay fundamentally in the export of salt. Northern France, Flanders, and England had access to the cereals growing in the north of Europe, which were much coveted by southern Europe; at the same time they were developing metallurgy and woolen textiles. In the 16th century, the population of Flanders was 40 percent city-based, and it was by far the most important city population in Europe. This urban concentration brought with it a specialization of functions and diversified markets. This is why Flanders, followed by England, became specialized in maritime transportation, and then competed with the Venetians and the Genovese.

The Portuguese kings used the Italians' maritime experience to create their military fleet. In 1316, King Denis invited the Genovese mariner Pessagno to be admiral of the fleet,

and the latter brought pilots and sailors with him. The enormous expansion of Portugal's maritime trade sparked innovations in its shipbuilding, which was a sign of its increasing autonomy, although the exploration journeys made along the African coast were partly carried out by Italian navigators, particularly Nicoloso da Recco, Alvise da Cadamosto, and Antoniotto Usodimare. The presence of Christopher Columbus in Lisbon, the Portuguese city of Funchal on the island of Madeira, and West Africa between 1476 and 1485, as well as the fact that he married a Portuguese woman, Filipa Moniz Perestrelo, is testimony to the long-standing and deep-rooted Genovese community in Portugal.

Carried out between 1496 and 1498, Vasco da Gama's sea voyage to India broke the Venetian monopoly on the distribution of spices in Europe. Caravan traffic from India to the Mediterranean through Persia and the Ottoman Empire to Aleppo, Syria, was taken by surprise when the sea route opened up. This crisis produced an enormous flow of information between Lisbon and Venice, which is clearly expressed in the diaries of the Italian historian Marino Sanudo. In any case, Venice managed to withstand the effects of the first shipments of pepper by sea, which brought about a great reduction in its price.

The Genovese merchants and bankers maintained an important presence in Spain and Portugal until around 1630, contributing to the development of the Atlantic economy, but the Venetians never stopped having agents in Lisbon. The Italian colony in Lisbon was so important in the 16th century that it built the Our Lady of Loreto church. Among the bankers of the Portuguese kings John III and Sebastian was Luca Girdali, a Florentine businessman who rose to become a knight of the royal household, receiving the title of nobleman in 1551 and a coat of arms in 1557. He bought the captaincy of Ilhéus in Brazil in 1560, and was one of the main contractors for journeys to India in the 1570s.

Portugal's relations with Italy were also marked by the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, which was fundamental for the recognition of the kingdom of Portugal. Although during this period of the foundation of the nation the Portuguese court had established privileged relations with other courts on the Iberian Peninsula, the wife of the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques, was Mafalda of Savoy. Rome generated regular diplomatic relations, visits by dignitaries from the Portuguese Church, Papal Nuncios, and a significant circulation of religious figures in both directions.

Dating from this period is John XXI, the only pope of Portuguese origin, elected in 1276; he was physician to Pope Gregory X, who named him Cardinal of Frascati. Another significant figure was Friar Gomes Ferreira da Silva, a Portuguese Benedictine monk who

studied in Padua, Italy, and was ordained there in 1413. He entered the Badia Fiorentina abbey in Florence in 1415 and was elected abbot in 1419. For 40 years he served as an agent of the Portuguese kings in representation to the papal court, promoting visits to Portugal by Italian painters and receiving Portuguese painters in Florence.

The son of the Portuguese Prince Peter, Cardinal Jaime, lived his last years in Florence, where he died in 1459. His memorial chapel in the church of San Miniato al Monte, built in 1460–66, is a precious testimony to the art of the Renaissance. It was designed by Italian architects Antonio Manetti and Giovanni Rossellino and decorated by the Italian painters Alesso Baldovinetti, Antonio and Piero da Pollaiuolo, and Luca della Robbia. Miguel da Silva, Bishop of Viseu and cardinal, to whom Baldassare Castiglione dedicated *Il Cortegiano* (1513–24), played a fundamental role as an artistic and literary mediator until the breaking off of his relations with Portuguese King John III. This artistic exchange continued over the centuries, ranging from the presence in Tuscany of the Portuguese painter Álvaro Pires de Évora between 1310 and 1330 to the role played by the Portuguese painter, architect, and restorer Alfredo de Andrade in Genoa between 1860 and 1910. But the best-known figure in this interchange was the Portuguese humanist Francisco de Holanda, who benefited from his participation in the neo-Platonic circle led by Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo when he studied in Rome between 1538 and 1547.

The impact of the Italian Renaissance in Portugal was mediated by French, Flemish, and Castilian artists, but innovations in military architecture were introduced directly by Benedetto da Ravenna, an imperial engineer and veteran of the eastern Mediterranean campaign, who designed the castles of Vila Viçosa and the Mazagão Fort according to then-new concepts of low, slanting walls, protected by bulwarks placed for cross-fire. This modernization was then immediately introduced to Portuguese fortresses in India, where the Portuguese architect Giovanni Battista Cairati worked as a chief engineer. In Portugal we may highlight the work of the Italian Filippo Terzi in the 1580s and 1590s in military architecture (São Filipe Fort in Setúbal, Pessegueiro Island Fort), religious architecture (the rebuilding of the Convent of Christ in Tomar and the Monastery of St. Vincent in Lisbon), and civic architecture (the Tower of the Terreiro do Paço in Lisbon, known as Black Horse Square in English).

The Portuguese Restoration War (1640–68), which culminated in the recuperation of the country's independence from Spain, was not favourable to artistic relations between Portugal and Italy, but these connections were renewed throughout the 18th century. An excellent example is the extraordinary baroque chapel of St. John the Baptist in the

São Roque Church in Lisbon, which was designed by the Italians Nicola Salvi and Luigi Vanvitelli (with an intervention by the German architect Johann Friedrich Ludwig) and installed in 1749. The work of the Italian Niccolò Nasoni in Oporto and northern Portugal between 1725 and 1773 is the most important architecture of the period. Of note are a vast complex of projects, the works in the cathedral, the Episcopal palace, the Church of São Pedro dos Clérigos (one of the best examples of baroque architecture in Portugal), the Palace of São João, the Palace of Freixo, and the Quinta da Prelada estate.

The neoclassical style, which was introduced into Portugal during the period of the Marquis of Pombal (1750–77), was developed over the last decades of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century by the Italian architect Francesco Saverio Fabri, who left a series of works in Faro (the town arch, the Misericórdia church, the Episcopal Seminary) before becoming involved in the project for the Ajuda Palace and the building of the Foz Palace, both of which are in Lisbon. A century later, another Italian left a significant work in the neo-Manueline style: Luigi Manini, a stage designer, decorator, painter, and architect, worked in Portugal between 1879 and 1913 and was involved in the set design and set dressing of such theaters as the São Carlos and the São Luiz in Lisbon, the restoration of the Hieronymite monastery in Belém, and the decoration of the Military Museum in Lisbon. His most important works are the Bussaco Palace, the Castro Guimarães Palace in Cascais, and the Quinta da Regaleira estate in Sintra. This last is a quite extraordinary example of connections between stage design and architecture. The work is marked out by the Rosicrucian and Masonic worldviews, as seen in its landscape architecture (ordered garden versus wild nature) and symbolic architecture (well of initiation, terrace of gods, tower, and labyrinth).

Literature was another favored domain in the relations between Portugal and Italy, given the exchange of diplomats and the presence of Portuguese citizens at Italian universities, particularly during the final decades of the 15th century and throughout the 16th century. The circulation of texts by the Italians Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, and Giovanni Boccaccio, as well as political and juridical texts by Egidio Romano, Bartolus de Saxoferrato, and Baldus de Ubaldis, began very early on. The book by the Venetian traveler Marco Polo was an object of great fascination in Portugal in the 15th century. It is against this backdrop that Portuguese expansion took place; the extraordinary extent of their itineraries covered almost the whole of Asia. The Italians Matteo Pisano and Giusto Baldino were invited by King Alphonse V of Portugal to write chronicles of Portuguese imperial undertakings in Latin, while the humanist Cataldo Siculo came to Portugal as the Latin teacher to Jorge, Duke of Aveiro, the illegitimate child of King John II; he published his *Epistolae et orationes* in Lisbon in 1500–13.

Francisco de Sá de Miranda made a trip to Italy in 1521–26, during which he met the writers Vittoria Colonna, Pietro Bembo, Jacopo Sannazaro, and Ludovico Ariosto; the trip was decisive for the introduction of Italian metrics into Portuguese poetry. This impact was extended to the theater, given that his plays *Estrangeiros* (1559) and *Vilhalpandos* (1560) established a break with the theatre of the then-current titan of Portuguese playwriting Gil Vicente. The Portuguese philosopher Damião de Góis studied in Padua between 1534 and 1538, and this was where he met the scholars Pietro Bembo and Lazzaro Buonamico. He was a friend to Erasmus, with whom he lodged in Basel, Switzerland, for some months in 1534, and he met the religious reformers Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon on his journeys throughout central Europe. He played a fundamental role in the divulging of Portuguese discoveries, for instance knowledge about Ethiopia and the drawing up of the chronicles of Prince John and King Manuel I.

Many other Portuguese figures played a significant role in literary relations between their country and Italy. Achilles Statius was a great favorite in Rome, where he left a large number of printed works in Latin. Luís Vaz de Camões not only incorporated Italian innovations in his extraordinary work, but also exerted a universal influence; his epic and his lyrical works were translated into many different languages. The 15th and 16th centuries were decisive in this field, given the reach of the Italian Renaissance. In the 17th century Father António Vieira was a key figure. He went to Rome in order to be sheltered from the Portuguese Inquisition and enjoyed great success at the papal court and the court of Christina of Sweden.

The study of political relations between Italy and Portugal usually focuses on papal connections. Thus, little is known regarding links with Turin, Naples, and Venice. It is relatively well known that Portugal received, between 1815 and 1861, some exiled Italian liberals after the fall of Napoleon; also common knowledge is the decisive role played by the Italian expeditionary force commanded by Borso de Carminati at the 1832 Battle of Oporto against the faction of Prince Michael after the arrival of the troops headed by the future King Peter at Mindelo. The close relationship between the Portuguese state under the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar and that of Benito Mussolini's fascist Italy is well known, but relations with the Italian Carbonari secret society, which was very important before and during the Portuguese First Republic in the beginnings of the 20th century, still need to be studied.

Venice played an important role in all of these relationships, as it is the gateway between Latin Europe and Orthodox Europe, Christian Europe, and the Ottoman Empire; indeed, it was a maritime empire in the Eastern Mediterranean until the 17th century. It is

through Venice that the Portuguese went to the Holy Land. It was there that they stopped off on their way to Asia by land. It was at the University of Padua that many Portuguese people studied. It was in Murano that they learned the art of glassware, of which the Venetians were the world's specialists, exporting to the whole of Europe and Asia, and even supplying the chandeliers for the Ottoman mosques. It was in Venice that the Portuguese learned the art of trade, because Venice had the highest concentration of markets with the best furs, silks, spices, and precious stones. The Portuguese also learned the art of printing in Venice, which was the greatest European center of that art at the end of the 15th century and into the 16th century. And, finally, it was in Venice that the new Christians found the conditions to become Jews again, restoring their faith and contributing to the creation of a vibrant community with connections to the whole world.

Venice is the right place for Joana Vasconcelos to show her art. It is a city of crystal chandeliers, mirrors, glass, beads, high-heeled shoes, furs, leather, feathers, fashion, courtesan exhibitionism, and female assertiveness before emancipation. These elements and styles are at the center of Vasconcelos's art, which functions on the dual levels of provocation and memory, the recuperation of consecrated images and iconoclasm, the reuse of materials and the transformation of functions. Her intense creativity, made of shifted and out-of-scale forms, is based on the best that history can provide as subject matter, at the same time that it frees itself from that very history.

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